

Genesis 41-42

An overview of Chapter 41

Two years have passed since God helped Joseph interpret the dreams of the cupbearer. The pharaoh has two troubling dreams, and wants to understand what they mean. After his magicians and wise guys couldn't decipher the dream, the cupbearer speaks up and tells the pharaoh about Joseph.

Joseph is cleaned up and brought to Pharaoh who gives Joseph the details of his dreams. Joseph explains that he has no special power, but that God will do the interpretation. According to God, the dreams are a warning that Egypt will have seven years of abundance followed by seven years of famine.

Joseph then offers the Pharaoh some counsel - in the good years save some food for the bad years. The pharaoh thinks it is a great idea, and he puts Joseph in charge of the task. Joseph is given all the power he needs to carry out this responsibility. Joseph gets a nice benefit package for his new career: Pharaoh's signet ring, fancy clothes, a gold necklace, a nice ride, everyone bows down to him, a new name (God speaks), and a wife. Not a bad benefit package for a 30 year old ex-con.

Joseph and his wife have a couple of kids, Manasseh and Ephraim.

Everything happens just as God had said, and all the world is coming to Egypt to buy food during the seven years of famine.

An overview of Chapter 42

Jacob and his boys are starving like the rest of the world. When Jacob hears there is food being sold in Egypt, he tells his boys to stop staring at each other and get to Egypt to buy some food. All the brothers go except Benjamin (the youngest). When they get to Egypt, they bow down to Joseph (not knowing it was their brother) and fulfill the dreams that Joseph had a few years back that caused them so much jealousy.

Instead of announcing whom he is, Joseph devises a test to see whether their hearts have changed. He challenges their story and even calls them spies. He takes Simeon captive, and tells the rest of the brothers that he will be held until they return with their youngest brother. The brothers are sure that this misfortune is a result of their actions against Joseph, and they say so in front of their brother not realizing it. Joseph is moved by this and has to hide his tears.

All the brothers except Simeon return home to tell dad what happened and pick up Benjamin. Dad is hesitant to let him go. Reuben stands up and says if they don't bring Benjamin back then he will kill his own sons (not a very effective argument since his sons are Jacob's grandsons). Jacob still refuses to let his youngest son go with them.

Reflection

What can you learn from Joseph's example of patience and faith while he is in prison? How does your character compare to Joseph? What can Joseph's advice to Pharaoh teach us about how to handle our finances? Do you often give God credit for the talents you have and what

you accomplish with them? What can you learn from how Joseph deals with his brothers? Do you test people to check their motives? Should you? Are you generous to those who have wronged you? As a parent, do you play favorites with your children?

For Further Study

God's plans for you: Jeremiah 29:11, Romans 8:28-31

Hope: Psalm 43:5, Psalm 62:5, Proverbs 10:28, Romans 5:1-5, 12:10-13, 15:3