

The Seven Years of Abundance Came to an End in Egypt, and the Seven Years of Famine Began

41: 46b-57

DIG: How would you characterize Joseph's reaction to this dramatic change in his life? What other blessings did Yosef have during this time? What **six** ways did **Joseph** foreshadow the life of Christ?

REFLECT: Have you saved for the time of famine in your life? Whom do you serve? Is your service to the world, or the King of Kings and Lord of Lords? Is your service any less valuable than Joseph's? Are you the same person, no matter where you serve?

With his newfound authority as prime minister, what did **Joseph** do first? After his initial survey, **Yosef** traveled **throughout Egypt** making a much more detailed, unit-by-unit survey of the agriculture and other productive occupations of **the Egyptians**. Thus **he** was able to organize, with his assistants, a comprehensive program of conservation during **the seven years of abundance** that lay ahead.

And Joseph went out from Pharaoh's presence and traveled throughout Egypt (41:46b). **57.** Yosef was not idle. He did not betray Pharaoh's confidence in him, but faithfully discharged his duty. He did not remain in the place of ease and comfort, but traveled throughout Egypt. How well these words remind us of what we read in the **Gospels concerning the One who Yosef foreshadowed**. Of Him we read: Yeshua went throughout Galilee teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness (Matthew 4:23, 9:35).

*Just as **Joseph** had predicted, **Egypt** began to produce an **abundance** of **grain** greater than **she** had ever known before or since.*

During the seven years of abundance the land produced plentifully (41:47). **58.** After their exaltation, both Yosef and Jesus experienced a season of plenty. These seven years of abundance foreshadow the current Dispensation of Grace (Acts 2:1 to Revelation 19:21). There has never been a time of such abundance. How few were saved during the centuries from Abel to the Flood? How few appear to have been saved during the time of the Patriarchs? How few among Israel, from the days of Joshua onwards, gave evidence of being born again? How few seem to have been saved even during the public ministry of Christ? How evident it is, then, that in contrast from all that proceeded, the earth is now bearing much spiritual fruit that is beyond measure (John 15:5 and 8).

Yosef collected all the food produced in those seven years of abundance in Egypt and stored it in the cities. In each city he put the food grown in the fields surrounding it (41:48). Granaries were often very extensive in Egypt, and every facility was made for the housing and subsequent delivery of the grain. As the seven years of abundance progressed, the grain was produced at such a rate that it became impossible to keep accurate records, except in units of filled storehouses.⁶⁴⁷ God had truly blessed the land as He had said He would.

59. Both Joseph and Jesus had unlimited resources available to meet the need of all. Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain, like the sand of the sea; it was so much that he stopped keeping records because it was beyond measure (41:49). **Likewise, the riches of Messiah are beyond measure. We have available to us** the incomparable riches of His grace (Ephesians 2:7). **God is also rich in mercy** (Ephesians 2:4). In fact, the unsearchable riches of **Christ are available to every believer** (Ephesians 3:8), for in Him all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form (Colossians 2:9). The Lord richly blesses all who call on Him (Romans 10:12).

Egypt was fruitful and so was Asenath. Before the years of famine came, two sons were born to Yosef by Asenath, daughter of Potiphera, priest of On (41:50). In spite of all his success, he gave his two sons Hebrew names, and they would become two of the most prominent tribes of Isra'el. They represent the turn of events in his life. He had gone from suffering to being fruitful. Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh, a Hebrew name that means *making to forget*, and said: **It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household (41:51).** It was not that Joseph had forgotten his past, but had forgotten in the sense of having his wounds healed. He used to be a homesick boy, but not anymore. He dressed, talked and lived like an Egyptian. Yosef could now see, as he later told his brothers (50:20), that God, for His own good and the survival of His family, had allowed all Yosef's suffering. Many years later, a songwriter put music to Joseph's painful but triumphant experience (Psalm 105:16-22).

