**SDG - Lesson #23**

**Genesis – Chapter 41**

1. In our last lesson, Joseph had asked Pharaoh’s cupbearer to mention him to Pharaoh. How much time has passed since that event?

2 years

2. How old was Joseph? (vs. 41) How long had he been in Egypt? (37:2)

30 years old; 13 years in Egypt

3. What is the significance of the number 7 in the Bible?

7 is the number of perfection or completion.

4. What was the significance of the Nile River to the Egyptians?

The Nile was the life-giving river of Egypt. All their agriculture depended on it. It was also home to several of the Egyptian gods.

5. Pharaoh basically had the same dream twice. One dealt with good cattle and bad cattle the other with good grain and bad grain. What is the significance of these two closely related dreams?

This is another example of parallelism. Anytime something is repeated it signifies that it must be important, and attention must be given to it.

6. What was Pharaoh’s reaction(s) to the dreams?

Pharaoh was troubled and he asked for his magicians and wise men to interpret them.

7. The chief cupbearer said, “I remember my offenses today.” What were his offenses?

Joseph had interpreted his dream and asked for him to mention him to Pharaoh. He had failed to do so for 2 years.

8. How did the chief cupbearer describe Joseph? What does this tell us?

He describes Joseph as a young Hebrew servant. We know that the jailer had put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners. It appears that he had made Joseph his chief servant. The cupbearer may have not even known that Joseph was a prisoner.

9. What is meant by the phrase, “out of the pit?”

Since we saw that Joseph was in a house (40:14), this is probably figurative language for the pit of Joseph’s life. It could be reference to the Egyptian dungeons.

10. What did Joseph do before seeing Pharaoh? Why? How might this affect us to this day?

Joseph shaved and changed his clothes. This is what was expected before entering the King’s court. It shows respect for the king and his throne. Likewise, we do the same before going to the White House, a play or even our boss. Should we not show such respect when entering God’s house or communing with Him?

11. What two facts does Pharaoh share with Joseph? (vs. 15)

Pharaoh states:

1. No one can interpret his dream.
2. He heard that Joseph could interpret dreams.

12. How did Joseph respond to this? Why?

Joseph told Pharaoh that it was not him who interpreted dreams but God. If Joseph said he could, he would have been stealing God’s glory. As a faithful, righteous servant, Joseph knew that the glory belonged to God and only God.

13. What was the first thing that Joseph revealed to Pharaoh concerning his dreams? (vs. 25a) What was the second thing? (vs. 25b)

Joseph revealed:

1. The dreams were one – Joseph acknowledges that this is an example of parallelism. It sets a precedent for how we handle parallelism in the Bible. (see also vs. 32)
2. The dreams were from God.

14. What was the message / interpretation of the dreams? (29-32)

The message of the dreams was:

1. There would be seven years of plenty.
2. There would be seven years of severe famine.
3. This would happen shortly.
4. It was fixed by God.

15. How severe would the years of famine/drought be?

The famine would be so bad that people would forget the years of plenty.

16. Notice the wording in verse 32: “The thing is fixed by God and God will bring it about.” What is significant about the phrase by God and God? (Helpful hint: Consider the beliefs of the Egyptians of this time)

Joseph is emphasizing the reality of the One True God. He speaks in the singular and does not use pronouns. This also shows extreme respect and reverence for the name of God.

17. Describe a discerning and wise man? Why did Joseph propose that Pharaoh look for such a person?

To discern is to be able to understand. Wisdom is the ability to know how to best handle a situation. Joseph suggested that Pharaoh select someone who could understand the coming blessings and famine and wisely lead the nation through it.

18. In verse 33, Joseph suggested that Pharaoh appoint a discerning and wise man over the land of Egypt. Keeping that in mind, what does Joseph do in verses 34-36?

Joseph literally defines what a discerning and wise man would or should do.

19. What was Joseph’s solution?

Joseph suggested that they take 20% of the crop from each year of plenty and store it for the lean years.

20. After listening to Joseph, what did Pharaoh realize?

Pharaoh realized:

1. The Spirit of God was in Joseph.
2. Joseph was the discerning and wise man.

21. What did Pharaoh do with Joseph?

Pharaoh made Joseph second in command in Egypt. He put Joseph over the affairs of his house as well. Only Pharaoh was greater than Joseph. Joseph would have been called the “Grand Vizier” or the grand steward of all Egypt.

22. What was the significance of the signet ring?

This ring had the signature or seal of Pharaoh on it. Joseph had the same authority as Pharaoh with it.

23. What other awards came with Joseph’s promotions?

Vs. 42 – A fine linen robe and gold chain

Vs. 43 – He rode in the second chariot, a public display of his position. People were told to bow to Joseph.

