

The Interpretation of Pharaoh's Dream

Genesis 41:1-57

- I. THE REMEMBERING OF JOSEPH (Genesis 41:1, 9-13)
 - A. The Two Full Years (Genesis 41:1a)
 1. Joseph's long wait—"two full years" is how long the butler forgot Joseph. These must have been very disappointing years for him. Note: (Genesis 40:23).
 2. The time finally arrives—The first five words of the chapter say a great deal, "And it came to pass". It will take Pharaoh dreaming for the butler to remember Joseph. Joseph has been in the depths of the prison, but now he is second only to Pharaoh. So it is with God's will. It may not be easy going through the training and trials, but in God's perfect timing the fog will clear, and the will of God will be clearer than ever before. The key is to trust Him in the fog or you will never be present when the fog clears.
 - B. The Talking of the Butler (Genesis 41:9-13)
 1. The remembering of the butler (Genesis 41:9-11)
 - a. The remembering of his faults (v. 9)
 - (1) *"I do remember my faults this day."*
 - (2) This was noteworthy. This confession did not offer excuses for the failure by calling it a nice name—the word *"fault"* in its various forms is found 27 times in 26 verses in scripture. A true confession of faults or in other cases sin, will not make excuses. Self-pride prompts an individual to make excuses for shortcomings, faults, and sin. Humbleness and repentance will identify the issue(s) and will claim responsibility and forgiveness (2 Chronicles 34:1, 27).
 - b. The wrath of Pharaoh (v. 10)
 - c. The dreams in prison (v. 11)
 2. The remembering of Joseph (Genesis 41:12-13)
 - a. The role of Joseph given (v. 12)
 - b. The interpreting by Joseph of their dreams (v. 13)
 - c. The death of the baker (v. 13)
 - d. Note: The two reasons for the butler remembering:
 - (1) The dreams of the Pharaoh (Genesis 41:1, 5)

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- (a) Pharaoh had two dreams; this started everything rolling for Joseph's from prison to the palace.
 - (b) The dreams were the third set of two dreams which involved Joseph. The first set was his own dreams, the second set was those of the prisoners and now this third set by the Pharaoh.
- (2) The inability of the magicians (Genesis 41:8)
- (a) The inability of the magicians was another factor which helped to prompt the remembering of the chief butler concerning Joseph. The Bible periodically gives illustrations of the inability of the world. This in turn opens the door for God to show what He can do.
 - (b) Several times this was true in Daniel's case (Daniel 2; Daniel 4; Daniel 5). In comparison, this was true concerning Christ; the woman that had spent all that she had with physicians but could not be healed came to Christ and was healed (Mark 5:25-29).

II. THE DREAMS OF PHARAOH (Genesis 41:1b-4, 5-8)

A. The Dream of the Cattle (Genesis 41:1b-4)

1. Note: It appears that dreams in Joseph's life always come in twos.
 - a. Joseph dreams two dreams about his future glory (Genesis 37:5-10).
 - b. In prison, he interprets the dreams of the butler and the baker (Genesis 40).
 - c. Here, Pharaoh has two dreams—one of the cattle and one of the corn.
2. Seven well favoured kine (Genesis 41:1-2)
 - a. Seven well favoured kine and fatfleshed came up out of the river (Genesis 41:2).
 - b. The seven well favoured kine fed in a meadow (Genesis 41:2).
3. Seven ill favoured kine (Genesis 41:3-4)
 - a. Seven ill favored kine and leanfleshed came up out of the river and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river (Genesis 41:3).
 - b. The seven ill favoured kine ate up the seven well favoured kine (Genesis 41:4).

B. The Dream of the Corn (Genesis 41:5-7)

1. Pharaoh returns to his sleep and dreams a second time (Genesis 41:5)
2. Seven good ears (Genesis 41:5)
 - a. came upon one stalk,
 - b. rank and good.
3. Seven thin ears (Genesis 41:6-7)

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- a. Seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after the good ears (Genesis 41:6).
- b. The seven thin ears devoured the seven good ears (Genesis 41:7).

