Genesis

**With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility (41:33-55)**

*From a study of Luther’s Works: Lectures on Genesis, Paul Kretzmann’s Popular Commentary of the Bible, and the Lutheran Study Bible*

## **There is a big job ahead (41:33-49)**

* The boldness of Joseph
  + Who is he, but a prisoner?!
  + Yet, Joseph takes it upon himself to tell Pharaoh what needs to be done.
* Overseers
* A 20% tax of the grain to be stored for reserve
  + 80% of an amazing yield was good enough to get by.
    - High taxes in Germany
      * Had been 5%
      * Risen to 25-50%
        + Seen solely as excessive greed
  + Blessed to preserve
* Makes sense to Pharaoh
  + Something odd is going on here….
    - Pharaoh listens to Joseph
      * Someone has opened Pharaoh’s ears!
    - Accordingly, it is a special blessing of God to be able not only to teach but also to listen when taught[[1]](#footnote-1)
  + But who will carry out this task?
    - A reoccurring question
      * 1 Samuel 17:8-10
      * Daniel 4:18
      * Romans 7:24-25
    - Has to have the Spirit of God
      * Has Pharaoh been converted???
        + But here Pharaoh becomes a Christian; he is instructed in the Word of faith and true piety, just as other Gentiles were saved without circumcision. And the Holy Spirit speaks through him.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* What just happened?
  + Joseph gets the job
    - A condemned (innocent) criminal who is young and a foreigner gets the job to save not only Egypt, but the surrounding world in a famine that is yet to come.
  + Is this what happens in the world?
    - Do people in power listen and take advise from the removed and lowly?
    - Entitlement
      * The sons of heroes become proud asses who boast of the virtue of their fathers and yet are not eager to imitate it but dream that they, too, are heroes born from heroes. But God distributes gifts according to His good pleasure[[3]](#footnote-3)
  + Pharaoh humbles himself and yields to a shepherd
* The sting of arrogance
  + Psalm 113:5-8
  + John 8:39
  + God does not have respect of persons. No, He has regard for what is lowly in heaven and on earth, that is, in the church and in the state. He does not put up with arrogance in His kingdom; and if I ever become insolent, He immediately removes me and raises up one who is lesser than I. He hurls a doctor into hell very quickly. Thus on earth we have need of פְּקִדִים (overseer). But “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5).[[4]](#footnote-4)
* Joseph gets *the* job
  + Second only to Pharaoh
    - This should shock the reader/hearer to their core!
    - Philippians 2:9-11
    - Also in charge of the military
  + Remember, nothing bad has happened yet!!
    - Pharaoh believes this prophecy of what is supposed to happen…
      * And with no consequences of what will happen to Joseph if he fails.
    - Pharoah acts on faith
  + The exaltation of those who wait for the Lord
    - You also see in this present history how splendidly God honors and exalts those who wait for the Lord and are able to bear a father’s hand and rod. Therefore this example should be carefully inculcated and set before all men in the state and in the church, in order that they may learn to wait and to endure in trial. Hold fast! Hold fast! “If you believe,” says Christ to Martha, “you will see the glory of God” (cf. John 11:40). Faith must precede, and then the waiting must follow, just as Joseph, in fetters and imprisonment, waited for the Lord. There a sword pierced his soul (cf. Luke 2:35) and humbled his heart. Nevertheless, he endured and waited.[[5]](#footnote-5)
    - Therefore we should know that God hides Himself under the form of the worst devil. This teaches us that the goodness, mercy, and power of God cannot be grasped by speculation but must be understood on the basis of experience. Just endure and wait for the Lord. Hold fast. Be content with His Word, just as Joseph has the Word of faith.[[6]](#footnote-6)
* “Heavy is the head that wears the crown”
  + Is this Joseph’s position to revel in his power and glory?
    - Or is it his to serve?
  + The Lord of the Ring
    - What can power do in the hand of those who wield it?
  + Entitlement: Again
    - Look at our insolence and arrogance! He who excels others in wealth, rank, and birth would gladly put his head among the clouds. Thus the princes are haughty beyond measure because of their power. They respect neither God nor men. Talented and learned men, theologians, lawyers, and poets, who have gained some renown for themselves by their writings, also think that they are higher than heaven itself. But why do we not look at our origin and condition? Were we not all born from a woman’s womb, and were we not all cast wailing upon the earth, as is stated in the Book of Wisdom? There we read: “And when I was born, I began to breathe the common air, and fell upon the kindred earth, and my first sound was a cry, like that of all. I was nursed with care in swaddling cloths. For no king has had a different beginning of existence; there is for all mankind one entrance into life, and a common departure” (7:1–6).[[7]](#footnote-7)
    - Furthermore, we bring upon ourselves the wrath of God and cast aside His grace and goodwill. Consequently, no one is more wretched and miserable than a proud man. For he cannot pray to God or trust in Him, because he does not know that he is subject to sin and death.[[8]](#footnote-8)
    - Why, then, are you proud—you who are ashes and dust (cf. Ecclus. 10:9), you son of malediction and wrath? “But,” you say, “I am born from a famous and illustrious lineage; I am a doctor of the law; I am a philosopher.” Correct indeed! But all these privileges are to be used, not enjoyed, according to the distinction made by Augustine, and as Paul, in Acts 13:36, says of David, “when he had served the counsel of God.” Thus Joseph is not proud because of that royal pomp and because of the personage he is as ruler of Egypt. No, he serves the counsel of God.[[9]](#footnote-9)
    - Accordingly, there is no more miserable man on earth than a haughty teacher, king, or prince.[[10]](#footnote-10)