Vs. 45a – An Egyptian name

Vs. 45b - An Egyptian wife

24. Where did Joseph put the stored grain in the years of plenty? Why?

Joseph stored the grain in the cities closest to the fields in which it was grown. This would later help with distribution and make it easier on the people.

25. What were the names of Joseph’s sons? What do these names mean?

Manasseh – making to forget

Ephraim – making fruitful

26. What was Pharaoh’s command to the people when the famine came?

“Go to Joseph. What he says to you, do.”

27. Verses 56 and 57 set the stage for the fulfillment of Joseph’s dreams. How bad was the famine? What was the result of this?

The famine affected all the earth. People came from all over the earth to get food from Egypt.

**Chapter 42**

28. What is meant by the phrase, “Why do you look at one another?”

This shows the severity of the famine. The brothers had probably done everything they knew of to deal with the drought and had no ideas left.

29. Who did Joseph send to Egypt? Who didn’t he send? Why? (vss. 2-5)

Jacob sent the 10 older brothers but did not send Benjamin because he didn’t want to risk the only son from Rachel that he had left.

30. What else do we learn from these verses? (Chapter 38)

By this time, Judah had returned to live with his father.

31. Why did Joseph’s brothers bow before him? (Caution: Think carefully before answering. There are two reasons!)

The brothers bowed before Joseph:

1. Because he was the governor.
2. To fulfill the prophecy of Joseph’s first dream.

32. Joseph recognized his brothers, but his brothers didn’t recognize him. Why? (see also vss. 23-24)

The brothers were dressed in Hebrew clothing, came from Canaan, and would have been easily recognized as the 10 brothers.

Joseph was dressed like an Egyptian and the last thing the brothers would have expected was for the brother they sold into slavery to be the governor. Finally, he used an interpreter.

33. What did Joseph accuse his brothers of? Why?

Joseph accused his brother of being spies who were looking for the weaknesses of Egypt. This was a test to see how they would react.

34. What was the brothers’ reaction to this accusation?

The brothers stated that:

1. They had come to buy food.
2. They were the sons of one man.
3. They were honest men.
4. They were never spies.

35. How did Joseph respond to his brother’ claim? Why?

Joseph continued to claim they were spies. He does this again as a test but most likely to find out more about the family.

36. How did the brothers react to Joseph’s response? Why?

The brothers built on what they had earlier stated by clarifying:

1. There were 12 sons total.
2. One was no more.
3. The youngest was with their father.
4. They were servants of Joseph; they had no allegiance to another king

It appears that the brothers may have anticipated some questioning and had decided that by speaking the truth all would go well.

37. What did Joseph do with this new information? Why?

Joseph responded by:

1. Accusing them for the third time that they were spies.
2. Putting the brothers to a test:
3. One brother could leave
4. That brother had to bring back the youngest
5. He placed them all in prison for three days.

This response showed beyond a shadow of any doubt that Joseph had authority over them. Yet, it also tested their character and would test their claim of honesty.

38. What is the first information that Joseph revealed about himself? Why? (vs. 18)

Joseph revealed that he feared God. If he feared God, he would obviously respect the truth and he could be trusted as well.

39. How did Joseph change his demands? (vss. 19-20)

Joseph changed his demands by saying that nine brothers could leave and he would only keep one in custody.

40. How did the brothers interpret Joseph’s actions/demands? Why?

The brothers felt that they were being punished for their mistreatment of Joseph. The fact that Joseph had told them that he “feared God” had probably brought their guilt back into their minds.

41. Why would Joseph weep when he heard his brother’ thoughts?

Joseph’s emotions finally overcame him. He realized Reuben had tried to save him and that his brothers had guilt over what was done about 20 years earlier.

42. Why did Joseph keep Simeon?

Since Reuben, the oldest, had tried to save Joseph. Simeon, the second oldest was the next in line for responsibility. His selection would have further alarmed the brothers. Was it any coincidence that Simeon was chosen? They would have seen it as God’s judgment.

43. Why did Joseph put the brother’ money back in the sacks of grain?

This was the greatest test of the truthfulness and honesty they claimed in verse 11. Honest men would return the money.

44. How did the brothers react when they found the money? Why? What do we learn about the brothers from this?

The brothers were fearful and saw it as God’s judgment on them. They figured they would be seen as thieves and killed. The brothers did not think of the obvious thing to do; go back and prove their honesty. Doing the right thing was not a natural action for the brothers.

45. How did Jacob react when he heard of all that happened?

Jacob grieved for Joseph and Simeon and felt he would lose Benjamin.

46. What did Reuben offer to do?

Reuben offered to let Jacob kill his two sons if he didn’t bring Benjamin safely back.

47. How did Jacob respond to Reuben’s offer?

Reuben’s offer did not persuade Jacob. Jacob refused to send Benjamin back with the brothers to Egypt.