C. The Inability of Interpretation (Genesis 41:8)

1. The search for interpretation
 - a. The dream troubled Pharaoh's spirit.
 - b. Pharaoh sent for the magicians and wise men of Egypt.
2. The inability of the magicians and wise men
 - a. Pharaoh told them his dream,
 - b. But none could give the interpretation.

III. THE INTERPRETATION BY JOSEPH (Genesis 41:14-32)

A. The Retrieval of Joseph Out of Prison (Genesis 41:14)

1. They brought Joseph hastily out of the dungeon.
2. He shaved himself.
3. He changed his raiment.
4. He came into Pharaoh.

B. The Introduction for the Interpretation (Genesis 41:15-16)

1. Pharaoh tells Joseph his dilemma (Genesis 41:15)
 - a. That he has dreamed a dream
 - b. None can interpret it.
 - c. Pharaoh understands that Joseph could understand dreams and interpret them.
 - (1) Despite the past numerous years of suffering that Joseph had endured, the first recorded words to Joseph from the highest ruler in the land was that of praise.
 - (2) The above is a great reminder that faithfulness is blessed by God. God will vindicate and exalt the righteous in His good time (Psalm 37:34; 1 Peter 5:6).
 - d. Note: There are two big mistakes in Pharaoh's understanding. 1) He says that it is Joseph that can understand dreams. 2) He says that Joseph can interpret dreams. Pharaoh saw Joseph as a powerful man, rather than a servant of a powerful God.
2. Joseph tells Pharaoh the solution (Genesis 41:16; Daniel 2:18-23, 28-30, 47)
 - a. Joseph sets the record straight that it is not in him, "*it is not in me.*"
 - b. "*God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.*"
 - c. Once again this shows Joseph's great character in this situation.

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- (1) Joseph's main concern was to honour God.
- (2) Joseph, despite the great injustice he had suffered was still more concerned about honouring God and helping others than he was himself.

C. The Giving of the Dream by Pharaoh (Genesis 41:17-24)

1. Pharaoh tells the dream of the cattle (Genesis 41:17-21)
2. Pharaoh tells the dream of the corn (Genesis 41:22-24a)
3. Pharaoh informs Joseph of the inability of the wise men and magicians (Genesis 41:24b)

D. The Interpretation by Joseph (Genesis 41:25-32)

1. An overview of the dreams (Genesis 41:25)
 - a. The two dreams are one dream.
 - b. The dream is a revelation (Genesis 41:25, 28)
2. The interpretation of the dreams (Genesis 41:26-31)
 - a. The seven good kine (cattle) and seven good ears are seven good years (Genesis 41:26)
 - b. The seven thin kine (cattle) and seven bad ears are seven years of famine (Genesis 41:27)
 - c. There shall be seven years of plenty throughout the land of Egypt and then shall come seven years of famine that will so bad that the years of plenty will be forgotten (Genesis 41:29-31).

IV. THE TYPOLOGY OF JOSEPH TO JESUS

A. The Interpretations by Joseph

1. Joseph, like Jesus, warned of coming danger (Genesis 41:32; Luke 13:3).
2. Both were filled with the Spirit (Genesis 41:38; John 3:34).
3. Both received wisdom from God (Genesis 41:39; John 5:20).
4. Both were wise beyond all others (Genesis 41:39; 1 Corinthians 1:30).

B. The Exaltation of Joseph

1. Joseph and Jesus were placed over a house (Genesis 41:40; Hebrews 3:3-6).
2. Both ruled according to their word (Genesis 41:40; 1 Thessalonians 2:13).
3. Joseph ruled as second in the kingdom (Genesis 41:40). He rode in the second chariot. This pictures Jesus as the second person of the Godhead.
4. Joseph, like Jesus, was made ruler of the earth (Genesis 41:41; Matthew 28:19-20).
5. Joseph, like Jesus, was arrayed in fine linen (Genesis 41:42) which is a picture of righteousness (Revelation 19:8).
6. Both were thirty years old when beginning their ministries (Genesis 41:46; Luke 3:23).