

Lesson 11 – Genesis 40-45

Text: Genesis 40-45

Main Characters: God, Joseph, Pharaoh, Joseph's brothers (especially Judah and Benjamin)

Key Passages:

- Genesis 41:16, 25, 28, 32 – Joseph explains that God is the one who interprets dreams, not him.
- Genesis 45:5-8 – Joseph explains that God sent him to Egypt, not his brothers, to preserve life.

Main Storyline:

While Joseph was in prison, two of Pharaoh's servants, the chief cupbearer and baker, angered him, and he threw them into prison with Joseph. One morning, Joseph noticed they were both very sad. He found out that they had had dreams which they did not understand. Joseph offered that God could interpret their dreams if they would tell him their dreams. Both men told Joseph their dreams. Joseph said that, in 3 days, the cupbearer would be getting his job back while the baker would be hanged. Joseph also asked the cupbearer to tell Pharaoh about him. After 3 days, the cupbearer was restored, and the baker was hanged. Unfortunately, the cupbearer completely forgot about Joseph for 2 years.

One day, Pharaoh had a dream that none of his magicians could interpret. The cupbearer, remembering Joseph, told Pharaoh that Joseph could interpret his dream. Pharaoh called for Joseph, and Joseph (through God) was able to interpret his dreams. According to the dreams, all the land would have 7 years of plenty, followed by 7 years of severe famine. Joseph advised that they store up food while they had plenty and then distribute it during the famine. Pharaoh, seeing Joseph's wisdom from God, made him 2nd in command in Egypt and put him in charge of preparing for the famine.

When the famine began, Jacob sent his sons (except Benjamin) to buy grain in Egypt, the only land with food. Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him (as they had been apart for about 20 years at this point). Joseph pretended not to know them, and accused them of being spies. After throwing them all in prison for 3 days, he demanded they return with Benjamin to prove their story, also keeping Simeon in Egypt as collateral. When they asked Jacob to let Benjamin go, Jacob refused, not wanting to lose Rachel's last son. Jacob said that if Benjamin died, he would also die.

Eventually, Jacob's family ran out of food again, so he asked his sons to return to Egypt to buy more grain. His sons refused to go unless Jacob allowed Benjamin to go with them, as Joseph had demanded. Jacob relented, and Judah took personal responsibility for caring for Benjamin on the journey. When they arrived in Egypt, Joseph ate with them in a large feast.

Before the brothers left to return to Canaan with the food, Joseph secretly had his silver cup placed in Benjamin's sack. After they left, Joseph told his steward to chase them and accuse them of stealing the cup. When the steward caught up and accused them, they denied, and pledged that they would be slaves if the cup were to be found, and the one who stole it could be killed. When they found the cup in Benjamin's sack, all of the brothers were heartbroken and tore their clothing in grief.

They returned to Egypt, and Joseph explained that only Benjamin would have to remain a slave. Judah explained the situation to Joseph, and selflessly offered to take Benjamin's place as his slave if Joseph would allow Benjamin to return home. Joseph could no longer restrain himself and revealed himself to his brothers. He invited his family to live in Egypt and to enjoy the best of everything it had.

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) God's promises and prophecies will take place, no matter how unlikely they seem.
- 2.) God is the true source of our blessings; we must give Him the glory (James 1:17).
- 3.) God can use a bad situation/someone's sin in order to accomplish something good (Job/Jesus).