

Old Testament Lesson 12

“FRUITFUL IN THE LAND OF MY AFFLICTION”

Prepared by Duane S. Crowther, March 2002

1. Joseph in Prison:

A. *Gen. 39:1-20*: Joseph was *unjustly imprisoned* by Potiphar when he resisted the seduction of Potiphar’s wife.

B. *Gen. 39:21-23*: “The Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.” He was made the *prison supervisor*.

C. *Gen. 40:1-8*: The king’s butler and baker offended the Pharaoh, and were put in the prison. The same night they both dreamed a dream. Joseph offered to interpret their dreams for them: “Do not interpretations belong to God?”

1. *Gen. 40:9-15*: The *butler’s dream* (a vine with three branches; he pressed the grapes into Pharaoh’s cup) and interpretation: In three days he would be restored as Pharaoh’s butler.

2. *Gen. 40:16-19*: The *baker’s dream* (three baskets on his head; birds ate out of them) and interpretation: In three days Pharaoh will hang him, and birds will eat his flesh.

3. *Gen. 40:20-23*: Three days later, on his birthday, *Pharaoh fulfilled both prophetic dreams*.

D. *Gen. 40:23; 41:1*: The butler forgot Joseph’s request and Joseph remained in prison 2 years.

2. Pharaoh’s Dreams and Joseph’s Inspired Interpretation of Them:

A. *Gen. 41:1-4*: *Seven fat kine* [cows, cattle] were eaten up by seven lean kine.

B. *Gen. 41:5-7*: *Seven fat ears of corn* on one stalk were devoured by seven thin ears of corn.

C. *Gen. 41:8-14*: When the magicians and wise men couldn’t interpret Pharaoh’s dreams, the butler remembered Joseph’s dream interpretations. He told Pharaoh, who summoned Joseph.

D. *Gen. 41:15-32*: *Joseph’s inspired interpretation*: In Egypt there will be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine which will consume the land. “God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do” [vv. 25, 28, 32]. (Compare Daniel 2, 4, 5, in which Babylonian kings receive dreams.)

E. *Gen. 41:33-45*: Joseph suggested a man be chosen to head a vast food-storage plan, and that during each of the seven years, a fifth of the country’s food be stored and preserved. *Pharaoh choose Joseph* to be that man, and *made him second in command* in the nation. “Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?” [v. 38] “Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art.” [v. 39]

F. *Gen. 41:46*: “Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt.” Thirteen years had passed since he was sold into Potiphar’s service. {See *Gen. 37:2*}

G. *Gen. 41:45, 50-52*: Joseph’s marriage and sons: “Pharaoh called Joseph’s name *Zaphnath-paaneah*: and he gave him to wife *Asenath* the daughter of Potipherah priest of On.” They had two sons: *Manasseh* the firstborn, (means *forgetting*) and *Ephraim* (means *fruitful*).

H. *Gen. 41:47-49, 53*: *Joseph “gathered up all the food* of the seven years.”

I. *Gen. 41:53-57*: *The famine came*: “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. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph to buy corn.” [vv. 56-57]

3. Joseph’s Reunions with His Family:

A. *Gen. 42:1-38*: Israel [Jacob] **sent his sons [except Benjamin] from Canaan to Egypt** to buy corn. They came to Joseph but didn't recognize him. Joseph accused them of being spies, kept Simeon as a prisoner, and required them to bring Benjamin with them when they returned. He sold them food, and returned their money in their sacks.

B. *Gen. 43:1-44:34*: Israel [Jacob] **sent his ten sons to Egypt a second time**. (Benjamin was still "a lad," [43:8].) Joseph arranged for them to eat with him at his home. His steward released Simeon to them. They "bowed themselves to him" [43:26] in fulfillment of Joseph's prophetic dreams [37:6-12]. Joseph sent them away with food, but had his silver cup put in Benjamin's sack, then sent his steward to stop them as they left the city and accuse them of theft of the cup. When they returned, Joseph required that Benjamin remain as his servant, but Judah pled to remain in Benjamin's place.

C. *Gen. 45:1-15*: **Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers**, and **acknowledged God's hand** in his trials: "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. . . . God did send me before you to preserve life. . . . God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God." [vv. 4-8]

D. *Gen. 45:16-28*: The brothers went back to Canaan and **brought Israel and their families back** to Egypt.

4. God's Appearance to Israel as His Family Moved to Egypt:

A. *Gen. 46:1-4*: God appeared to Israel in vision at Beersheba, and said: (1) "I am God, the God of thy father: (2) fear not to go down into Egypt; (3) for **I will there make of thee a great nation** (see Ex. 12:37-38); (4) I will go down with thee into Egypt; and (5) I will also surely bring thee up again (see Gen. 50:1-13); and (6) Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes" (see Gen. 50:1).

B. *Gen. 46:1-47:12*: Israel and all his family and servants **came to Egypt** (306 people [Gen. 46:26]; seventy of them were Jacob's family [Gen. 46:27; see the family list: Gen. 46:6-25]), and all their flocks and herds [Gen. 46:6, 32] Jacob was 137 years old when he came to Egypt. [Gen. 47:9]

C. *Gen. 47:11*: Joseph situated his family in the **land of Goshen** [Gen. 45:10, 27-29], "in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded" [Gen. 47:11]. (That would be about like living in the Mississippi River delta in Louisiana, near New Orleans.) He was protective of them, for they were shepherds, and "every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians." [Gen. 46:34, 31-34; 47:3-6]. See Map 2: A-B2.

D. *Gen. 47:28*: Israel (Jacob) lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years.

5. Israel's Patriarchal Blessings to His Grandsons:

A. *Gen. 48:1-22*: Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh:

1. *Gen. 48:5-6*: Joseph's two sons were regarded by Israel as his own sons, and were given blessings and inheritances among the tribes of Israel. "Thy two sons, **Ephraim and Manasseh**, . . . **are mine**; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. And thy issue, which thou begettest after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance."

2. *Gen. 48:8-20*: Israel blessed the two young boys at the same time, intentionally crossing his hands so that his right hand was upon the head of Ephraim, rather than upon Manasseh's. When Joseph objected, Israel prophesied concerning them, saying: "He [Manasseh] (1) also shall become a people, (2) and also shall be great: but (3) truly **his younger brother [Ephraim] shall be greater than he, and** (4) **his seed shall become a multitude of nations**." [v. 19] "And he set Ephraim before Manasseh." [v. 20]

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