

# Life of Joseph

Lessons in Humility, Leadership and Forgiveness

## Pharaoh's Dream

- Two years after the cupbearer had been restored to his position, Pharaoh had a dream [Gen 41:1-4].
  - In the dream Pharaoh was by the Nile [Gen 41:1].
  - Seven healthy cows came up from the Nile and grazed [Gen 41:2].
  - Seven gaunt cows came up from the Nile and ate the seven healthy cows [Gen 41:3-4].
- The dream woke Pharaoh up, but he fell back to sleep again and had a second dream [Gen 41:5-7].
  - In this dream, seven healthy ears of grain came up on a single stalk [Gen 41:5].
  - Seven thin and scorched ears of grain sprouted up after them and swallowed the healthy ears of grain [Gen 41:6-7].
- The second dream also woke Pharaoh up and the next morning he was troubled by his dreams [Gen 41:7-8].
- Pharaoh was desperate to know the meaning of the dreams so he called for his magicians (soothsayer priests) and wise men, but no one could interpret his dreams [Gen 41:8].
- The episode jogged the memory of the chief cupbearer who finally got around to telling Pharaoh about Joseph being able to interpret dreams [Gen 41:9-13].
  - He correctly acknowledged that Joseph had accurately interpreted the dreams [Gen 41:13].
  - However, he failed to acknowledge that Joseph had done so by the power of God [Gen 40:8].
- Pharaoh wasted no time in calling for Joseph to be brought to him [Gen 41:14].
- Pharaoh repeated to Joseph what he had heard from the chief cupbearer [Gen 41:15].
- Joseph made it clear that he was not the one who could interpret Pharaoh's dream, but God could do so [Gen 41:16].
- Pharaoh then recounted his first dream to Joseph [Gen 41:17-21].
  - Pharaoh described the extreme ugliness of the seven gaunt cows as being the worst he had ever seen in Egypt [Gen 41:19].
  - Pharaoh also noted that the seven gaunt cows were not any healthier after eating the fat and sleek cows [Gen 41:21].
- Pharaoh then recounted his second dream to Joseph [Gen 41:22-24].
  - Pharaoh seems to view the two dreams as being part of a single dream [Gen 41:15, 22].
  - Pharaoh pointed out that he had told the dream to his magicians (soothsayer priests), but they were unable to explain the meaning to him [Gen 41:24].
- Joseph started by explaining the nature of the dreams [Gen 41:25-28].
  - Pharaoh was right about the two dreams actually being connected and that a period of seven years was in view [Gen 41:25-27].

- Even more importantly, God was communicating an important message to Pharaoh through these dreams [Gen 41:25, 28].
- Joseph then explained the meaning of the dreams [Gen 41:29-31].
  - The seven healthy cows and seven healthy ears of grain represented seven years of abundance in the land Egypt [Gen 41:29].
  - The seven gaunt cows and seven thin and scorched ears of grain represented seven years of a very severe famine [Gen 41:30-31].
- Joseph then explained the reason the dream was repeated twice [Gen 41:32].
  - God had sovereignly determined that these things would surely come about.
  - The events represented by the dreams were not way off in the future – they were going to happen very soon.
- Joseph proposed a course of action for Pharaoh to take [Gen 41:33-36].
  - Put a wise leader and overseers in charge of the land [Gen 41:33-34].
  - Store up a reserve of food during the seven years of abundance [Gen 41:34-35].
  - Use the reserve to sustain the people during the seven years of famine [Gen 41:36].
- Pharaoh and his servants liked the plan, but were uncertain if they could find a man qualified to be the leader [Gen 41:37-38].
- Pharaoh made the command decision to place Joseph over all the land of Egypt since God had revealed to him the meaning of the dreams [Gen 41:39-41].
- Pharaoh officially promoted Joseph to second in command [Gen 41:42-46].
  - He gave Joseph a signet ring which was used to seal documents and carried with it the authority of Pharaoh himself [Gen 41:42].
  - He dressed Joseph in clothes suitable for his position of authority [Gen 41:42].
  - He had Joseph ride in the second chariot so everyone would know that he was now second in command [Gen 41:43].
  - He confirmed to Joseph that his authority was over all the people of the land [Gen 41:44].
  - He honored Joseph by giving him a woman from a prominent family to be his wife [Gen 41:45].
  - Joseph's position gave him the opportunity to travel all throughout the land [Gen 41:46].
- The seven years of abundance came about as God had told Joseph [Gen 41:47-52].
  - In each city the surplus food from the surrounding area was stored up [Gen 41:47-48].
  - The amount of abundance God supplied was beyond measure [Gen 41:49].
  - The times of abundance extended even to Joseph and his wife [Gen 41:50-52].
- The seven years of famine came about as God had told Joseph [Gen 41:53-57].
  - The famine affected more than the land of Egypt [Gen 41:54, 56-57].
  - Joseph used the abundance to supply the needs of the people of Egypt [Gen 41:55-56].
  - Joseph also sold grain to people from other countries who were suffering famine [Gen 41:57].