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THE LIFE OF JOSEPH – LESSON 9

FRUITFULNESS BEFORE FAMINE

Joseph is now the chief ruler over all of Egypt which included modern day Ethiopia. He set forth to implement the plan God had given him. He began to travel throughout the country to establish storehouses for the grain harvests. Twenty percent of everything produced was taken and stored. The harvests were abundant, and the storage facilities filled up during the first seven years.

His personal life also had change. Pharaoh arranged a marriage to Asenath, the daughter of the Priest of On. The priests (pagans) were a very privileged class even above the lords and nobles of the country, so this was considered to be a very high honor.

Asenath bore him a son named Manasseh which means “forgetting” because Joseph said in Genesis 41:51, **“For God...hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father’s house.”** This statement indicates that he has put his brother’s treachery behind him (forgiveness).

A second son was named Ephraim meaning “fruitful.” He said in vs. 52, **“For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.”**

The first seven years then end. The seven years of famine begins. The famine was not just in Egypt, but all through the entire area of Canaan and surrounding countries.

Egyptians came to Pharaoh crying out for bread (food). Pharaoh referred them to Joseph and told them to do whatever he told them to do. (Remember the “whatever” because that becomes very important later.) Also, people from “all countries” (vs. 57) came to Egypt to buy food as it was the only country that had any.

Next, we shall see how the plight of this extremely severe famine impacts Jacob’s family and the entire future of Israel as God raises up a nation whose ultimate purpose was to introduce God to the whole world through a people group he would call “his own.”