

# Dream Interpreter

Joseph 4; Genesis 40:1 – 41:36

By Scott Huckaby

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## Genesis 40:1-8, Joseph Serving in Prison

*Some time later, the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their master, the king of Egypt.<sup>2</sup> Pharaoh was angry with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker,<sup>3</sup> and put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the same prison where Joseph was confined.<sup>4</sup> The captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph, and he attended them. After they had been in custody for some time,<sup>5</sup> each of the two men—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were being held in prison—had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own.<sup>6</sup> When Joseph came to them the next morning, he saw that they were dejected.<sup>7</sup> So he asked Pharaoh's officials who were in custody with him in his master's house, "Why do you look so sad today?"<sup>8</sup> "We both had dreams," they answered, "but there is no one to interpret them." Then Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams."*

## What happened to Joseph in prison?

He became charged with and befriended two high-profile prisoners who had previously been part of Pharaoh's staff. As we'll see, building relationships is important.

## What is the significance of Joseph being confined with two criminals?

As Joseph was punished alongside two criminals where one was saved and the other lost, so too was Jesus crucified with two criminals where one was saved and the other was lost [52]:

*Luke 23:39-40 – Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?"*

## Genesis 40:9-15, The Butler's Dream

*9 So the chief cupbearer told Joseph his dream. He said to him, "In my dream I saw a vine in front of me,<sup>10</sup> and on the vine were three branches. As soon as it budded, it blossomed, and its clusters ripened into grapes.<sup>11</sup> Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup and put the cup in his hand."<sup>12</sup> "This is what it means," Joseph said to him. "The three branches are three days.<sup>13</sup> Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand, just as you used to do when you were his cupbearer.<sup>14</sup> But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison.<sup>15</sup> I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon."*

## Of what does this dream interpretation remind us?

Genesis 40:8 – Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God?"  
Daniel interpreting the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar.  
Daniel 2:28 – But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.

## How was Joseph able to interpret the butler's dream?

As the Holy Spirit gave the butler a dream and inspired Joseph with its interpretation, so too did Jesus acknowledge the role of the Holy Spirit in His ministry [53]:

*Luke 4:18 – The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed*

### **v13 – What is the significance of Joseph foretelling that the cup bearer would be raised up after 3 days?**

As Joseph prophesied that the cup bearer would experience deliverance after three days, so too did Jesus prophecy of His own resurrection [54]:

*Matthew 16:21 – From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day*

### **What is significant about the third day?**

Three is the number of God... the Trinity. It is also interesting to notice how often three is associated with resurrection, not just the resurrection of Christ but also the nation Israel:

*Hosea 6:1-2 – Come, and let us return to the Lord; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.*

Per Psalm 90:4, with God, a day is often associated with a thousand years. Since Hosea wrote this in 800 BC; Israel would be revived after ~1300 BC... that happened starting in 1948. We are well into the third millennium after Hosea wrote this prophecy so Israel's relationship to God could be restored at any time. This will happen during the Millennial Kingdom.

### **v14 – What is the significance of Joseph telling the cup bearer to remember him after he's raised up?**

As Joseph told his fellow inmate to remember him after his deliverance, so too did Jesus tell us to remember Him [55]:

*Luke 22:19 – He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”*

### **v15 – What is the significance of Joseph being incarcerated?**

As Joseph was incarcerated in a dungeon, so too was Jesus confined by the authorities [56]:

*John 18:12 – So the Roman cohort and the commander and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and bound Him*

### **v15 – What is the significance of Joseph saying he did nothing to justify him being put in the dungeon?**

As Joseph told his fellow inmate he did nothing to justify his punishment, so too did Jesus' judge say that about Him [57]:

*Luke 23:4 – So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, “I find no fault in this Man.”*

### **Genesis 40:16-23, The Baker's Dream**

*16 When the chief baker saw that Joseph had given a favorable interpretation, he said to Joseph, “I too had a dream: On my head were three baskets of bread. 17 In the top basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head.” 18 “This is what it means,” Joseph said. “The three baskets are three days. 19 Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and impale your body on a pole. And the birds will eat away your flesh.” 20 Now the third day was Pharaoh’s birthday, and he gave a feast for all his officials. He lifted up the heads of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker in the presence of his officials: 21 He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, so that he once again put the cup into Pharaoh’s hand— 22 but he impaled the chief baker, just as Joseph had said to them in his interpretation. 23 The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.*

### **v16-23 – What happened in the baker's dream?**

There were three baskets on his head, the uppermost basket had baked goods for Pharaoh but birds ate them out of the basket on his head.

### **What was the interpretation of the dream?**

Within three days Pharaoh would cut off the baker's head and hang him on a tree so that the birds would feast on his body.

### **What is the significance of Joseph prophesying that the baker would be hanged on a tree?**

As Joseph prophesied that the baker would be hanged on a tree, Jesus prophesied the same about himself [58]:

*John 3:14 – as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up*

### **What was this serpent in the wilderness?**

This was an image of a snake on a pole that God told the Israelites during Moses' day they would have salvation from snake bite if they looked at it after they were bitten. This points to Christ who offers the ultimate of spiritual death for all who believe in Him.

