

## LESSON 5

## JOSEPH INTERPRETS PHARAOH'S DREAM

**Scripture Text:** *Genesis 41*

God was with Joseph. He gave him the interpretations of the dreams. The dreams of the butler and baker were fulfilled exactly. Joseph suffered many things by which his faith was tested and his life chastened.

The outcome of God's plan for Joseph is not yet apparent, but all these happenings are shaping to bring it to pass. The dreams and Joseph's interpretation of them are necessary to God's purpose.

**MEMORY VERSE:** *"In all thy ways acknowledge him; and he shall direct thy paths."*

*Proverbs 3:6*

### Humility

**Genesis 41:1-16** Two years after the butler returned to Pharaoh's service, Pharaoh had a dream. It troubled him greatly. He inquired of all the magicians and wise men of Egypt, but none could interpret the dream. Worldly minds cannot yet interpret God's message. Then the butler remembered. Joseph had asked him to intercede with Pharaoh for him. He had neglected to do so. Now he told Pharaoh of Joseph and his interpretations. He explained how they came to pass. Pharaoh was interested in no small way. He sent for Joseph, and **they brought him hastily**. Joseph made himself as presentable as possible, and came. Pharaoh said, "**I have heard . . . that thou canst understand a dream.**" Joseph answered, "**It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.**"

The same humble Joseph. Even after years spent wrongfully in prison, he showed no bitterness, because he had none. Humility is the nonexaltation of self. It is not thinking lowly of oneself but rather, not thinking of oneself at all. It is the disposition to give honor to another. Joseph showed this virtue when Pharaoh told him he heard of his ability to interpret dreams. "It is not in me," said Joseph. "God . . ." Joseph recognized the truth—that the power is all God's. No special credit is due Joseph for this attitude. It is the only right one to hold.

Yet, how many of us might have said, "I have had some success in that line"? Some might even have advertised ourselves as a "gifted interpreter of dreams." Thus, we would have lost the opportunity of being a channel through which God's power would flow. How much, do you suppose, of the manifestation of God's power in the world is thwarted by the attempt of some human to take honor to himself? This is a grievous sin. Desire for honor hinders faith (John 5:44).

### Joseph Reveals God's Plan

**17-32** Pharaoh recounted his dream, a dream of two parts. He saw seven fat cattle come out of the river. There followed seven skinny or lean cattle that ate up the fat cattle. After this he dreamed again and saw seven full ears of corn on one stalk. After them came up seven blighted ears of grain. They devoured the seven good ears. (Corn here represents all types of grain).

Joseph told Pharaoh that the dream came from God to show Pharaoh what He was going to do. It was given unto Pharaoh twice (given in two parts) because it was **established** (unchangeably decided), and God would bring it to



pass soon. Joseph gave the meaning. The first seven cattle and seven good ears were seven years of plenty that were coming throughout Egypt. In those years food would grow in abundance. The seven lean cattle and seven empty ears were seven years of famine that would follow the good years. In them no food would grow. The famine would be so serious that all the plenty would be forgotten. This is a type of the famine in our land today (Amos 8:11-12). Joseph proved that he was God's man by truthfully revealing God's plan. There was only one interpretation of the dream. Only God's man had it. Pharaoh believed fully God's plan for Egypt that Joseph gave.

### A Glorious Promotion

**33-36** After the interpretation Joseph gave advice. He proposed that Pharaoh should choose a **discreet** (having discernment, able to avoid error or evil, careful, prudent) **and wise** man to gather and store food during **the seven plenteous years** to be used in **the seven years of famine**. Under him would be officers to help in the gathering.

**37-45** The plan won Pharaoh's favor. He felt Joseph was the man best fitted for the position of food administrator. He recognized the large place that God held in Joseph's **life—a man in whom the spirit of God is . . . God hath shewed thee all this**. So Pharaoh appointed Joseph as ruler of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself. He dressed Joseph in fine linen and jewelry, gave him his chariot, took off his signet ring and gave it to Joseph, giving him authority to do business for the king, and resented him with a wife (a type of our salvation). He gave him power and authority, sending runners before him to command the people to **bow the knee** (another type).

Where in all of history do we find another rise to power comparable to this? Joseph was advanced in one day from prison to the second in command in the land. He was a foreigner, and he had not sought or worked for or even known of the promotion until it was done (another type).

**46-49** Joseph began his work when thirty years old. Christ began His ministry when thirty years old. During the first seven years Joseph traveled about Egypt gathering corn into the cities. It grew so abundantly that he ceased to keep account of it.

**54-57 Seven years of dearth** (scarcity, want, lack) **began to come**, just as Joseph said. All lands felt the famine. Egypt alone had bread. When the stores of the people gave out they applied to Pharaoh who sent them to Joseph. Joseph sold to them and to people of other countries from the storehouses of grain he had gathered. Christ set up a storehouse to feed His people seven years or seven ages. It was not Joseph; only God could have done this. Joseph was only the yielded tool. But without Joseph's yielding, God's plan would have failed. Had Joseph allowed bitterness into his life or had he become discouraged and given up or sought his own honor or in any way fallen into sin, this blessing would never have come to him or his people. Let us watch that we do not frustrate the grace of God (Galatians 2:21).

### JUST A THOUGHT

**"A failure is the man who goes through life  
earning nothing but money."**