

Joseph--Genesis 41:1-36

Pharaoh's Dreams

I. Additional Scriptures...

1. Another east wind in Egypt (Ex 10:13).
2. The Chief Butler had forgotten—some things ought to be remembered and not forgotten (Deut 9:7; Ps 137:1; Mark 14:72; 2 Pet 1:9-14).

II. Chronology.

We are still in the 3rd Period of Bible History: **Patriarchy**.

With the developments recorded in this chapter, we are ending the 11-year period Joseph spent in the prison and Joseph is now somewhere around 30 years of age. The opportunity of this chapter will change the surroundings for Joseph considerably for the better and leads on further into the development of the Abrahamic promise of Genesis 12:1-3.

III. Summary.

Evidently two years passed between the time the butler was restored to his place and the time that Pharaoh had the dreams that are recorded in this chapter. The Nile River is of such great importance to the people of Egypt, there is no surprise that God would use it in his revelation to Pharaoh through his servant Joseph. In the first dream the number seven is important in that there were seven fat and seven lean cows. The seven fat cows came out from the river first then the seven lean cows ate the seven fat cows. Pharaoh woke from the dream then went back to sleep and dreamed another dream. In the second dream seven full ears of corn appeared first and then seven blasted (likely burned up by the hot east wind) ears sprang up and devoured the seven full ears. Naturally, Pharaoh was disturbed by these dreams and called for the “wise men” to tell him what it all meant. They were not able.

Finally there came to the butler a season of remembrance and he told Pharaoh about Joseph having accurately interpreted his own dream in prison. Pharaoh wasted no time in calling forth Joseph out of the dungeon into his presence. Humble Joseph declined the place of honor he could have claimed and glorified God as the Interpreter of dreams.

When the dreams are repeated to Joseph (interestingly with a bit more detail—the lean cows did not become any fatter after devouring the fat cows), Joseph's first statement is that the two dreams are telling one story. He tells Pharaoh that God has showed him a glimpse into the future through the dreams. Joseph says that the dreams indicate seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. The famine will be a very grievous famine. The fact that the dream was given in two forms indicated the certainty of its fulfillment and its immediacy.

Joseph advises Pharaoh to select a discreet and wise man to set over the land of Egypt to store up for the famine during the seven prosperous years.

IV. Outline.

1. Pharaoh dreams two dreams (1-7).
2. The dreams trouble him and he sends for the wise men (8).
3. The Chief Butler remembers how Joseph had interpreted accurately his own dream and mentions it to Pharaoh (9-13).

4. Pharaoh immediately calls for Joseph and asks for an interpretation (14-15).
5. Joseph glorifies Jehovah as the Interpreter of dreams (16).
6. Joseph hears the dreams (17-24).
7. Joseph says it is ONE dream about the future (25).
8. The dream is about seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine (26-30).
9. The years of famine will be grievous (31).
10. The double dream means that it is ESTABLISHED and shortly to come to pass (32).
11. Joseph advises preparation for the years of famine (33-36).

V. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ The seven fat kine ate up the seven lean.
02. _____ Joseph suggested that twenty per cent of the produce in the plenteous years be stored up in reserve.
03. _____ The wise men of Egypt were unable to interpret Pharaoh's dreams.
04. _____ Joseph said that which the dreams predicted would happen in 100 years.
05. _____ Joseph told Pharaoh that God had showed him what He was about to do.

Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. _____ Instituting Joseph's plan for dealing with the last seven years Pharaoh dreamed about would keep the land of Egypt from: (a) war; (b) perishing from the famine; (c) prosperity.
07. _____ How long did it take the Chief Butler to remember the promise he had made to Joseph: (a) ten years; (b) five years; (c) two years.
08. _____ Joseph told Pharaoh the seven years of plenty would be: (a) forgotten; (b) remembered; (c) unimportant, when the seven years of famine began because of the grievous nature of that famine.
09. _____ The Chief Butler said that this day he remembered: (a) his Maker; (b) his benefactor; (c) his faults.
10. _____ The second set of seven ears of corn had been blasted with: (a) disease; (b) the east wind; (c) locusts.

Fill in the Blanks

11. "Then Pharaoh sent and called _____, and they brought him _____ out of the dungeon: and he _____ himself, and changed his _____, and came in unto Pharaoh."
12. After the dreams, it is said of Pharaoh that his spirit was _____.
13. "And let them gather all the _____ of those good years that come, and lay up _____ under the hand of Pharaoh..."
14. "And, behold, there came up out of the _____ seven well favoured kine and _____; and they fed in a _____."
15. Joseph advised Pharaoh to find a man who was _____ and _____ to put in charge of getting prepared for the years of famine.

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be given on next week's handout

[ANSWERS to Genesis 40 Questions... (01) False, 2; (02) True, 23; (03) True, 4; (04) True, 7-8; (05) False, cf., 10, 16; (06) a, 1; (07) b, 20-22; (08) d, 10-11; (09) b, 19; (10) a, 14; (11) stolen, nothing, dungeon, 15; (12) cupbearers, 1 Kings 10:5; (13) God, answer, 16; (14) king's cupbearer, Nehemiah 1:11; (15) hanged, Joseph, 22].

VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. **...but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh** (v. 8). The dreams that Pharaoh dreamed were from Jehovah God. There would be no man able to interpret them except the man to whom God chose to reveal them. That man was Joseph. Today we also have revelation from God (the Bible), which was delivered through about 40 men selected by God. To anyone who seeks to find revelation from God from any source other than the Bible, the identical result comes that Pharaoh got as he went to his own wise men and magicians to interpret his dreams--ZERO. There are ZERO men today who are able to give us some new revelation from God. It is completed and is not being added to in our time (2 Tm 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:3; Js 1:25; Eph 3:1-6; Jude 3). When men seek to provide such latter day revelations, their only creation is **division**.
2. **...I do remember my faults this day...** (v. 9). It seems from verse one that two years had passed since the time that Joseph had interpreted the Chief Butler's dream and he had made the simple request: **"But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house"** (Gen 40:14). The humble way the Chief Butler speaks seems to indicate a genuine sorrow and recognition that he had done wrong. When we become cognizant of wrongdoing the correct thing to do is as this man did. We should have the courage immediately to make correction as much as is in our power to do so. As Christians we must do as Simon did--repent and pray (Acts 8:22).
3. **...It is not in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace** (v. 16). The **humility** of Joseph comes shining through in this statement. Humility is a virtue often praised in Scripture. The purpose of the wilderness wandering was to humble the people (Deuteronomy 8:2). Likewise, the provision of manna in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 8:16). Other verses: 2 Chronicles 7:14; 32:26; Proverbs 16:19; 29:23; Matthew 18:4; 23:12; Luke 18:9-14; Colossians 3:12; James 4:6, 10.
4. **God hath showed Pharaoh what he is about to do** (v. 26). There is no question as to the source of this dream or its interpretation. Joseph is used as God's instrument to reveal the meaning of the dream to this powerful man.
5. **And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass** (v. 32). This is a principle which would seem to apply also to Joseph's dreams about his family bowing down to him (Gen 37).
6. **Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt** (v. 33). Joseph, as God's mouthpiece, has now told Pharaoh what is about to happen in the immediate future. Joseph's advice about how to react to this precious knowledge is to let the knowledge lead to action, which will provide protection for the people of Egypt during the famine. As we read this, of course, we realize that it is all part of God's plan for bringing about the further development of the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham. When preachers present the plan of salvation to the lost, the desire is that the knowledge of God's plan for saving man will lead to the action of trusting obedience on the part of the hearers. Hebrews 11 makes it clear that faithful ones are those who hear God and do what He says.
7. **...that the land perish not through the famine** (36). The seven plenteous years will be sufficient to lay up for the seven years of famine. However, if a plan is not set in order to the laying up of that produce, the results will be disastrous. Let us make

application to our own lives here upon this earth. Our time here, if we follow our Lord's teaching, ought to be occupied with laying up treasures in heaven (Mt 6:19ff).

VIII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

K A S D F G H J K E A S T P O P I U Y T
 E I D S W X Z A S W E D C V F R T G B J
 B K N O P B G I L L F A V O U R E D E S
 V B G E R E D C X S W A T Z X C V B N M
 E R D E V O U R E D W P T G B N H Y U J
 A M J U Y H N B R G E T R F V T H I N E
 R D F C K X A E Q L L A Z X S W E L D C
 S C A V N F V R S T L G B N H Y U E J M
 P O T I A I K M J U F Y H N B G T A R E
 V B F E R A Z X S W A S T U D Y J N A B
 Q A L Z X C V B S E V E N T H E N F M L
 L K E J H G F D S A O W B I B L E L W A
 A W S S D E R F G T U U W J K O P E M S
 Z A H W E A D C V B R G I T Y H W S N T
 M K E O P K W U J M E B N G T O V H R E
 A S D D F G H O J K D O D P D I U E M D
 Z X C V B N M N K K J H G A G O O D Y T
 R E F G H J K L M E B V E C V B X Z A Q
 W E S T A L K R T Y U M I O P J H G F D
 X C G H J K M N B T Y U I O P Q A Z X R

[The words listed below are from Pharaoh's dream which is recorded in Genesis 41. Two of the "words" are actually two words run together in the puzzle. See how many of them you can find up above. If you are *exceptionally* sharp, you might even find a special message in addition to the words listed.]

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|-------------------|-----------------|
| 01. river | 02. seven |
| 03. well favoured | 04. kine |
| 05. fatfleshed | 06. meadow |
| 07. ill favoured | 08. leanfleshed |
| 09. awoke | 10. slept |
| 11. ears | 12. stalk |
| 13. rank | 14. good |
| 15. thin | 16. blasted |
| 17. east | 18. wind |
| 19. devoured | |