

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY
Week 12: Genesis 39 – 41 – Joseph: Prison & Promotion

Outline of the Story of Joseph:

Genesis 37:	Joseph is sold into Egypt		*Joseph has two dreams
Genesis 38	Judah and Tamar		
Genesis 39:1-19	Joseph and Potiphar	A	
Genesis 39:20-40	Joseph in Prison	B	*His fellow prisoners have two dreams
Genesis 41	Joseph in the Palace	C	*Pharaoh has two dreams
Genesis 42	First visit of Joseph's family to Egypt	A'	
Genesis 43-45	Second visit of Joseph's family to Egypt	B'	
Genesis 46-47	Third visit of Joseph's family to Egypt	C'	
Genesis 48-50	The last days and words of Jacob and Joseph		

CHAPTER 37 RECAP

So, Joseph, the dreamer, has two dreams that one day he will rule over his brothers. As a result of his arrogance, he is betrayed by his brothers and sold to a caravan of Ishmaelites on their way to Egypt. His brothers take his coat, dip it in goat's blood, and present it to their father suggesting that Joseph, his favorite son, has been eaten by a wild animal. Jacob tears his clothes and goes into mourning and no one can console him. "Meanwhile the Midianites sell him in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard" (Genesis 37:36).

GENESIS 39 – Joseph and Potiphar's Wife

When we pick up again in chapter 39, after a brief interlude, we once again learn about the sale to Potiphar who bought Joseph from the "Ishmaelites." God blesses Joseph and blesses Potiphar for Joseph's sake. In verses five and six, we learn that Joseph is trustworthy and that Potiphar trusted Joseph with everything that he had. At the end of verse six, we learn that Joseph is handsome and good-looking. And then in verse 7, here comes trouble.

Potiphar's wife notices Joseph and wants him. But he rebuffs her advances day after day until one day, she grabs his robe and he runs out of the house naked. "Seizing" the opportunity to get back at Joseph, she calls her servants and accuses him of doing exactly what she had been asking. Potiphar is not pleased. Joseph can't catch a break and is put in prison. But even in prison, God blesses him, and the chief jailer puts Joseph in charge of all the prisoners and it goes well for everyone. Joseph, again, is a man placed in charge of many things and he prospers.

GENESIS 40 – Cupbearer and Baker's Dreams

The king of Egypt's cupbearer and baker offend the king, and both are put in prison. The captain places them under the care of Joseph. They both have a dream and are troubled. So, Joseph interprets their dreams for them. Good news for the cupbearer and Joseph asks him to put in a good word with Pharaoh about Joseph. Bad news for the baker who is hanged. When the cupbearer was restored, he forgot about Joseph. Does this remind us of the book of Daniel?

GENESIS 41 – Pharaoh's Dreams and Joseph's Rise

Two years pass and then Pharaoh has two dreams: cows in the first and grain in the second. Pharaoh is troubled, and no one can interpret his dreams for him. But then the cupbearer remembers Joseph and tells Pharaoh and Joseph is summoned to the dungeon. Joseph insists that God is the interpreter of dreams, not him. So, Pharaoh retells the story of his dreams. The dreams are about feast and famine; seven good years followed by seven bad years. He tells Pharaoh that God is going to do this and so he had better plan and store up food for the famine.

Pharaoh is pleased and places Joseph in charge of his household and gives him his signet ring. He gave him the name "Zaphenath-paneah" (which might mean "The god speaks and he lives") and gave him the daughter of a priest as a wife. Joseph went around in those seven years and stored up more grain than could be counted. He had two sons, Manasseh (which means "making to forget") and Ephraim (which means "to be fruitful"). Famine then strikes all over, but Egypt is prepared and Pharaoh sends his people to Joseph. Joseph opens up the storehouses and people from all the world come to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain.

FOR NEXT WEEK: Read Genesis 42