

JOSEPH APPOINTED TO A HIGH POSITION

BIBLE TEXT: Genesis 41:37-57.

LESSON 36 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread" (Psalm 37:25).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Genesis 41:37-57.

³⁷ ¶ And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants.

³⁸ And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?

³⁹ And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art:

⁴⁰ Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.

⁴¹ And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

⁴² And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;

⁴³ And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.

⁴⁴ And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

⁴⁵ And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

⁴⁶ ¶ And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh,

NOTES:

Divine Revelation

The wisdom of Joseph appealed to Pharaoh. He believed the interpretation Joseph gave of his dreams, and agreed that it would be good to prepare for the lean years that were to come after the years of plenty. In Pharaoh's conduct this heathen king showed more wisdom than many men manifest today. The Word of God tells us of the judgements that are going to fall upon the earth; and has given us many signs of things to come before our Lord returns, but men refuse to prepare to meet God. When they stand before Him on the Judgement Day, they will be without excuse, because the Word of God has given the sinners hundreds of warnings, and has placed His faithful followers as watchmen on the wall who have taken up the cry to warn the ungodly of impending doom, but they refuse to heed the warning.

In the patriarchal days the people did not have the Bible for instruction, so God often spoke to men through dreams, just as He did to Pharaoh. Sometimes God spoke to the prophets in this way, and through visions, but in our day God has spoken through His Son, and we have the Bible for our guide (**Hebrews 1:1, 2**; ¹ God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, ² Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;). Occasionally, God may still give one of His children a dream; but many people who are going around telling of special revelations from Heaven are false prophets, and their dreams are not from God. There were some such prophets in the time of Moses. But he said, through the inspiration of God, if they dreamed a dream or performed a miracle contrary to the Lord's command, "Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deuteronomy 13:3). If we have the love of the truth in our hearts, the Spirit will reveal His will to us, and we shall not go after false dreamers.

Joseph Promoted

Pharaoh recognised that God was with Joseph, and decided there could be no better person than he to undertake the tremendous task of saving enough food during the seven years of plenty to care for the people of the land through seven years of famine. Even the people from other countries were to come to Egypt to buy food when the famine struck their lands.

The tide of Joseph's fortune had turned. No longer was he to suffer the hatred of his brothers; no longer did he have to serve as a slave or languish in an Egyptian prison. He was made the second ruler in the land. In Pharaoh's own house Joseph could tell people what to do, and they had to obey him. No man could "lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt" unless he had Joseph's permission.

The gold chain that was put upon Joseph was a token of authority and the ring was probably the one with the king's signet, which he used to sign his business papers. Joseph was even given power to sign the king's letters!

Joseph's Faithfulness

Joseph was still a comparatively young man to have such great honours thrust upon him, but they did not turn his head. He was faithful in the work he had to do, and God helped him to do it right.

and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

⁴⁷ And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls.

⁴⁸ And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same.

⁴⁹ And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number.

⁵⁰ And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On bare unto him.

⁵¹ And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.

⁵² And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

⁵³ ¶ And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended.

⁵⁴ And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

⁵⁵ And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.

⁵⁶ And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt.

⁵⁷ And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn;

He received a personal reward, too, in that the king gave him a name of honour, gave him a wife, and within seven years he had two sons. He must have had a happy home, because he said that God had made him forget his sufferings and even his father's house. God will always reward His children if they are faithful through the hard places. "The toils of the road will seem nothing when we get to the end of the way."

Plenty, Then Famine

God fulfilled His Word just as Joseph had prophesied, and the land brought forth great crops, which were stored up in every city to such an extent that no one could tell how much there was.

Then came the seven years of famine. What a terrible time of suffering that would have been if there had been no preparation made! And what a terrible time of suffering it is going to be for those who fail to prepare to meet their God! They will know of the bliss of the righteous, but for them there will be nothing but weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

We learned that when God called Abraham out of an idolatrous country and set him apart as the father of a new nation He could call His own, He set a pattern. Abraham fulfilled his part in the plan; then came Isaac, and later Jacob. God had promised that the Messiah would come through the line of Abraham, and thus far the line has not been broken.

God could see that a terrible famine was to come upon all the earth -- and what if His chosen people should starve to death? What would happen to His plan? But God is all-wise, and He will let nothing hinder His work.

Israel's Preservation

Perhaps there was no other country that was fertile enough to raise sufficient crops to feed the people through seven years of famine. So in Egypt God provided a place that would succour His people and keep them alive, and He made a way for them to be there.

No one would ever have thought when Joseph was sold into Egypt that it was a link in God's chain of preservation for His chosen people at a time when they were threatened with extinction. How good God is to His people! "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33).

QUESTIONS

1. Did Pharaoh recognise the Spirit of God in Joseph?
2. What did Joseph do to prevent a famine?
3. Pharaoh said to the Egyptians, "What he saith to you, do." Who spoke similar words in the New Testament?
4. Why did Pharaoh call on Joseph to interpret his dreams?
5. Were Pharaoh's dreams coming to pass according to Joseph's interpretation?

because that the famine was so
sore in all lands.