

Miketz Genesis – Bereshit (41.1-44.17)

Instead of killing their hated Joseph, his brothers sold him for twenty pieces of silver. He became the most trusted servant to an officer of Pharaoh, whose wife wanted Joseph. When Joseph refused, she accused him of attacking and he ended up in the royal prison. The Chief Wine Steward and Chief Baker had dreams and Joseph interpreted their dreams correctly but the promise to tell Pharaoh about Joseph was not kept.

Two full years passed when Pharaoh had a dream. Out of the river there came 7 fat cows that were swallowed by 7 thin cows. Then Pharaoh had another dream. Seven healthy ears of corn were swallowed up by 7 thin ears of corn. In the morning Pharaoh's spirit was troubled and none of the wise men could explain the dreams. Then the Chief Wine Steward told Pharaoh about Joseph. "I hate to recall my crimes but when I was in the royal prison there was a Hebrew aid to the head guard who correctly interpreted dreams." The Pharaoh sent then for Joseph.

Quickly Joseph shaved and changed clothes before meeting the Pharaoh. After hearing his two dreams, Joseph said, "Pharaoh's dream is but one dream that tells what God is about to do. God has announced to Pharaoh that Egypt will have 7 years of good grain and crops, then 7 years without any grain. You must hire a wise man to save grain now and give it out later when there is hunger in the land." The Pharaoh then took off his ring and placed it on Joseph's hand, "Since God is on your side, you will be my Overseer."

For 7 years Joseph oversaw the storing of grain. He also got married and had two sons. Menashe, meaning "God has made all my trouble turn to good for me," and Ephraim, meaning "God has caused me to blossom in the land of my affliction."

Then the 7 years of plenty ended and the famine began and there was hunger everywhere, including Canaan where Jacob and his 11 sons lived. Jacob sent all of his sons to buy supplies in Egypt, but not Benjamin, the youngest and Rachel's. They journeyed and finally got to bow before the Pharaoh's Overseer of Grain.

Joseph recognized his brothers immediately but made himself like a stranger and Pharaoh's Overseer. Then he recalled his dream with his brothers bowing down to him. The Overseer yelled out, "You are spies."

Now the brothers did not recognize Joseph. They said, "No. We are twelve brothers. The youngest is with our father in Canaan and the other is gone." The Overseer said, "If you want to prove you are not spies - I will keep one brother, Shimeon and you will bring back your youngest brother."

The brothers moaned, "Now we are suffering for selling our brother Joseph. That is why this misfortune has come upon us." When Joseph heard, he had to leave the room to weep.

Later, Joseph told his servers, "Pack their bags with grain, return their money and give them food for the journey."

The brothers left. Stopping to rest they opened their sacs and cried fearfully, “Oh no! The money we gave the Overseer is here and food too! What has God done to us now?”

Arriving home, they told their father everything. And time passed and the famine stayed.

The famine grew worse until finally Jacob relented and let them take Benjamin. When they reached the Overseer’s aid, they said, “Here, take back this money which came with our sacs.”

He refused saying, “God placed a treasure in your pack.” Told this, the Overseer, sent his servant to release brother Shimeon and invite them all to a feast.

The Overseer Joseph entered the dining hall and the brothers bowed, offering their gifts. They sat at the table the oldest to youngest. When Joseph saw his youngest brother Benjamin, he rushed to another room to weep. He returned later after washing his face.

The next day Joseph told his servant to fill his brothers’ bags with food, return again their money and hide a silver goblet in Benjamin’s bag. He did and soon the brothers left. Later, Joseph sent his servant after them.

The Overseer’s servant said to them, “Why have you repaid good with evil? Whoever has stolen the silver goblet shall return to the Overseer and become his slave!” Then starting at the eldest, he searched every pack. And there it was! In Benjamin’s pack!!

The servant returned the brothers to the Overseer and they bowed. He said, “What deed is this that you have done?”

Brother Judah answered, “What shall we say? God has found out the sins of your servants. We shall all remain here as your slaves as well as Benjamin.”

But the Overseer said, “No. The goblet was found with Benjamin so he will remain my slave, but you go in peace to your father.”

Questions: 1) Why did Joseph shave and change clothes before he met the Pharaoh? What difference does it make what you wear? 2) Do you remember your dreams? Do you try to understand them? 3) Joseph tests his brothers? Do you ever test people? How?

Illustration ideas: The Pharaoh’s dreams... Joseph interpreting these dreams... The Pharaoh giving the ring to Joseph to become his Overseer...Joseph storing the grain ... The brothers coming to Joseph...Joseph weeping... The goblet being discovered in Benjamin’s bag.