    - For you are not a man to be adored by the rest, but it is God’s will that this life be governed and preserved, in order that the works of the devil may be abolished and peace and discipline may be retained. This must be the goal of all government. For God does not pay consideration to any “person” position when He confers salvation. Why, then, does He create and set up these ranks and grades of human society? He does so in order that He may humble you under this burden and lead you to the recognition of your weakness and wretchedness. This plan of God you abuse and turn into the opposite, that is, toward pride and arrogance, although it is God’s will that under these masks you should serve His ordinance and man’s need. In this way God wanted to come to the aid of man’s need, and for this reason He has commanded that honor be bestowed on the government, as is written: “Respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due” (Rom. 13:7). Without these masks peace and discipline could not be preserved. Therefore use these gifts to the glory of God and for the common good, and think as follows: “Lord God, I would prefer to be hidden as a private citizen without a scepter, a crown, gold, silver, and all pomp and splendor. But Thou hast called me to this kind of life; it is Thy will that I be superior to the rest. Therefore I will obey Thy will and serve the common good, not my own desires or pleasures.”[[11]](#footnote-11)
    - In this life military glory is greatest. Thus Achilles, Alexander the Great, and Scipio had very remarkable gifts; but Solomon prefers Joseph, David, and Moses to those very brave heroes. Not one of them can be compared to Joseph, since he is the ruler of his heart through humility.[[12]](#footnote-12)
    - Here, however, the Jews dream too pleasantly that they have equal honor and glory with Joseph. For they all desire this glory most greedily. But they do so in vain. They desire only the mask and the “person,” in order that they may shed the blood of the Gentiles and make them their slaves. They do not care about Joseph’s administration or his fear of God or his humility. This means being crazy seven times over, as I stated above.[[13]](#footnote-13)
  + Respect for the office (government/public/pastor)
    - Romans 13:4
    - For I am not a ruler for myself but for God’s will and for the need of men. I need no kingdom, no pulpit, no assembly in a church, no ministry of the Word; for I can read privately in my home what I teach in public. Why, then, do you preach? Because God wanted this. He has appointed me a pastor, a teacher of the Word; and the people have need of instruction and doctrine. Thus you will truly walk in the fear of God and in love for your neighbor.[[14]](#footnote-14)
    - For if I do not honor the government, I cannot live unharmed and safe from robbers, no, not even from some wicked neighbor. Accordingly, I honor the prince or pastor for my own advantage, in order that I may be able to lead a quiet and respectable life and learn piety and good arts. Thus all these things must be referred to the will of God and to the public need. Those who think of these matters and take pains to follow them both in the state and in the church will be the most praiseworthy governors and teachers, just as Joseph was.[[15]](#footnote-15)
* From promise to action
  + Pharaoh follows through
    - Esther 8:2
    - Daniel 5:29
    - Luke 15:22
  + No hand or foot lifted without Joseph’s consent
    - This is what he means: “No one shall be a judge, prince, or magistrate without your pleasure and decree; from you all who will rule over others shall receive the laws of government; you shall appoint magistrates and superintendents everywhere throughout all Egypt; and no one will enter upon any duty or office without your authority.”[[16]](#footnote-16)
* Why doesn’t Joseph refuse?!?
  + Who am I?
    - Therefore he undertook this administration of all Egypt in fear and humility, and he had far more work to do than he did in slavery and prison, as the heathen, too, have complained[[17]](#footnote-17)
  + This really is a lot of work!
    - Public office
    - Marriage/parenting
    - Pastor/church worker
    - Genesis 3:18-19
      * Buckle up buttercup!
      * But who could bear those pricks of the thorns, the sorrow, the harshness, the troubles, and the difficulties of every kind? I would rather flee. You shall not flee. Indeed, right from your earliest years you must accustom yourself, not to pleasure but to that which is of service to the common life.[[18]](#footnote-18)
      * But we know for our consolation that we merited this punishment in Paradise when we strove to be like God. Therefore God orders us to be gods and magistrates. Nevertheless, He changes this punishment into grace and mercy, not into wrath.[[19]](#footnote-19)
* Joseph given new name and a wife
  + Zaphnath-paneah
    - Meaning “treasury of the glorious rest”
  + Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera
    - No relation to Joseph’s former master
  + Why take a daughter of a heathen and godless priest as his wife??
    - Accordingly, although Asenath was a godless woman and not yet imbued with the pure knowledge of godliness, yet Joseph married her without sin and later taught her about the worship and invocation of the true God. Moreover, it is possible that many of the priests, when they heard Joseph teaching and admired so many excellent virtues in him, were converted to godliness from the worship of idols. Thus David says in Ps. 105:22 that Joseph was a bishop of bishops and a teacher of teachers.[[20]](#footnote-20)
    - The importance of Gentiles to the Lord
* Time to get to work
  + Surveys the land
    - Side note of being 30
      * Sold when he was 17
        + Good things come to those who wait
  + And then again goes out
    - The second is different from the first
      * First was for surveying
      * Second was for putting the plan into action
    - It is not just Pharaoh that listens to Joseph!
      * The people/farmers respond
    - Therefore Joseph carefully surveys every single thing in the whole land. He has his eyes fixed on the land, not outside it, as lazy or prying men are accustomed to do. Thus in the functioning of the church faithful bishops and inspectors are required to keep watch earnestly over purity of doctrine and the true use of the sacraments, and to separate false and godless teachings from those that are true.[[21]](#footnote-21)

