

Our Purpose: Do We Know What It Is?

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Genesis 41

In our study of Genesis, we have reached the final Toledoth of the book, a pivotal point in our journey. This Toledoth, found in Genesis 37:2, *'These are the generations of Jacob,'* marks the transition to a new phase. It's crucial to grasp that the rest of Genesis revolves around Jacob, the Promised Land, the Promised Seed, and the Covenant. Joseph plays an enormous role in the final chapters. But why? Is his purpose to show that God will bless you and make you a powerful leader if you are faithful? Does it demonstrate that after hardship comes blessing? Or is it something else?

As we have delved into Joseph's life, the words in Genesis 50:20 must always resonate as we study: *'As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.'*

I. The Third Pair of Dreams in the account of Joseph (41:1-8)

- A. The First Pair – Kindled his brothers' animosity (Genesis 37:3-11)
 - 1. Sheaves did obeisance to Joseph
 - 2. Stars did obeisance to Joseph
 - B. The Second Pair – Butler and Baker (Genesis 40:1-5)
 - 1. Butler's (Cupbearer) Dream (led to his release & life)
 - 2. Baker's Dream (led to his death)
 - C. The Third Pair – Pharaoh's dreams (Genesis 41:1-8)
 - 1. Fat cows/Skinny Cows
 - 2. Good Sheaves/Blasted Sheaves
- Joseph accurately interpreted each dream regardless of the consequences.
 - Every dream that Joseph interpreted had providential implications in his life.
 - Each pair of dreams propelled Joseph through a series of events that led him to his purpose.

II. The Summons by Pharaoh to Appear Pharaoh (41:9-24)

- A. The Chief Cupbearer remembers Joseph (41:9-13)
- B. Joseph is called, prepared, and brought into the presence of Pharaoh (41:14).
 - 1. **Proverbs 21:1**, *The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will.*
- C. Pharaoh presents to Joseph his dilemma (41:15).
- D. Joseph denies himself and gives God the glory (41:16)
 - 1. **Romans 11:36**, *For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever.*
- E. Pharaoh recounts to Joseph his dreams (41:17-24)

III. The Interpretation of Pharaoh's Dreams given to Joseph (41:25-32)

- A. The Explanation began with God (41:25) God REVEALS.
 - 1. **Daniel 2:28-29**, *But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days...and he who reveals mysteries made known to you what is to be.*
- B. The Famine is foretold by Joseph (41:26-31, esp. vs. 28) God ILLUMINATES.
 - 1. **Revelation 4:1**, *After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."* God has foretold to the world that judgment is coming for sin and that the Father has provided only one way of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- C. The Certainty of the truth is fixed and immutable (41:32). God PRESERVES (KEEPS)
 - 1. **Hebrews 9:27**, *And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,*

V. The Plan for Survival is Communicated by Joseph (41:33-36)

- A. Select a wise and discerning man (33)
 - 1. Discerning – to comprehend the meaning of a situation; to see below the surface; examine.
 - 2. Wise – judicious; exercise good judgment or common sense in practical matters.
- B. Store a surplus of the harvests (41:34-35)
- C. Supply the nation with food during the famine (41:36)

VI. Pharoah's "Choice" of Joseph and the Ironies Involved (41:37-49)

- The "tension" between our present situation and God's ultimate purpose for our life (timing, events, and temptations). It could have been easy for Joseph to "miss" God's purpose.
- A. Joseph's purpose was not to persuade and preserve a pagan king (41:37-38)
 - 1. Pharoah believed Joseph's interpretation; his brothers, who were covenant people, reacted violently and intended murder.
- B. Joseph's purpose was not to bless Pharoah's house (41:39-40).
 - 1. In every house where he lived, Joseph brought the blessing of God (Potiphar, Prison, Pharoah). But his purpose was to bless his people, the people of God's covenant, Jacob's house.
- C. Joseph's purpose was not found in ruling a foreign land (41:41).
 - 1. Egypt, opposite of Canaan vs. Canaan, land of promise; Arguably, Joseph was now the second most powerful person in the world.
- D. Joseph's purpose was not to wear the robe of a pagan father (Gen 41:42-44; 37:3)
 - 1. Jacob's robe vs. Pharoah's robe – he was under the authority of the wrong father. He had become the favored son of Pharoah.
- E. Joseph's purpose was not to identify himself with his new name (45)
 - 1. The pagan king gives him a pagan name. In the same way, Nebuchadnezzar gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar.
- F. Joseph's purpose was not to be influenced by his given wife (46)
 - 1. Pagan wife, the daughter of a Pagan priest

VII. Joseph's purpose was to remember who he was and to Whom he belongs! (50-57)

- A. Joseph named the first son Manasseh. Why? *"For God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house."*
 - 1. Joseph gave his firstborn son a Hebrew, Covenantal name, not an Egyptian name.
 - 2. His son's name was significant to Joseph's state of mind. The name Manasseh means forgetting and letting things go.
 - 3. **Philippians 3:13-14**, *Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*
- B. Joseph named the second son Ephraim. Why? *"For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."*
 - 1. Joseph counted Egypt as his **land of affliction** rather than the land of prosperity!
 - 2. Joseph considered Canaan as the **land of promise** and blessing!