### **What is the significance of the two elements in the two dreams Joseph interpreted?**

As Joseph interpreted the two dreams featuring the cup and bread, Jesus also specified the cup and bread to be used in remembrance of Him [59]:

Luke 22:19-20 – *He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.”*

### **Genesis 41:1-8, Pharaoh's Dreams**

*When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream: He was standing by the Nile,<sup>2</sup> when out of the river there came up seven cows, sleek and fat, and they grazed among the reeds. <sup>3</sup> After them, seven other cows, ugly and gaunt, came up out of the Nile and stood beside those on the riverbank. <sup>4</sup> And the cows that were ugly and gaunt ate up the seven sleek, fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up. <sup>5</sup> He fell asleep again and had a second dream: Seven heads of grain, healthy and good, were growing on a single stalk. <sup>6</sup> After them, seven other heads of grain sprouted—thin and scorched by the east wind. <sup>7</sup> The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy, full heads. Then Pharaoh woke up; it had been a dream. <sup>8</sup> In the morning his mind was troubled, so he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for him.*

#### **What were the two dreams of Pharaoh?**

- Seven well-fed cows came from the Nile river were followed by seven emancipated cows who ate the fat cows.
- A stalk of grain had seven healthy plump heads was followed by seven thin, blighted heads that devoured the plump heads.

#### **Why was pharaoh troubled by these dreams?**

God troubled him... they were probably very vivid and memorable unlike most dreams that fade soon after you wake up.

### **Genesis 41:9-14, Pharaoh Summons Joseph**

*<sup>9</sup> Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, “Today I am reminded of my shortcomings. <sup>10</sup> Pharaoh was once angry with his servants, and he imprisoned me and the chief baker in the house of the captain of the guard. <sup>11</sup> Each of us had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own. <sup>12</sup> Now a young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. We told him our dreams, and he interpreted them for us, giving each man the interpretation of his dream. <sup>13</sup> And things turned out exactly as he interpreted them to us: I was restored to my position, and the other man was impaled.”*

<sup>14</sup> So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought from the dungeon. When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came before Pharaoh.

**What was the breakthrough that changed Joseph's life?**  
The butler remembered Joseph being able to correctly interpret dreams.

#### **v14 – What was the significance of Joseph having his clothing changed so that he could go before Pharaoh?**

As Joseph had to be clothed in the right garments before he could be brought to Pharaoh, so too must we be clothed in Christ before we may be with God in heaven [60]:

*Galatians 3:27 – For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

#### **What does it mean to be baptized into Christ?**

To be born again so that the Holy Spirit may indwell us.

#### **What is water baptism?**

It is an ordinance that should be taken as an act of obedience in making a public profession of faith in Jesus.

### **Genesis 41:15-24, Pharaoh tells Joseph his Dreams**

<sup>15</sup> Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.”

<sup>16</sup> “I cannot do it,” Joseph replied to Pharaoh, “but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires.”

<sup>17</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “In my dream I was standing on the bank of the Nile, <sup>18</sup> when out of the river there came up seven cows, fat and sleek, and they grazed among the reeds. <sup>19</sup> After them, seven other cows came up—scrawny and very ugly and lean. I had never seen such ugly cows in all the land of Egypt. <sup>20</sup> The lean, ugly cows ate up the seven fat cows that came up first. <sup>21</sup> But even after they ate them, no one could tell that they had done so; they looked just as ugly as before. Then I woke up.

<sup>22</sup> “In my dream I saw seven heads of grain, full and good, growing on a single stalk. <sup>23</sup> After them, seven other heads sprouted—withered and thin and scorched by the east wind. <sup>24</sup> The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven good heads. I told this to the magicians, but none of them could explain it to me.”

#### **v16 – How was Joseph attributing to God the interpretation of his dreams reminiscent of Jesus?**

As Joseph gave God the glory by attributed to Him the interpretation of the dreams, so too did Jesus attribute what He did and said to the Father [61]:

*John 8:28 – I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.*

Jesus set aside His prerogatives as God while He was in His mortal body, see Philippians 2:5-8.

#### v17-24 – What did Pharaoh add to the telling of his dreams to Joseph?

He stressed the ugliness of the emancipated cows and he commented on the fact that the emancipated cows looked just as ugly after they ate the fat cows. But his recounting of the grain stalks was pretty much the same.

#### Genesis 41:25-32, Joseph Interprets the Dreams

<sup>25</sup> Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh are one and the same. God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. <sup>26</sup> The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads of grain are seven years; it is one and the same dream. <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> “It is just as I said to Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. <sup>29</sup> Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt, <sup>30</sup> but seven years of famine will follow them. Then all the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will ravage the land. <sup>31</sup> The abundance in the land will not be remembered, because the famine that follows it will be so severe. <sup>32</sup> 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.

#### v25-32 – What was the interpretation of the dreams?

Both dreams pointed to seven years of abundance agriculturally followed by seven years of famine so severe that the years of abundance would be forgotten.

#### What is the significance of there being “green years” followed by “dry years”?

As Joseph spoke of “green years” followed by “dry years,” so did Jesus when He was on the Via Dolorosa on the way to Golgotha [62]:

Luke 23:28-31 – Jesus, turning to them, said,  
“Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!’ Then they will begin ‘to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’’’ For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?

#### What was Jesus speaking of in Luke 23:28-31?

The part about those who are not mothers brings to mind Jesus’ words in the Olivet Discourse when He was talking about the Tribulation:

Matthew 24:19 – *woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!*

The part about calling on the mountains to fall on them brings to mind what people hiding in their bunkers will say in response to the 6<sup>th</sup> seal of the Tribulation:

Revelation 6:15-16 – *the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!*

So, Jesus was equating the current age with the green wood and the coming Tribulation transition time as the dry.

#### What is the significance of Joseph prophetically revealing a seven-year famine?

As Joseph prophetically revealed a seven-year famine, so did Jesus when in the Olivet Discourse, He referenced “*the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet*” (Matthew 24:15) [63]:

Daniel 9:27 – *Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.*

#### Genesis 41:33-36, Joseph’s Recommendation

<sup>33</sup> “And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. <sup>34</sup> Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. <sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine.”

#### What solution to the coming famine did God inspire Joseph to recommend?

To appoint a discerning and wise man to oversee collecting 20% of the agricultural production during the seven plentiful years and store it up in the cities for use during the famine years.