

OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

Green Mountain 1st Ward, Lakewood, Colorado

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Lesson 12: "Fruitful in the Land of My Affliction", Genesis 40–45

Introduction

Imagine that you have died and entered the spirit world and are now reviewing your experiences in mortality.



- What were some of the trials you faced in mortal life?
- What lessons have you learned from life's trials?
- If you could live your life over, what would you change about the way you dealt with your trials?
- How could you have taken better advantage of life's experiences?

This lesson is about Joseph, son of Jacob, and how he was faithful and obedient even during great trials.

Lesson Highlights

- Joseph interprets the dreams of the butler, the baker, and Pharaoh. Pharaoh makes Joseph ruler over all Egypt.
- Joseph makes himself known to his brothers and forgives them.
- The great latter-day Joseph

A study of this lesson will help us understand that if we are faithful and obedient, God will consecrate our afflictions for our good.

Joseph interprets the dreams of the butler, the baker, and Pharaoh. Pharaoh makes Joseph ruler over all Egypt. (Genesis 40–41)

As we discussed in the last lesson, Joseph had experienced trials in his early life.

- **Genesis 37:4.** He was hated by his brothers.
- **Genesis 37:18-28.** His brothers conspired to kill him, and then sold him as a slave instead.
- **Genesis 39:20.** He was unjustly imprisoned as refusing to do evil.

Joseph responded to trials by continuing his righteous-

ness and the Lord blessed him for it. Remember that when a physically free person is in bondage spiritually, he is actually a slave. When a physically enslaved person lives a righteous life, as Joseph did, he is free in a very important respect. Because he was obedient to higher laws, Joseph was free from the consequences of broken law.

After he was joined in prison by the Pharaoh's

butler and baker, Joseph was able to interpret dreams that each of them had. The interpretations were fulfilled within three days.

Genesis 40:14-15. In return for interpreting his dream, Joseph had asked the butler to remember him. But that did not happen.

Genesis 41:1, 9-16 teaches that Joseph was finally given an opportunity for freedom when the Pharaoh

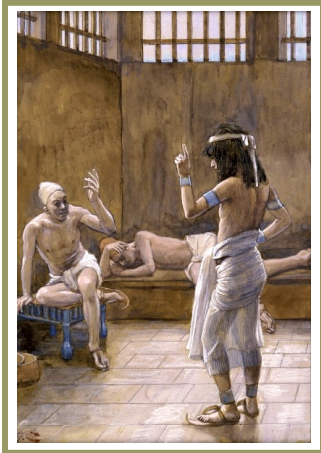
Doug Simpson—Website: dcsimpson.info

Next Week

GENERAL CONFERENCE

Following Week

#13: Bondage, Passover, and Exodus, Exodus 1–3; 5–6; 11–14



Joseph Interprets the Dreams While in Prison, c. 1896-1902, by James Jacques Joseph Tissot

wanted an interpretation of his dream. Rather than claim credit for the ability to discern the meaning, Joseph told Pharaoh that God would give the interpretation. Joseph was a model of integrity and used his gifts to glorify God and bless others, not for his own glory.

Genesis 41:1-7, 17-24 describes the dream of Pharaoh.

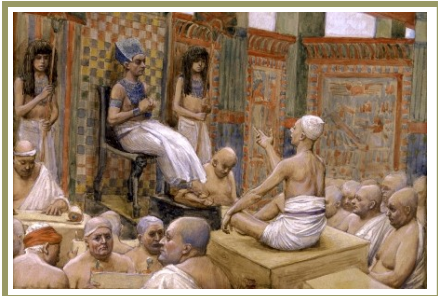
Genesis 41:25-32 is the interpretation as given by God to Joseph.

Genesis 41:33-36 contains Joseph's suggestion to Pharaoh.

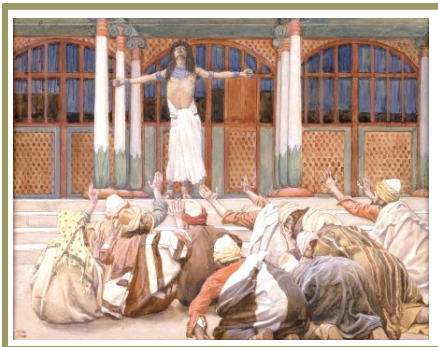
Genesis 41:37-43 records that the Pharaoh made his wise servant, Joseph, ruler over all Egypt.

Preparing for famine

Joseph counseled Pharaoh to use the seven years of plenty to prepare Egypt for the seven years of famine that would follow (Genesis 41:29–30, 34–36). Just as Joseph gave counsel to Pharaoh about preparing for times of famine, our Church leaders have given us counsel.



Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dream, c. 1896-1902, by James Jacques Joseph Tissot



Joseph Makes Himself Known to His Brethren, c. 1896-1902, by James Jacques Joseph Tissot

Joseph makes himself known to his brothers and forgives them. (Genesis 42–45)

Genesis 42:1-3. Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy "corn" (this refers to several grains including wheat, barley, rye, beans, and lentils).

Genesis 42:33-34, 43:2. They needed to return a second time to Egypt.

Genesis 42:36, 38. Jacob was reluctant to let Benjamin go to Egypt with his brothers.

Genesis 43:3-5, 11-14; 42:36. Jacob relented and sent Benjamin with his brothers, even though he thought he might lose another son. Even though Jacob viewed this as a trial, the Lord turned this into a blessing since it would lead to Joseph being restored to him.

Elder L. Tom Perry taught:

"Just as it is important to prepare ourselves spiritually, we must also prepare ourselves for our temporal needs. ... We have been instructed for years to follow at least four requirements in preparing for that which is to come.