VIII. Joseph affirmed God's Providential Guidance.

- A. **Genesis 45:5**, *And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.*
- B. **Genesis 45:7-8**, *And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. 8 So it was not you who sent me here, but God.*
- C. **Genesis 50:20**, *As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. Genesis 50:21*, *So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.*

- As a believer, I can never lose sight of the promises of God. He will surely bring them to pass!
- I must be accepting of God's timing and his purposes (see Genesis 45:3-5)
- God's grace, forgiveness, and mercy are greater than all my hurts and injustices that I may suffer.
- Remember, our citizenship is not of this *"land of affliction"* (Hebrews 11:8-10)

X.

XI.

XII.

XIII. God is in Complete Control, Authority, Sovereign.

- A. **Ephesians 1:4-5**, Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love **5** he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,
- B. **Romans 11:36**, For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.
- C. **Matthew 10:29**, Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.
 - 1. **1 Samuel 14:45**, Then the people said to Saul, “Shall Jonathan die, who has worked this great salvation in Israel? Far from it! As the Lord lives, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day.” So the people ransomed Jonathan, so that he did not die.
 - 2. **Proverbs 16:33 (ESV) — 33** The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord.
- D. In Genesis 41
 - 1. **Genesis 41:32**, And the doubling of Pharaoh’s dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about.

XIV. Sovereign to Rescue

- A. Imagine Joseph waking up on day 730, two years after interpreting the baker’s and the cupbearer’s dreams and experiencing a glimmer of hope for release from Pharaoh’s prison. Yet, God remained silent on the matter. Joseph was now 30 years old. Unseen and Unheard to Joseph, God was working his plan, even in the dreams of the Pharaoh of Egypt.
- B. The Two Dreams
 - 1. Gen 41:1-4 – standing by the Nile; 7 plump fat cattle and 7 skinny cattle.
 - 2. Gen 41:5-7 – 7 good stalks and 7 blasted.
- C. The Swift Summons
 - 1. The Remembrance (41:9-13)
 - 2. Pharaoh Summons Joseph. **Gen 41:14 - Proverbs 21:1**, The king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will.
 - a) Joseph was called for by Pharaoh.
 - b) Rescued from the pit of prison.
 - c) Cleaned, shaved, and given a NEW ROBE fit for the presence of a King!
 - 3. Note: Our impatience and God’s timing often clash!

XV. Sovereign to Rule

- A. God was working in the heart of the most powerful man on earth at the time (Pharaoh)
 - 1. **Psalms 24:1**, The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,
 - 2. **Proverbs 21:1**, The king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will.
- B. God was working through “natural catastrophes” **Genesis 41:32**, And the doubling of Pharaoh’s dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about.
 - 1. Pharaoh was considered the embodiment of a god.
 - 2. The Nile River was Egypt’s chief god and worshipped as a source of life and fertility.
 - 3. The failed magicians were priests in the astrological cult of the nation. Failed
 - 4. **Genesis 41:15**, And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.”
 - 5. Pharaoh stoops to calling a Hebrew prisoner, who was a slave!
- C. History is in the hand of God!

XVI. Sovereign to Reveal

- A. **Genesis 41:16**, Joseph answered Pharaoh, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable

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- answer.”
- B. The dreams recounted (41:17-24)
 - C. The Answer (41:25-32)
 - 1. The dreams are a single message (41:25)
 - 2. There would be seven plenteous years
 - 3. There would be seven famine years
 - 4. Joseph gave God the glory for his revelation (**Genesis 41:28**, It is as I told Pharaoh; God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do.
 - D. The Advice (41:33-36)

XVII. Sovereign to Save

- A. Our warning (**Hebrews 9:27 (ESV) — 27** And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,
- B. **Ephesians 1:7 (ESV) — 7** In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,
- C. **Acts 16:31 (ESV) — 31** And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

XVIII. When Dreams Come true AND PURPOSES ARE REVEALED (41:33-57)

- A. God’s Word Come True
 - 1. Joseph’s Recommendation (41:33-36)
 - a) Select a leader
 - b) Select regional overseers.
 - c) Collect 20%
 - d) Reserve it the 20% for the famine years.
 - 2. Pharaoh’s Selection (41:37-41)
 - a) Joseph stood out for his wisdom and discernment
 - b) **James 1:5**, If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.
 - c) **Genesis 41:39**, Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are.
 - d) **Mark 1:22**, And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one with authority, not as the scribes.
- B. Joseph at the Top
 - 1. Joseph was 30 years old ; in about 13 years, he ascended from assistant shepherd to his brothers to be in charge of the mightiest nation on earth. One could argue that Joseph was the second most powerful man in the world at 30.
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)