

Seven Years of Abundance will Come to Egypt, but Seven Years of Famine will Follow

41: 25-36

DIG: What does Joseph's interpretation and advice of Pharaoh's dream say about his relationship with the LORD? How is the Joseph of Chapter 41 different than the Joseph of Chapter 37? What has happened in the twenty-two years since he left his brothers?

REFLECT: What do you see as ADONAI's role in all of this? Why do you think God chooses to work with Joseph, and some of us, in this way? As Joseph suggested plans to Pharaoh, where would you like to design a specific action plan for your life today? How have you grown and changed from your spiritual maturity and life's experiences? Will you be ready for the exact moment that the LORD has prepared for you?

Joseph discerned the significance of Pharaoh's dream as quickly as he had discerned those of the cupbearer and the baker. Then Joseph said to Pharaoh the king: The two dreams of Pharaoh have the same meaning (41:25a). It seems that Pharaoh had already suspected this (41:17-24a), and now Joseph confirmed it.

45. Having listened to the king's dream Joseph said: God has revealed to Pharaoh what He is about to do, and then he knew the meaning of the dreams (41:25b). How perfect is the parallel between this and the opening verse of the book of Revelation. Just as God made known to the Egyptians, through Joseph, what He was about to do, so has He now made known to us, through Yeshua Messiah, the things He is about to do in this world when John wrote: The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants what must soon take place (Revelation 1:1).

The four symbols were really two sets of seven years. The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads of grain are seven years; it is one and the same dream (41:26). The seven lean, ugly cows that came up afterward are seven years, and so are the seven worthless heads of grain scorched by the east wind: They are seven years of famine (41:27). Joseph clearly emphasizes the seven years of famine more than the seven years of abundance.

It is just as I said to Pharaoh: God, has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do (41:28). Here Joseph gives God the glory. When supernatural events happen in the world,

you can discern who's behind it by who gets the glory. When Moses turned his staff into a snake, **God** got the glory. When the **wise men, sorcerers, and the Egyptian magicians did the same thing by their secret arts, the Egyptian gods** got the credit (**Exodus 7:11-12**). The Bible teaches that before **the Lord** returns, Satan will deceive the entire world. **The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders (Second Thessalonians 2:14).** Jesus would say: **At that time, if someone says to you, "Look! Here's the Messiah!" or, "There He is!" don't believe him, For there will appear false Messiahs and false prophets performing great miracles - amazing things - so as to fool the chosen, if [that were] possible (Matthew 24:23-24 CJB).** How do you tell what is counterfeit and what is real? You can tell by who gets the glory, and **Joseph** takes care of that right up front: **God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do.**

Then **Joseph** goes into detail. He said: **Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt. But seven years of famine will follow them. Then all the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will ravage the land (41:29-30).**

The abundance in the land will not be remembered, because the famine will be so severe (41:31). Pharaoh had seen the **seven fat cows** coming out of the Nile River, which was the lifeline of Egypt. Because Egypt has virtually no rainfall throughout the entire year, it relies on the flooding of the Nile to provide water for their crops. During the first seven years the waters of the Nile would overflow its banks and flood, but during the famine it would recede and no flooding would take place.

This **famine** would affect the Egyptian gods. The god Osiris, who was pictured as a bull, was the god of the Nile. It would also affect the goddess Isis, who was pictured as a cow. She was the supposed wife of Nimrod. In Syria, she was called Ishtar. In Phoenicia, she was called Ashtoreth. In Greece, she was Aphrodite. In Rome she was Venus, but in Egypt, she was called Isis. She was the goddess-queen who was worshiped as having the power over life and death. She was prayed to as a divine source of fertility and wisdom.

The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon (41:32). Joseph's interpretation was refutation of Pharaoh's worldview, and a confirmation of his. Pharaoh was worshiped as god in the land of Egypt, but Joseph presented the king with a different reality. God alone was divine and He had revealed to Pharaoh events that were about to become known. Pharaoh could only respond to what God had already set in motion. What a scene, a Hebrew slave explaining the workings of God to the mighty Pharaoh, and the thirteen years of prison had prepared him for that very moment.

Joseph had correctly interpreted **Pharaoh's** mysterious and disturbing dreams. That meant that **the land of Egypt** was headed for trouble. What would **Pharaoh** do about it? His people were used to a good life. But how would they react when the **famine** came? Would they blame him? Would they lose faith in their gods? Would revolution follow? Especially if this **Pharaoh** was a member of the hated Hyksos dynasties, thoughts such as these must have troubled **him**.

Human nature being as it is, **the people** themselves really couldn't be counted on to store up grain for the coming years. But on the other hand, a central bureaucracy could easily lead to despotism and cruelty if all the grain were left in the hands of a self-seeking dictator. The key to the success of such a plan, and the survival of the nation, would be the key administrator. The right **man** would be a savior; the wrong man would be a tyrant. Therefore, **Joseph's** first recommendation was to find such a **man**.

46. Having interpreted to Pharaoh the meaning of his dreams, Joseph then undertook to advise the king as to the wisest course to follow in order to meet the approaching emergency and provide for the future. And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt (41:33). Again the foreshadowing is perfect; Christ, too, has been shown to be the Wonderful Counselor (Isaiah 9:6), the One sent by God with a message to tell men how to prepare for an uncertain future, and make sure of their eternal interests. He is the One in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3).

Joseph continued talking and suggested that the Egyptians should have a plan to face the coming famine. He said: **Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt, or a twenty percent tax, during the seven years of abundance (41:34). That would double the usual tax on grain, which was normally ten percent.** They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh to be kept in the cities for food to sustain Egypt during the seven years of famine (41:35).

47. Joseph warned of the coming danger, and urged his hearers to be prepared. Joseph didn't paint a rosy picture. He fearlessly told the truth. This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come to Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine (41:36). Messiah also told the truth and warned of the coming danger, and urged His hearers to be prepared (Luke 11:27, 12:4). He made known the fact that death is not the end of life, that there is a life to come (John 14:6). He warned those who trusted in their earthly possessions and who boasted of how they were going to enjoy them, that their

souls would shortly be demanded from them (Luke 12:20). He lifted the veil that hides things unseen, and gave His hearers a view of the suffering of the damned in Hell (Luke 12:4, 16:19-31). He spoke often of that place where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:48), and where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 13:42). Therefore, Jesus counseled men and women to be prepared for eternal life; either with, or without Him (John 6:37-40; Mt 7:15-23).

It is interesting how the two names of the LORD are used in the story of Joseph. Whenever Joseph was speaking to the Egyptians about the LORD, God is used (39:9, 40:8, 41:16, 25,28, 32), but whenever the Ruach HaKodesh comments about God's dealing with Joseph, He uses ADONAI (39:2-3, 5, 21, 23).

Joseph was not hinting that he was the man for the job. It didn't even cross his mind. He was a Hebrew prisoner who had never held any political office. He wasn't trained for such a task, he didn't have any experience, and he was only thirty years old. Although he didn't realize it, ADONAI had prepared him for that exact moment.