

OLD TESTAMENT STORIES FOR
PERILOUS¹ TIMES

2 Timothy 3:1-5

CANAAN: FROM THE PIT TO THE PALACE
Genesis 37, 39 - 41:1-45

INTRODUCTION

This story is about Joseph, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. These men were in the covenant² line as the offspring of Jacob, son of Isaac, son of Abraham. They became known as the sons of Israel.

Because Joseph was favored by his father, it caused his brothers jealousy, resentment, bitterness and almost resulted in murder. Yet God was with Joseph, and in His divine sovereignty³ fulfilled His plan, despite the great injustices he suffered.

THEME SCRIPTURE

The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian (Genesis 39:2).

¹ PERILOUS - Greek *chalepos* reducing the strength: difficult, dangerous, furious, fierce, savage.

² covenant: an agreement; a pact; alliance, pledge, divine transaction.

³ divine sovereignty: supreme power and authority, God's control over all reality, God's rule over all that He has created.

SECTION I - Joseph, the Favored Son

READ Genesis 37:1-4.

1. Where did Jacob and his family dwell (v. 1)? _____

4 5

2. Joseph was one of twelve sons of Jacob. What did he bring to his father about the son of Bilhah⁶ and Zilpah⁷ (v. 2)?

3. What did Israel⁸ make Joseph? Why (v. 3)? _____

4. How did Jacob's favoritism toward Joseph affect his brothers (v. 4)? _____

PERSONAL

How have you experienced favoritism? Were you favored, disfavored, or have you shown favoritism?

SECTION II - Joseph's Dreams

READ Genesis 37:5-11.

1. What was Joseph's dream (vv. 5-7)? _____

⁴ stranger - Hebrew *magur* temporary lodging; pilgrimage, sojourner.

⁵ Canaan - Hebrew *Knaan* humiliated; merchant traffic; Jacob, the son of Isaac, journeyed to Canaan from his homeland in Padan Aram to find a wife.

⁶ Bilhah - Hebrew *Bilah* timid; maid servant of Jacob's wife Rachel; Jacob's concubine.

⁷ Zilpah - Hebrew *Zilpah* fragrant dropping; a trickling; Leah's maid servant; Jacob's concubine.

⁸ Israel - Hebrew *Yisrael* he will rule as God: a symbolic name of Jacob given to him by God.

2. How did his brothers respond to his dream (v. 8)? _____

3. What was Joseph's second dream (v. 9)? _____

4. Joseph told his father this dream. How did his father respond (v. 10)? _____

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5. His brothers hated him and envied him for his dreams. What did Jacob do about the dreams (v. 11)?

SECTION III - Joseph Sold By His Brothers

READ Genesis 37:12-36.

1. Israel sent Joseph to check on his brothers who were feeding the flock in Shechem¹⁰. Where did he find them instead (vv. 12-17)?

⁹ mother - Hebrew *em* a mother as the bond of the family: in a wide sense (both literally and figuratively).

¹⁰ Shechem - Hebrew *Shekem* ridge: back or shoulder; a city in Mt. Ephraim situated between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim in the land of Palestine.

2. As soon as his brothers saw him what did they plot against him (vv. 18-20)? _____

3. How did Reuben, the eldest son of Jacob and Leah, intervene (vv. 21, 22)? _____

What did Reuben plan to do? _____

4. What did Joseph's brothers then do to him (vv. 23, 24)? _____

5. After this horrific act the brothers sat down to eat a meal. As they were eating who came into their sight (v. 25)?

¹¹ Dothan - Hebrew *Dotan* two wells: situated along a major trade route to Egypt.

¹² Ishmaelites: Midianite traders; the descendants of Ishmael, eldest son of Abraham by Sarah's bondservant Hagar; the half-brother of Isaac, Jacob's father.

What was their destination? _____

6. What plan did Judah come up with? Why (vv. 26, 27)? _____

7. The brothers agreed to sell Joseph to the Ishmaelite merchants. Where did the traders take him (v. 28)?

8. When Reuben returned to rescue Joseph, he was not there. What was the brothers' underhanded plot to deceive their father (vv. 29-33)?

9. How did Jacob mourn for his son (vv. 34, 35)? _____

10. Who did the Midianite traders sell Joseph to? Who was this man (v. 36)? _____

SECTION IV - Joseph, A Slave in Egypt

READ Genesis Chapter 39.

1. What did Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, notice about his slave, Joseph (vv. 1-6a)? _____

Because of Joseph's sake, what did the LORD do for Potiphar and his household? _____

How did he promote Joseph? _____

2. What else was outstanding about Joseph (v. 6b)? _____

3. How did Potiphar's wife pursue Joseph (vv. 7-9)? _____

What exactly did he say to refuse her advances? _____

4. Potiphar's wife was relentless in her sexual pursuit of Joseph. How did she attempt to trap him? How did Joseph escape (vv. 10-12)?

5. What was her lying accusation about Joseph to the men of her house and to her husband (vv. 13-18)?

6. What did Potiphar do to his loyal servant (vv. 19, 20)? _____

7. Once again, the LORD showed favor and mercy to Joseph. How did the keeper of the prison promote Joseph (vv. 21-23)?

PERSONAL

How has the Lord used unfair, unjust and difficult trials to mold your character? _____

How do the following Scriptures encourage you?

Romans 5:3, 4 _____

James 1:1-4 _____

SECTION V - The Prisoners' Dreams

READ Genesis 40.

While Joseph was in prison, the chief butler and chief baker offended the Pharaoh, king of Egypt, so they were both thrown into the prison where Joseph was confined. While in custody, these two high officials had dreams on the same night. Noticing that they were sad, Joseph acknowledging that all dream interpretations belong to God, interpreted their dreams. According to the interpretations of the dreams, the chief butler would be restored to his position of favor, but the chief baker would be hanged. Both of the interpretations came to pass.

1. What did Joseph request of the chief butler? Why (vv. 14, 15)? _____

2. After the dreams were fulfilled, what happened regarding Joseph's request (v. 23)? _____

SECTION VI - Pharaoh's Dreams

READ Genesis 41:1-36.

Two years after the two prisoners' dreams, Pharaoh had dreams. The chief butler remembered Joseph's request and told Pharaoh of Joseph's God-given ability to interpret dreams. Pharaoh had Joseph released out of the dungeon so he could interpret the dreams.

Once more Joseph, as he stood before Pharaoh, declared that God alone is the only true interpreter of dreams. After Joseph heard the dreams, God revealed to Pharaoh, through Joseph, what He was about to do. There would be seven years of bountiful prosperity followed by seven years of severe famine. Not only did Joseph interpret the dreams but he gave the king of Egypt godly counsel.

What was Joseph's counsel to the king (vv. 34-36)? _____

SECTION VII - Joseph in the Palace

READ Genesis 41:37-44.

The advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and all his servants.

1. What did the king declare about Joseph (vv. 37, 38)? _____

2. WRITE in detail what Pharaoh said to Joseph and how he promoted him (vv. 39-44). _____

PERSONAL

What divine truths have been deeply engraved in your heart because of Joseph's story? _____

THEME SCRIPTURE

WRITE out the THEME SCRIPTURE.

_____ (Genesis 39:2).

*Then Pharaoh said to Joseph,
'Inasmuch as God has shown you all this,
there is no one as discerning and wise as you.'*

Genesis 41:39

NOTES: _____

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