

WHEN GOD GIVES THE ANSWER

Beginning in Beginnings: Genesis 40-41

January 23, 2022

*"I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh,
"but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."
Genesis 41:16*

Introduction: History and Scripture

*Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.
This is the account of Jacob*

Genesis 37:1-2

1. The history of Egypt's Middle Kingdom is hundreds of years after building the pyramids and fifteen hundred years before Herodotus – but Moses tells us more!
2. Joseph's story fits into the Genesis theme of humanity's need for God
3. This final "account" in Genesis provides the conclusion of
 - the history of Genesis, preparing God's people for God's redemption in Exodus
 - the theology of Genesis, completing the story of man's need for God's redemption

"Some time later"

The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him. When two full years had passed

Genesis 40:22-41:1

1. Joseph's service brings him into contact with Pharaoh's court – God is at work!
2. Two dreams (see Genesis 37 and 41 as well!) point to the "witnesses" God provides
3. God's providential timing is not always convenient

A tale of two dreams

. . . . Pharaoh had a dream: He was standing by the Nile, when out of the river there came up seven cows He fell asleep again and had a second dream: seven heads of grain

Genesis 41:1-8

1. Two dreams (a pattern in this story, see Genesis 41:32) reveal God's sovereignty over his creation
2. Joseph's meteoric rise in Egypt will reveal God's providential care for his people
3. Joseph introduces a long line of God's people used to bless the nations (Genesis 12:1-3)

God answers, but Joseph listens

1. Joseph had a lifetime of practice with God's dream method of revealing his plan
2. Joseph made room for people even in difficult circumstances

⁶ When Joseph came to them the next morning, he saw that they were dejected. ⁷ So he asked Pharaoh's officials who were in custody with him in his master's house, "Why are your faces so sad today?"

⁸ "We both had dreams," they answered, "but there is no one to interpret them."

Then Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams."

Genesis 40

3. Joseph has incredible confidence in God's word

³¹ The abundance in the land will not be remembered, because the famine that follows it will be so severe. ³² The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon.

Genesis 41:32

Finding God's answers

1. When you don't hear an answer, trust

⁴⁵ *From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land.* ⁴⁶ *About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"—which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*

Matthew 27

Two principles:

- 1) God's silence is NOT (can we say never?) a sign of a lack of faith

- 2) God is always at work in the silence

2. Primary skill for hearing what God is going to say: knowing what God has already said

In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom—² in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.³ So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.

⁴ *I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed:*

"O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands,⁵ we have sinned and done wrong

Daniel 9

3. Like Joseph, God is preparing me for hear his next word

² *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,³ because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.⁴ Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.*

