



Thru the Bible in 2012

The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of our God endures forever. Isaiah 40:8

Ladies for Jesus Tuesday Bible Study Ponderings

Readings for January 16, 2012 – January 18, 2012

Emailed: Saturday, January 21, 2012

For our ponderings, consider the questions listed below in regards to what we have read during the days of Monday, January 16th –Wednesday, January 18th.

- **(Genesis 43:1)** Jacob and his sons had no relief from the famine. They could not see God's overall plan of sending them to Egypt to be reunited with Joseph and fed from Egypt's storehouses. Have you been praying for relief from suffering or pressure and God is not bringing it as quickly as you would like? Remember that God may be leading you to special treasures and along the way there are valuable eternal lessons that He wants to plant from His heart to yours.
- **(Genesis 45:4-8)** Although Joseph's brothers had wanted to get rid of him, God used even their evil actions to fulfill His ultimate plan. He had sent Joseph ahead to preserve their lives, save Egypt, and prepare the way for the beginning of the nation of Israel. God is sovereign. His plans are not dictated by human actions. Do you feel that others have intended evil towards you? Remember that God is still in control and He will use their actions as tools to work for good of those who love Him. (Romans 8:28) As Joseph said to his brothers, "you intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people."
- **(Genesis 45:26-27)** Jacob needed some evidence before he could believe the incredible news that Joseph was alive. Similarly, Thomas refused to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead until he could see and touch him (John 20:25). It is hard to change what you believe without all the facts – or sometimes even with the facts. Good news can be difficult to believe. Sometimes, even in reading the promises God gives us in the Bible, we don't truly believe them. This usually shows up in our actions. Do you find yourself not trusting God and what He has promised? If so, don't ever give up hope that God has a wonderful future in store for you. (Jeremiah 29:11)



Joseph was 30 years old when he became second-in-command in Egypt. At age 17, he had been sold into slavery by his brothers. Thus he had spent 13 years as an Egyptian slave and as a prisoner.



Why was grain so valuable in those days? As a food source it was universal and used in nearly everything eaten. It could be dried and stored much longer than any vegetables, milk, products, or meat. It was so important that it was even used as money.



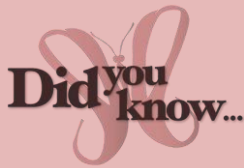
In 43:32, Joseph ate by himself because he was following the laws of the Egyptians' caste system. Egyptians considered themselves highly intelligent and sophisticated. They looked upon shepherds and nomads as uncultured and even vulgar. As a Hebrew, Joseph could not eat with Egyptians even though he outranked them. As foreigners and shepherds, his brothers were lower in rank than any Egyptian citizens, so they had to eat separately, too.

- **(Genesis 47:1-6)** Joseph's faithfulness affected his entire family. When he was in the pit and in prison, Joseph must have wondered about His future. Instead of despairing, he faithfully obeyed God and did what was right. Here we see one of the exciting results. Do you look at the state you are currently in and place grim outcomes on the future? Keep the faith and follow God even in the everyday moment by moment steps of your life. We may not always see the effects of our faith, but we can be sure that God will honor faithfulness.

Consider this in regards to despair as well . . .

(Genesis 48:11) When Joseph became a slave, Jacob thought he was dead and wept in despair (37:34). But eventually God's plan allowed Jacob to regain not only his son but his grandchildren as well. Circumstances are never so bad that they are beyond God's help. Jacob regained his son. We need never despair because we belong to a loving God. We don't yet know what good He may bring of a seemingly hopeless situation.

- **(Genesis 50:5)** Joseph has proven himself trustworthy as Pharaoh's adviser. Because of his good record, Pharaoh had little doubt that he would return to Egypt as promised after burying his father in Canaan. Privileges and freedom often result when we have demonstrated our trustworthiness. How are you building upon your trustworthiness? Since trust must be built gradually over time, take every opportunity to prove your reliability even in minor matters.
- **(Genesis 50:15-21)** Now that Jacob (or Israel) was dead, the brothers feared revenge from Joseph. Could he really have forgiven them for selling him into slavery? But to their surprise, Joseph not only forgave them but reassured them, offering to care for them and their families. Joseph's forgiveness was complete. Have you forgiven someone by words, yet your actions show that you haven't completely forgiven them in your heart? How are you treating them? Are you treating them as Christ treats you? To answer these questions think about Joseph's demonstration of how God graciously accepts us even though we don't deserve it. Because God forgives us even when we have ignored or rejected him, we should graciously forgive others.



Joseph's silver cup was a symbol of his authority. The Egyptians even thought of it to have supernatural powers, and to steal it would be a serious crime. Such goblets were used for predicting the future. A person poured water into the cup and interpreted the reflections, ripples, and bubbles. Joseph wouldn't have needed his cup, since God told him everything he needed to know about the future.



Embalming was typical for Egyptians but unusual for nomadic shepherds. Believing that the dead went to the next world in their physical bodies, the Egyptians embalmed bodies to preserve them so they could function in the world to come. Jacob's family allowed him to be embalmed as a sign of courtesy and respect to the Egyptians.