

Day 38 - TUESDAY: December 6th

Genesis 41

Genesis 41:1-57 NKJV

Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river. Suddenly there came up out of the river seven cows, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. Then behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the river, ugly and gaunt, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the river. And the ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine looking and fat cows. So Pharaoh awoke. He slept and dreamed a second time; and suddenly seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, plump and good. Then behold, seven thin heads, blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. And the seven thin heads devoured the seven plump and full heads. So Pharaoh awoke, and indeed, it was a dream. Now it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh. Then the chief butler spoke to Pharaoh, saying: "I remember my faults this day. When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, both me and the chief baker, we each had a dream in one night, he and I. Each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his own

dream. Now there was a young Hebrew man with us there, a servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him, and he interpreted our dreams for us; to each man he interpreted according to his own dream. And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him." Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it." So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: "Behold, in my dream I stood on the bank of the river. Suddenly seven cows came up out of the river, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. Then behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such ugliness as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt. And the gaunt and ugly cows ate up the first seven, the fat cows. When they had eaten them up, no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were just as ugly as at the beginning. So I awoke. Also I saw in my dream, and suddenly seven heads came up on one stalk, full and good. Then behold, seven heads, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. And the thin heads devoured the seven good heads. So I told this to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me." Then

Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do: The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads are seven years; the dreams are one. And the seven thin and ugly cows which came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty heads blighted by the east wind are seven years of famine. This is the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do. Indeed seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land. So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it will be very severe. And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. "Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that are coming, and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. Then that food shall be as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land may not perish during the famine." So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find

such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?" Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you." And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, "Bow the knee!" So he set him over all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh also said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Paaneah. And he gave him as a wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On. So Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt. Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. Now in the seven plentiful years the ground brought forth abundantly. So he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities; he laid up in every city the food of the fields which surrounded them. Joseph gathered very much grain, as the sand of the sea, until he stopped counting, for it was immeasurable. And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine

came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: "For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." And the name of the second he called Ephraim: "For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction." Then the seven years of plenty which were in the land of Egypt ended, and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. The famine was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, do." The famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians. And the famine became severe in the land of Egypt. So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, because the famine was severe in all lands.

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 1 – Two years after interpreting the Chief Cup-Bearers dream, Joseph is still in prison. Remember, God has been with Joseph ever step of the way. Is this an accident that Joseph had to wait two more years? Could not God had inspired the dream to Pharaoh sooner? God was still in complete control, everything happening exactly at the right time. Pharaoh now has a dream.

Verse 4 – This must have been some sight in his dream. Cows don't eat other cows. Pharaoh wakes up, but then is able to fall back asleep.

Verse 7 – The thin grain engulfs the good grain.

Verse 9 – The NKJV states “I remember my faults this day”. The Hebrew word translated here “faults” is virtually always translated “sins” elsewhere in the Bible. He didn't keep his word, he had left Joseph in prison another two years, without bringing him up to Pharaoh.

Verse 14 – Joseph is brought quickly from the dungeon, where he quickly shaves and changes into appropriate clothes to appear before Pharaoh. Jamieson–Faucet–Brown states “The Egyptians were the only Oriental nation that liked a smooth chin. All slaves and foreigners who were reduced to that condition, were obliged, on their arrival in that country, to conform to the cleanly habits of the natives, by shaving their beards and heads, the latter of which were covered with a close cap.”

Verse 16 – A true servant of God is careful to not take God's credit/glory upon oneself. Joseph is clear to give God the glory for what is about to be made known to Pharaoh.

Verse 33 – Joseph advises Pharaoh that he should look for a man who contains two qualities: Discerning & wise.

“Discerning” comes from the Hebrew meaning “to separate mentally (or distinguish). It’s the quality of being able to consider and separate out what is important, how something should be handled, etc.

“Wise” means “wise, intelligent, skillful”.

We aren’t told this, but I think it’s inferred that Joseph isn’t using his own wisdom to tell Pharaoh how to handle this desperate situation that is about to come about for Egypt, but instead was supplied by God. In verse 16 Joseph told Pharaoh that “God would give Pharaoh an answer of peace.” Peace comes in understanding that everything is going to be alright and you understand that God is in control and has a plan.

Joseph tells Pharaoh in verse 33 through 36 what the plan of action was to be.

Verse 39 – Pharaoh understands that there is no one that has the two qualities (“discerning & wise”) that Joseph laid out in verse 36 more than Joseph himself.

Verse 40 – NKJV reads “all my people shall be ruled according to your word”. The literal Hebrew words mean: “At thy mouth do all my people kiss”. This had to do with the culture that those under authority would kiss anything that comes from a superior, in order to show submission and respect to that position and person. Pharaoh is saying that anything Joseph would say would be “kissed” (shown the utmost respect and submission to).

Verse 42 – Albert Barnes commentary states – “His ring.” His signet-ring gave Joseph the delegated power of the sovereign, and constituted him his prime minister or grand vizier. “Vestures of fine linen.” Egypt was celebrated for its flax, and for the fineness of its textures. The priests were arrayed in official robes of linen, and no man was allowed to enter a temple in a woolen garment (Herodotus ii. 37, 81). “A gold chain about his neck.” This was a badge of office worn in Egypt by the judge and the prime minister.”
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Verse 43 – Adam Clarke’s commentary says “That which usually followed the king’s chariot in public ceremonies.”, which shows Joseph’s high standing in society.