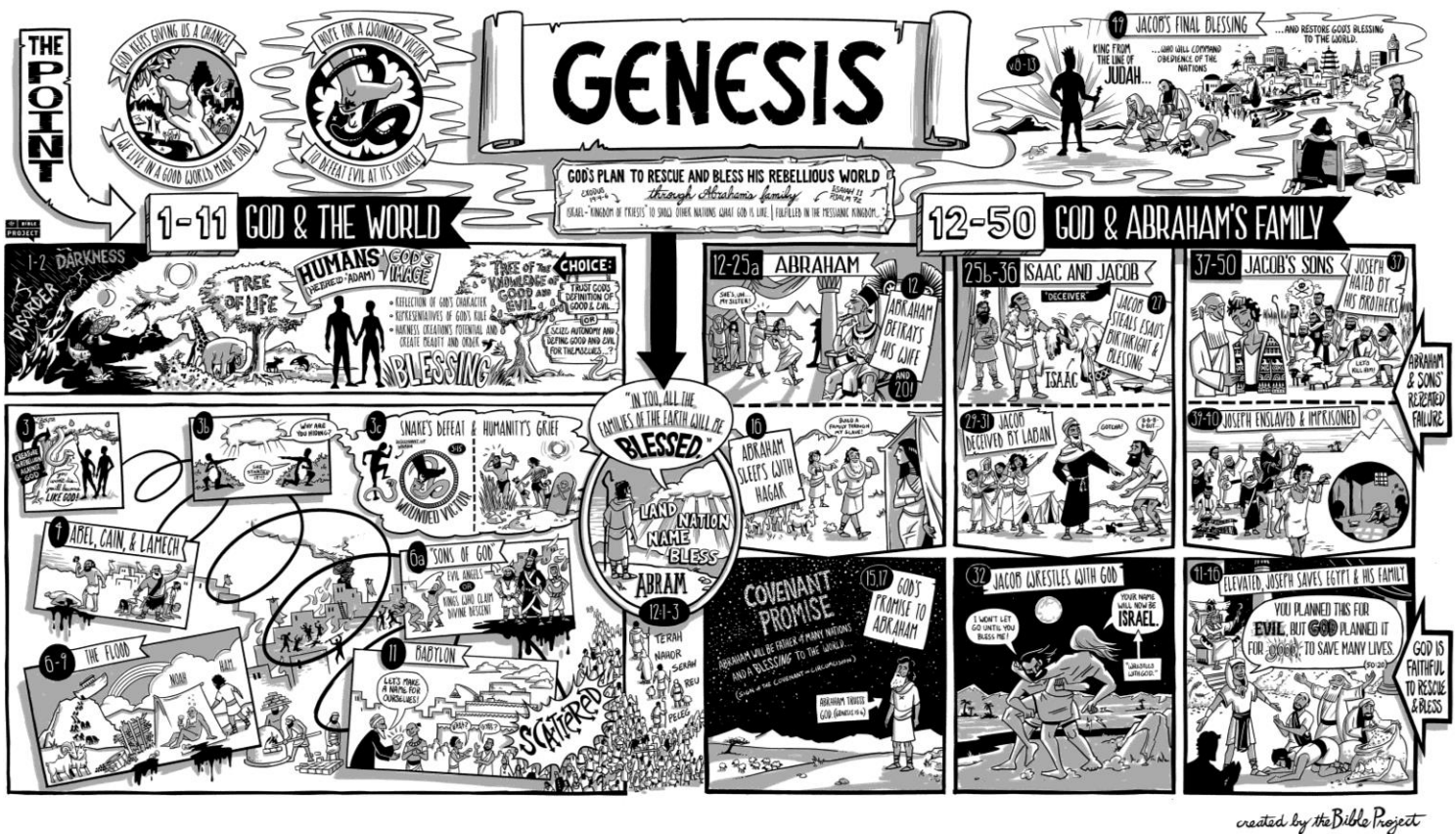
James 1 (compare to Daniel's story)

³³ *"And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt.³⁴ Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance.³⁵ They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in the cities for food.³⁶ This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine."*

³⁷ *The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials.³⁸ So Pharaoh asked them, "Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?"*

³⁹ *Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you.⁴⁰ You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.*

Genesis 41



Resources for the Genesis

Be sure to check the [Bible Project's poster](#) on Genesis.

[Bible.org](#) has some wonderful sermons on Genesis, especially those by Deffinbaugh and Stedman.

John Piper has a classis Christological message on the Joseph story at <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-sale-of-joseph-and-the-son-of-god>

Riddlebarger's blog has a wonderful take on the Joseph story at <https://www.kimriddlebarger.com/the-riddleblog/josephs-faith-in-death>

Jonathan Edwards has a reflection on the Joseph story at <https://www.biblebb.com/files/edwards/temptation.htm>

Maclaren has a helpful commentary at on many of these passages at https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/bible_book/genesis_maclaren.html

Many of Spurgeon's sermons on Genesis are collected at <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/scripture-index/genesis/>

Very Poythress has some very interesting thoughts on hermeneutics in Genesis at www.frame-poythress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/2013ChristianInterpretationsOfGenesis1.pdf and <http://faculty.wts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/PoythressVernCorrelationsWithProvidenceInGenesis2.pdf>

Tim Keller has a wonderful sermon on the "male and female" dynamic at <https://www.monergism.com/first-wedding-day-%E2%80%93-genesis-218-25>