Is it possible to forget a great wrong that has been done to you? Is forgetting a great wrong tied to forgiveness? Is the phrase, "If you haven't forgotten, you haven't forgiven" true? Did Joseph forget the day his brothers ripped his royal robe off him and soaked it in blood? Did he forget the day his brothers threw him into the pit? Did he forget the debate his brothers had as he begged for his life? Did he forget that his brothers sold him for the price of a slave? Did he forget the ten years he spent in prison when Potiphar's wife falsely accused him of rape? Did he forget the iron wrapped around his neck and ankles? Did he forget helping the cupbearer and then languishing in prison for another two years? Is it possible to forget a great wrong? No, it's not possible to forget. Yosef never forgot any of those events, because if he had forgotten he would never have named his son Manasseh. If he had forgotten, why would he remember that he needed to forget?

If you have been wronged greatly, you will never forget it. But **ADONAI** can help to take the pain from your mind. The emotional sting will be gone. You will not be in bondage to those past injustices. There will be no lingering bitterness and no fear. You will be healed in your heart, soul, mind and body. You will have no anger and you will be free from the bitterness of the past. Only **God** can do that.

First, you must be willing to forgive, which will liberate you from the sting of the past. Forgiveness is not approval of what someone else has done. **God** hates sin and will deal with their sin. Turn your tormentors over to **Him**, and the moment you do **He** will become the tormentor of that person (**Matthew 18:34**). Peace is better than bitterness, joy is better than anger, and love is better than hate. And when you are tired of seeking revenge and you ask **Him**, then: **God's shalom, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with the Messiah Yeshua (Philippians 4:7 CJB)**. Joseph would eventually forgive his brothers (**45:4-15**).

Second, if you are going to have a relationship with the person you want to forgive, it demands change. That is why **Yosef** is going to test his brothers. **He** wanted to see if they had changed. **He** wanted to see if they treated Benjamin better than they treated **him**. To grant forgiveness without a change in conduct is to make the grace of **God** a partner to evil. **Jesus** told the woman caught in adultery: **Go and leave your life of sin (John 8:11b)**. **The Lord** demanded change. If you are going to have a relationship with that person, without change there can be no forgiveness.

Third, if that person will not talk to you or will have nothing to do with you, it doesn't matter. You forgive them so they cannot torment you. Then you become free to live out your life without bitterness. Forgiveness is not reconciliation because reconciliation requires the participation of two people. Forgiveness only involves you.

The second son he named Ephraim, another Hebrew name that means *double fruit*, and said: **It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering (41:52)**. The fact the **Joseph** gave his sons Hebrew names means that **he** had not adopted either **the Egyptian** religion or **the Egyptian** culture.

This is also how **the Lord** deals with us, first the testing, and then the triumph. Paul wrote: **I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us when the Lord returns (Romans 8:18)**. Even if your entire life is spent in suffering and rejection, in the name of **Messiah**, you can have confidence that all is in preparation for a great work for **the Lord** in the ages to come, following the resurrection. **And God will wipe every tear from their eyes . . . no longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and the Lamb will be in their city, and His servants will serve Him . . . and they shall reign forever and ever (Revelation 21:4. 22:3 and 5)**.

And at last, just as **Yosef** had predicted, **the seven years of abundance** came to an end. **Yosef** was thirty-seven at that time. **The Egyptians** were used to having all the **grain they** needed. **They** were probably caught off guard when **they** couldn't have all the **grain they** wanted. Is this your story? Could there be a day in the future where you may have to give up many of the creature comforts that you have come to regard as rights and necessities?