Then it says in the NKJV “and they cried out before him, “Bow the knee!” So, he set him over all the land of Egypt.” This word “Bow the knee” is thought to probably to come from Egyptian origin meaning “to kneel” but they really aren’t sure.

This is what Adam Clarke’s commentary says about this word: “[abrech](#), which we translate bow the knee, and which we might as well translate anything else, is probably an Egyptian word, the signification of which is utterly unknown.”

Jamieson–Faucet–Brown states this: “*abrech*, an Egyptian term, not referring to prostration, but signifying, according to some, “father” (compare [Gen_45:8](#)); according to others, “native prince” – that is, proclaimed him naturalized, in order to remove all popular dislike to him as a foreigner.” You can see they aren’t sure. Even without clear understanding, we see that it results in Pharaoh setting Joseph “over all the land of Egypt.”

Verse 44 – Pharaoh continues heaping on honor for Joseph. About verse 44, John Gill’s commentary states: “which is to be taken not in a strict literal sense, but proverbially, signifying, that nothing should be done in the nation of any moment or importance, relating to political affairs, but what

was by his order and authority; the hands and feet being the principal instruments of action.”

Verse 45 – This name given to Joseph from Pharaoh is not well understood. I read several commentaries, but Jamieson-Faucet-Brown gives a succinct commentary: “ variously interpreted, “revealer of secrets”; “savior of the land”; and from the hieroglyphics, “a wise man fleeing from pollution” - that is, adultery.”

Jewish historian Josephus states “who called him Psothom Phanech, out of regard to his prodigious degree of wisdom; for that name denotes the revealer of secrets.” (Antiquities-Jews, Book 2, Chapter 6). Joseph is given a wife from the Egyptian people, from Pot-Pherah, Priest of On. While we might see some similarities between the name of Potiphar and Pot-Pherah, they were two different people.

Verse 46 – When we picked up Joseph’s story he was 17 years old (Gen 37:2), but he’s now 30 years old. A lot had happened for him in the 13 years since he was sold into slavery by his brothers.

Verse 47 – 48: Joseph begins carrying out the plan that he had explained to Pharaoh.

Verse 51 – Joseph has two sons born to him, his first he names Manasseh meaning “causing to forget”.

Verse 52 – His second son is named Ephraim meaning “I shall be doubly fruitful”

The UCG Bible reading program shows how historical documents seem to refer and confirm this account described at the end of chapter 41:

“Historical confirmation of this time of abundance succeeded by a long period of great food shortage is believed to exist. The following is from a book titled *The Signature of God* by Grant Jeffrey, 1996, pages 42–43:

A fascinating inscription confirming the Bible’s account of the “seven years of great plenty” followed by the “seven years of famine” (Genesis 41:29–30) was discovered during the nineteenth century in southern Saudi Arabia. This inscription was found on a marble tablet in a ruined fortress on the seashore of Hadramaut in present-day Democratic Yemen. An examination of the writing suggests that it was written [in the patriarchal age].... This inscription was rendered in Arabic by Professor Schultens and was later translated into English by Rev. Charles Forster. This is his translation of this ancient inscription:

We dwelt at ease in this castle a long tract of time;
nor had we a desire but for the region-lord of the vineyard.
Hundreds of camels returned to us each day at evening,
their eye pleasant to behold in their resting-places.
And twice the number of our camels were our sheep,
in comeliness like white does, and also the slow moving
kine.

We dwelt in this castle **seven years of good life**

–how difficult for memory its description!

**Then came years barren and burnt up:
when one evil year had passed away,
then came another to succeed it.**

And we became as though we had never seen a glimpse of good.

They died and neither foot nor hoof remained.

Thus fares it with him who renders not thanks to God:

His footsteps fail not to be blotted out from his dwelling.

While remarkable, this should not surprise us too much.

After all, the Bible is the Word of God—and it *is* true despite the arguments of skeptics. The following is also taken from *The Signature of God*, pages 44–45:

Explorers during the last century discovered a number of other fascinating ancient inscriptions in the Middle East that provided confirmation of facts recorded in the sacred Scriptures.... The greatest treasure of all was a fascinating engraved stone tablet [found in the tomb of a rich Yemenite noblewoman of the patriarchal age] bearing her final inscription which confirmed the biblical account of Joseph's careful management of the remaining food reserves during the seven years of famine in Egypt.

*A Yemenite Inscription About a Famine During the Time of
Joseph*

In thy name O God, the God of Hamyar,

I Tajah, the daughter of Dzu Shefar, **sent my steward to
Joseph,**

And he delaying to return to me, I sent my hand maid
With a measure of silver, to bring me back a measure of
flour:

And not being able to procure it, I sent her with a measure
of gold:

And not being able to procure it, I sent her with a measure
of pearls:

And not being able to procure it, I commanded them to be
ground:

And finding no profit in them, I am shut up here.

Whosoever may hear of it, let him commiserate me;

And should any woman adorn herself with an ornament
From my ornaments, may she die with no other than my
death.

(reported in Niebuhr's *Voyage en Arabie*, PL. LIX.

Translation by Rev. Charles Forster).

It should be noted here that the above translation appears
quite credible, since Frieslander Carsten Niebuhr was a

respected pioneer in archaeological exploration of the Middle East and in translating inscriptions found there, having accurately translated many from ancient Persepolis.”

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