

Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dreams

Joseph rises from prison to become second-in-command of Egypt by interpreting Pharaoh's prophetic dreams about seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine.

Genesis 41:1-57

CHARACTERS: Joseph, Pharaoh, Chief butler

THEMES: Divine wisdom, God's providence, Preparation and stewardship, Elevation from affliction

TWO FULL YEARS after interpreting the dreams of Pharaoh's servants, Joseph remained in prison, seemingly forgotten. But God's timing is perfect. One night, Pharaoh dreamed troubling dreams: seven fat cows emerged from the Nile, only to be devoured by seven gaunt, ugly cows. Then seven full ears of grain were consumed by seven thin, withered ears. When Egypt's magicians and wise men could not interpret these visions, the chief butler finally remembered Joseph. Hastily brought from the dungeon, Joseph stood before the most powerful man in the ancient world. When Pharaoh recounted his dreams, Joseph gave God the glory: 'It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.' The interpretation was sobering—seven years of abundant harvest would be followed by seven years of severe famine. But Joseph went beyond interpretation to offer divinely inspired counsel: appoint a wise overseer to gather one-fifth of Egypt's harvest during the plenty, storing it against the coming famine. Pharaoh recognized God's Spirit in Joseph and declared, 'Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?' At age thirty, Joseph was elevated from prisoner to prime minister, given Pharaoh's signet ring, fine linen, and a gold chain. He received a new name, Zaphnath-paaneah, and married Asenath, daughter of an Egyptian priest. During the seven plenteous years, Joseph gathered

grain 'as the sand of the sea' until it was beyond measure. When famine struck, not only Egypt but all surrounding nations came to Joseph for sustenance. The dreamer had become the dream's fulfillment, the rejected brother now held the power of life and death over nations. Through imprisonment and exaltation, God's sovereign purpose prevailed, positioning Joseph to preserve his family and the covenant promise.

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