60. Joseph and Jesus' exaltation was also followed by a period of famine. The seven years of abundance in Egypt came to an end and the seven years of famine began, just as Yosef had said. There was famine in all the other lands (41:53-54a). **After the Dispensation of Grace** and the full number of the Gentiles has come in (Romans 11:25b), **there shall come that season that the Bible calls the Great Tribulation** (See my Commentary on **Isaiah** **Eu - The Rapture and the Great Tribulation**), **for then shall be Israel's darkest hour.** At present the world is enjoying the years of abundance, but how few believe in the coming time of spiritual famine over the whole earth. **Be warned dear reader, and seek the Lord while He may be found (Isaiah 55:6a).** For if you are left behind on the earth in His Day of Wrath (Zephaniah 1:15), **it shall he said: The harvest is past, the summer has ended and we are not saved (Jeremiah 8:20).**

61. Yosef and Yeshua alone dispensed the bread of life. But in the whole land of Egypt there was food. When all Egypt began to feel the famine, the people cried to Pharaoh for food (41:54b-55a). **We might say that this was the gospel for Egypt; the good news was that Joseph was appointed savior and whoever was hungry needed to go to him to be fed.** How perfectly this foreshadowed the present Gospel of God's grace. **When a guilty and convicted sinner hungers for the bread of life, where does he or she go? To the Savior, Yeshua ha-Meshiach! Only in Him is salvation found, for salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).** **And just as the old Pharaoh told the Egyptians to go to Joseph and do what he tells you (41:55b), so, upon the Mount of Transfiguration the Father said to the three apostles of Christ: This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him and do what He tells you (Matthew 17:5b).**

There will be a time in your life when the things you have depended on and the people you have trusted will fail you. Your Nile River will dry up. Maybe it is your spouse. Maybe it is your job. Maybe it is your friend. But it will become the desert of your days and the only moisture you will know will be the tears that run down your face. What do you do when the people and things that you have trusted in fail you? You do what Pharaoh told the people of Egypt to do. You go to Joseph, who points you to Christ. Are you broken-hearted? Go to the Good Shepherd. Are you fearful of the gathering storm your family is facing? Go to Yeshua. Are you grieving over the false accusation of someone who is trying to destroy you? Go to Messiah. Are you troubled at the thought of dying? Go to the King of kings. Are you

*searching for water in the desert of your days? Go to **the Savior**. Are you walking through the darkest night that you have ever known? Go to **the Son of Righteousness**. He is **the light of the world** (John 8:12). Whatever you are searching for, whatever you are looking for, whatever it is, here is the answer: go to **Jesus** and do what He tells you.*

When the famine had spread over the whole country, Joseph opened the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout Egypt (41:56). Why didn't Yosef just give the grain away instead of making them pay for it? Because if he gave it away, the grain would have been taken for granted. Instead, he kept strict control over the supplies in order to prevent looting and waste, knowing that the vast supplies that had been accumulated would have to be carefully guarded to last through the seven long years of famine. It is reasonable to assume that special provision was made for those who were truly in need and unable to pay. But if food had been given away, it would have violated a principle that the Lord would eventually give to the church at Thessalonica: **If a man will not work, he shall not eat** (Second Thessalonians 3:10b).

Therefore, God's covenant with Abraham held true even until the time of Joseph and until today: **I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all the peoples of the earth will be blessed through you** (12:3).

62. Joseph and Christ became the Savior to the whole world. And all the countries came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the world (41:56). **Yosef was raised up to meet a worldwide need. He gave to whosoever needed food, be it the Egyptians, his brothers or strangers from distant lands. How equally true this is of Christ.** God does not show favoritism, but accepts men and women from every nation (Acts 10:34). **He saves both the Jew and the Gentile, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, old and young, women and men alike.** For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall have eternal life (John 3:16). **And just as the whole world came to Yosef, Jesus purchased a kingdom of priests from every tribe and language and people and nation with His blood** (Revelation 5:9-10).

Joseph's outstanding abilities and integrity were plain for all to see. It didn't matter whether he was in an Egyptian prison or prime minister over all the land. He was simply the same man. By the time the famine came, he had been in Egypt twenty years and had never heard from his family. But that was about to change. God was bringing his family to him.