"First, gain an adequate education. Learn a trade or a profession to enable you to obtain steady employment that will provide remuneration sufficient to care for yourself and your family. ...

"Second, live strictly within your income and save something for a rainy day. Incorporate in your lives the discipline of budgeting that which the Lord has blessed you with. As regularly as you pay your tithing, set aside an amount needed for future family requirements. ...

"Third, avoid excessive debt. Necessary debt should be incurred only after careful, thoughtful prayer and after obtaining the best possible advice. We need the discipline to stay well within our ability to pay. ...

"Fourth, acquire and store a reserve of food and supplies that will sustain life [if local laws permit such storage]. Obtain clothing and build a savings account on a sensible, well-planned basis that can serve well in times of emergency. As long as I can remember, we have been taught to prepare for the future and to obtain a year's supply of necessities. I would guess that the years of plenty have almost universally caused us to set aside this counsel. I believe the time to disregard this counsel is over. With events in the world today, it must be considered with all seriousness" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1995, 46–47; or Ensign, Nov. 1995, 36).

During the famine, "all countries came into Egypt to Joseph" to buy food because Egypt was the only country that had prepared for the famine (Genesis 41:54–57). Consider how being prepared can provide us with opportunities to serve others.

***Genesis 37:5-11**, which we reviewed before, revealed that Joseph's brothers would eventually bow down to him. While this was a trial to them at first, it actually became a blessing to them as it led to their temporal salvation.

Genesis 42:21 indicates that, even after 13 years, his brothers still felt guilty about selling Joseph into slavery. Guilt can be a positive force in our lives if it causes us to repent fully and seek complete forgiveness for our past sins. If guilt does not motivate us to repent, but simply causes us to despair, it cannot serve as a positive influence. The choice is up to us.

Genesis 44:18, 30-34 shows that Judah had become kinder and more concerned about his family since that time when he had generated the idea to sell the 17-year old Joseph into slavery.

Genesis 45:1-3 tells us that Joseph's brothers were troubled when Joseph revealed his identity.

Genesis 45:4-11, 14-15 record Joseph's complete forgiveness of his brothers and his testimony to them that it was the Lord who had turned this extreme case of sibling rivalry into the salvation of his family during a severe seven-year famine.

D&C 64:8-11 reminds us of the principle of forgiveness that the Lord requires of his followers. As we see, Joseph followed this principle of righteousness. Today, we need to assure that we are indeed ready to obey this principle as it applies to us in our dealings with those who have harmed us. It is up to us to develop a forgiving

heart and a charitable spirit toward those who harm us.

***Genesis 45:4-8** (cited above) demonstrated that Joseph's imprisonment, a trial for him, became a blessing for him, his family, and the entire nation of Egypt. Who knows what far-reaching effect our forgiveness might have on us individually, and on our families.

Romans 8:28 records that the Apostle Paul told the Romans that "*all things work together for good to them that love God*". Consider how this has been proven true in your life experience.

The great latter-day Joseph

The Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis 50:24–38 contains prophecies that Joseph made about one of his descendants who would become a "choice seer." The Book of Mormon prophet Lehi restated these prophecies in 2 Nephi 3:5–15. The descendant referred to in these prophecies is the Prophet Joseph Smith.

The following prophecies made by Joseph of Egypt were fulfilled in the life of Joseph Smith:

a. One of Joseph's descendants would be a "choice seer" (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:26; 2 Nephi 3:6).

b. This seer would be greatly respected by the other descendants of Joseph (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:27; 2 Nephi 3:7).

c. He would teach them of the covenants that God had made with their ancestors (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:28; 2 Nephi 3:7).

d. He would be obedient to God (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:28; 2 Nephi 3:8).

e. He would be a great prophet, like Moses (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:29; 2 Nephi 3:9).

f. He would be the means for bringing forth new scripture (the Book of Mormon) that would support and work with existing scripture (the Bible) (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:30–31; 2 Nephi 3:11–12).

g. Although he would be weak, the Lord would make him strong (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:32; 2 Nephi 3:13).

h. Both he and his father would be named Joseph (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 50:33; 2 Nephi 3:15).

Conclusion

Throughout his many trials, Joseph remained faithful. He even forgave his brothers for selling him into slavery. Because of his righteousness, Joseph was greatly blessed. Because of his righteousness, Joseph was greatly blessed. If we are faithful, God will bless us by making all things work together for our good.

Joseph's sons

Genesis 41:45, 50-52. After being made ruler over Egypt, Joseph married Asenath, who bore him two sons. The names were appropriate for these sons, Manasseh ("forgetting") and Ephraim ("fruitful"). Manasseh, his first son, was a pleasant distraction to aid Joseph in forgetting the thirteen years of slavery and the treachery of his brothers. Regarding Ephraim, Joseph said, "God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction." (Genesis 41:52)

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin:
Joseph, the son of Jacob, was a model of integrity. . . . He did what was right and good; he was trustworthy and incorruptible, self-disciplined never to violate a trust. Because of his integrity and righteousness, Joseph was favored and blessed of the Lord in every circumstance. His life is evidence that "all things work together for good to [those] who love God" (Rom. 8:28) ("Personal Integrity," Ensign, May 1990, 30)

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Romans 8:28

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- How can you follow Joseph's example in dealing with your own challenges and trials?
- What does the world tell us to do when someone has wronged us, as Joseph's brothers had done to him? How have you been blessed when you have dealt kindly with others who have mistreated you?
- What experiences have you had in which events that at first appeared negative became blessings?