



## Pharaoh's Dreams

FAMILIES IN TRUTH

Genesis 41



After the cupbearer was released from prison, he forgot all about his promise to help Joseph. Joseph remained in prison for two more years. Though others forgot about Joseph, God did not. Soon Joseph would learn that God's timing is always perfect.

## Day #1: Pharaoh's Dreams

What are some warning signs that you see every day? One example is a yellow light that tells a driver that the traffic light will soon turn red. What would happen if we did not have these warnings? Warnings are given for our good, not to harm us. God had a warning for Pharaoh.

One night, Pharaoh had two dreams. The first dream was of seven big healthy cows that came up out of the Nile River. Soon seven more cows came out of the river. They were skinny and sickly, and they ate the healthy cows! The second dream was very similar. Pharaoh dreamed of seven healthy heads of grain growing on a stalk. But soon seven more heads of grain sprouted up. The dry grain swallowed up the healthy grain.

Pharaoh had no idea what the dreams meant. In the morning, he called together his magicians and wise men to see if they could explain the dreams, but they couldn't. Pharaoh didn't know what to do. Pharaoh didn't believe in the one true God, so he didn't pray for an answer.

We will see that Pharaoh's dreams were actually **warnings** from the Lord. Time and time again in the Bible, God warned people about bad times that were coming. He gave warnings to Adam and Eve, Cain, Noah, and Jonah, just to name a few (Genesis 2:17, 4:7, 6:13, Jonah 1:1). In the same way, God wanted Pharaoh and his people to know about the bad times that were ahead for Egypt. God gave these warnings to Pharaoh because God loves people.



*The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease.* - Lamentations 3:22 NLT

See how many warning signs you can find on your next car ride. Warnings are everywhere! They are given for our protection. We should listen to God's warning above all others. Because God loves us, He gives us many warnings in His written word, the Bible.

## Day #2: I Can't, God Can

Pharaoh had received a warning from God, but he didn't even know it. Pharaoh needed a godly man to help him.

It had been two long years since the cupbearer was held in prison under Joseph's care. But when Pharaoh mentioned his strange dreams, the cupbearer remembered the dreams he once had in prison. Suddenly, the cupbearer remembered Joseph! He told Pharaoh all about the man who was able to explain his dreams to him.

Pharaoh called for Joseph. How unusual it was for the mighty Pharaoh to call for help from a lowly slave!



*Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream. No one can tell me what it means. But I've heard that when you hear a dream you can explain it."*

**"I can't do it,"** Joseph replied to Pharaoh. **"But God will give Pharaoh the answer he wants."** - Genesis 41:15-16

Joseph had this exactly right! Humbly, Joseph realized that he could never know the mind of God unless God revealed it to him. He did not lean on his own understanding, but on God's wisdom!



In the same way, when it comes to telling people God's message, we do not come up with our own explanation. We depend on God to give us the words. God's Holy Spirit, who lives inside of each believer, gives you just the right words to tell others about the Lord.

*We don't use words taught to us by people. We use words taught to us by the Holy Spirit. We use the words of the Spirit to teach the truths of the Spirit.* - 1 Corinthians 2:13b

## Day #3: Joseph Explains

Pharaoh told Joseph all about his dreams. Joseph said, "God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do." (Genesis 41:25) God gave Joseph the meaning of the dreams (Amos 3:7), and Joseph explained it to Pharaoh.

Joseph said that the two dreams had the same meanings. There would be seven very good years coming to the land of Egypt. In these years, there would be plenty of food to eat and water to drink. But right after those good years would be seven terrible years of famine.

### Day #3 continued:

It was by God's grace that He warned Pharaoh about the terrible famine that was coming. And when God sends a warning, He also sends instructions (Genesis 6:13-21, 1 Kings 17:1-4). God had a plan to provide food during the seven years of famine.

Joseph told Pharaoh that he should choose a wise man to be in charge of Egypt. This man would store up one-fifth of the food that was grown during the really good years, to be eaten during the really bad years.

Pharaoh liked this plan a lot. He liked the plan so much, that he chose Joseph to be the man in charge! He said:

**+** *"The spirit of God is in this man. We can't find anyone else like him, can we?" Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "God has made all of this known to you. No one is as wise and understanding as you are." - Genesis 41:38-39*

For seven years, Joseph oversaw the collecting of grain. Suddenly when the eighth year began, the famine struck just as Joseph had said. God's warning came true, but by His grace, there was a plan in place! The people of Egypt and the nearby countries were able to buy the food that they needed.

**\*** Because Joseph abided in (or remained with) God, he could hear God's plan very clearly. This is also the key for you to hear God's plan clearly in your life (John 15:4).

## Day #4: Cocoon

Butterflies make everyone smile. We almost always stop to watch their beautiful colors as they flutter by. Most people know that a butterfly starts out as a caterpillar, and then it spends time in a cocoon (properly called a chrysalis). Inside the "cocoon," the caterpillar's body actually breaks down before transforming into the adult butterfly. Out of the ugly, uncomfortable space of the cocoon, something beautiful appears!

Joseph had something in common with a butterfly: Joseph's uncomfortable suffering had a beautiful outcome.

Joseph was sold into slavery, taken to Egypt, lied about, thrown in prison, and forgotten about. This was Joseph's cocoon. It was a long period that was dark and difficult, but it was not wasted time! During that time, Joseph abided in God and God grew his character.

Because all these things happened to Joseph, he was at the right place at the right time to explain God's message to Pharaoh. And because Joseph was there

### Day #4 continued:

to warn Pharaoh, millions of lives were saved. After he had suffered, when the time was just right, God used Joseph in a beautiful way.

**+** *We are full of joy even when we suffer. We know that our suffering gives us the strength to go on. The strength to go on produces character. Character produces hope. - Romans 5:3-4*

**\*** When you are in a time of trouble, think of it as your cocoon. It may be a time that God has chosen for you to grow and become strong for the plan He has laid out for you. Abide in God and rely on His grace. Ask God to help you emerge stronger and ready to be used by Him.

**Idea:** Parents, find a video of a butterfly emerging from its chrysalis and watch the amazing metamorphosis together.

## Day #5: Greater than Joseph

Joseph's life was a picture of a life much greater than his. Can you think of a story that is similar to Joseph's - one in which someone is betrayed and then suffers for the good of millions of other people? It is Jesus' story.

Let's look at some of the similarities between Joseph and Jesus. Joseph had not done anything to harm his brothers, but they hated him. Jesus was innocent, yet still hated by others (1 Peter 2:22, Mark 8:31). Joseph was sold as a slave and then Potiphar's wife lied about him. Jesus was given up for money and lied about also (Matthew 26:15, 59-60). Joseph's suffering brought him to the place where he could be used to keep millions of people from starving. And, because Jesus willingly suffered, He was able to save billions and billions of people from the punishment of their sin, which is death.

**+** *It was written long ago that the Messiah would **suffer** and die and rise from the dead on the third day. It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of His name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: '**There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.**' - Luke 24:46-47 NLT*

Jesus' story is greater than Joseph's because Jesus is perfectly **sinless**. And because of Jesus' amazing love, He actually **CHOSE** to suffer so that He could save people's **eternal** souls. Every person in the world is invited to place his or her trust in Jesus and gain eternal life.

**\*** No doubt, you have seen many exciting movies. We often tell our friends that a particular movie was "amazing." But there is **NO** story as amazing as the true story of Jesus' suffering so that He could bring you back to your heavenly Father. Ask the Lord to help you tell His true story to someone this week.