## **There are blessings (41:50-57)**

* Sons born to Joseph
  + Manasseh
    - Sounds like the Hebrew for *making to forget*
      * Note the wording of v.51!
      * Why would Joseph forget his father’s house??
        + With his position, couldn’t he have sent a delegation?
        + Has his new position given him a different hope for not only his future but the future of his descendants?
        + Did he take the seriousness of his position to be that great?
        + Was it just not God’s time?
  + Ephraim
    - Sounds like the Hebrew for *making fruitful*
      * Remember that the Lord restores
      * But we should learn from this passage that mortification usually precedes exaltation; for we must first become Manassehs, that is, be reduced to nothing, although the flesh does not bear this killing without great grief. Thus nature generally avoids corruption and self-destruction, and not even a tree or a bush is cut down without a crash. Christ Himself cries out on the cross: “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46). Then we should strive to imitate Joseph’s modest spirit. He is not puffed up by such great honor and success but remains humble.[[22]](#footnote-22)
* The famine does come after seven years
  + The effects are not immediate
    - But people do run out of food.
  + Then the command is given from Joseph to open the storehouses
    - Because there is “bread/food” in Egypt.

1. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.37-38&off=370&ctx=ants+and+ministers.+~Accordingly%2c+it+is+a), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 161. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.37-38&off=6144&ctx=+those+descendants.+~But+here+Pharaoh+bec), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 164. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.39&off=3388&ctx=1+Chron.+8%3a13).%EF%BB%BF23%EF%BB%BF+~The+sons+of+heroes+b), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 165. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.39&off=8300&ctx=+those+differences.+~God+does+not+have+re), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 167. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.40&off=14087&ctx=nd+weighty+matters.%0a~You+also+see+in+this), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.40&off=17390), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 175. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.40&off=25849&ctx=herds+and+herdsmen.%0a~Look+at+our+insolenc), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 179. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.40&off=28535&ctx=eized+by+some+evil.%0a~Furthermore%2c+we+brin), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 180. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.40&off=30430&ctx=med+him+in+the+end.+~Why%2c+then%2c+are+you+p), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 181. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.40&off=34299&ctx=ubjects+or+hearers.%0a~Accordingly%2c+there+i), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.40&off=37668&ctx=em%2c+not+enjoy+them.+~For+you+are+not+a+ma), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 184. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.40&off=40066&ctx=+who+takes+a+city.%E2%80%9D%0a~In+this+life+militar), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 185. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.41-43&off=3393&ctx=+the+royal+chariot.%0a~Here%2c+however%2c+the+J), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 187. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.40&off=32740&ctx=wn%2c+rings%2c+etc.%EF%BB%BF36%EF%BB%BF+~For+I+am+not+a+ruler), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.40&off=42467&ctx=e+respected+in+him.%0a~For+if+I+do+not+hono), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 186. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.44&off=418&ctx=+to+ascend+on+high.+~This+is+what+he+mean), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 188–189. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.45&off=5447&ctx=of+the+Holy+Spirit.+~Therefore+he+underto), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 191. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.45&off=12741&ctx=1%3a28%2c+18%3b+3%3a18%E2%80%9319.)%0a~But+who+could+bear+t), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 194. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.45&off=16451&ctx=+crown+to+another!%E2%80%9D%0a~But+we+know+for+our+), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 196. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.45&off=25780&ctx=ontracted+in+Egypt.%0a~Accordingly%2c+althoug), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 200. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.47-49&off=3837&ctx=n+every+government.+~Therefore+Joseph+car), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 205. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.52&off=4870&ctx=+Hosea%2c+and+others.%0a~But+we+should+learn+), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 211. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)