

Genesis
St. Jerome Adult Bible Study
Lesson 9 – Answers

1. The major events in Joseph's life in chapter 39 were (1) his capture by his brothers; (2) his being thrown in a well; (3) his being sold into slavery; and (4) his imprisonment following the false accusation by Potiphar's wife.
- 2.a. Joseph's special gift was that he was given wisdom from God to interpret dreams
- 2.b.
3. Joseph interprets a dream for Pharaoh's cupbearer and asks him to remember him to Pharaoh. However, the cupbearer forgets all about Joseph.
- 4.a. Pharaoh was greatly disturbed by two dreams which are told in Genesis 41:1 – 8:

...Pharaoh had a dream. He saw himself standing by the Nile,
²when up out of the Nile came seven cows, handsome and fat; they grazed in the reed grass. ³Behind them seven other cows, ugly and gaunt, came up out of the Nile; and standing on the bank of the Nile beside the others, ⁴the ugly, gaunt cows ate up the seven handsome, fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up. ⁵He fell asleep again and had another dream. He saw seven ears of grain, fat and healthy, growing on a single stalk. ⁶Behind them sprouted seven ears of grain, thin and blasted by the east wind; ⁷and the seven thin ears swallowed up the seven fat, healthy ears. Then Pharaoh woke up, to find it was only a dream. ⁸Next morning his spirit was agitated.
- 4.b. Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dream to mean that Egypt will enjoy seven years of bountiful harvests and abundance to be followed by seven years of famine.
- 5.
6. Joseph proves to Pharaoh that he is wise beyond his ability to interpret dreams by telling Pharaoh exactly what he should do to cope with the seven lean years.
7. Several stories in the book of Genesis illustrate the importance or significance of clothing. Joseph has a multi-colored coat that irritates his brothers and serves to fool Jacob into believing that Joseph has been killed. In the Judah and Tamar episode, Judah's clothes identify him as the father of Tamar's child

while Tamar's clothing deceived Judah. When Joseph is in Egypt, Potiphar's wife uses his cloak to falsely accuse him of imposition.

8. Joseph's marriage is much different than Isaac's or Jacob's. While his father and grandfather would never marry outside their family, especially not a pagan, Joseph married an Egyptian who was the daughter of a pagan priest.
9. Jacob (Israel), suffering from the beginnings of the famine Joseph foresaw, sent ten of his sons to Egypt to buy grain.
- 10.a. Famine is especially bad right now in Rwanda and eastern Africa.
- 10.b. God has called many persons to work to feed the starving people of this world.
11. In 37:5 – 11, Joseph tells his brother about his own dream which seems to indicate that he believes they, and their father, should bow down to him. In 42:6 – 8, they do, indeed bow to him.
12. When his brothers buy grain from him, Joseph has their money returned to them secretly. While he could have simply wanted to give them the grain, it's also possible that he wanted them to feel the fear of guilt as they contemplated the possibility of being accused of theft. The brothers ask, in 42:28, "What is this that God has done to us?"
13. Twice Jacob has lamented about the loss of a son that might bring him down to "Sheol." According to the NABre Catholic Study Bible, Sheol is the place under the earth where the dead rest in peace forever and was not seen as punishment or reward but simply as nothingness. However, the Jewish Encyclopedia makes more of it, calling it a city with gates as far from heaven as possible where the dead will continue as they were in life:

Here the dead meet without distinction of rank or condition—the rich and the poor, the pious and the wicked, the old and the young, the master and the slave. The dead continue after a fashion their earthly life. Jacob would mourn there; David abides there in peace; the warriors have their weapons with them, yet they are mere shadows. The dead merely exist without knowledge or feeling. Silence reigns supreme; and oblivion is the lot of them that enter therein. Hence it is known also as "Dumah," the abode of silence; and there God is not praised. Still, on certain extraordinary occasions the dwellers in Sheol are credited with the gift of making known their feelings of rejoicing at the downfall of

the enemy. Sleep is their usual lot. Sheol is a horrible, dreary, dark, disorderly land; yet it is the appointed house for all the living. Return from Sheol is not expected; it is described as man's eternal house.

14. Joseph had asked that the brothers bring the youngest son of Jacob, Benjamin, back with them and he kept Simeon as ransom. Jacob, however, refused to let Benjamin go until Judah pointed out that the famine was worse than ever, they needed more grain, and he took personal accountability for Benjamin.
15. It is ironic that Jacob (Israel) had the brothers take balm, gum, and resin as gifts for the master in Egypt because those are the same things that Judah intended to sell Joseph for, although he settled for *twenty pieces of silver* (!).
- 16.
17. By placing his goblet in Benjamin's sack and then having him arrested, Joseph was able to inflict great horror upon the brothers when they considered what they had done to Joseph and what the loss of another son would do to Jacob.
18. Judah offers to trade his own freedom for Benjamin's and he explains to Joseph that his poor old father was not likely to survive the loss of yet another son.