

Genesis Chapter 41 Commentary

1 And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river.

Joseph has been in prison for quite some time now. The two years mentioned here are two years since Joseph interpreted the dream of the butler, seen in the previous chapter, and made his plea for deliverance.

2 And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine and fatfleshed; and they fed in a meadow. 3 And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favoured and leanfleshed; and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river. 4 And the ill favoured and leanfleshed kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke. 5 And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good. 6 And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them. 7 And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream. 8 And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh. 9 Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day:

Now it is God's time for the butler to present Joseph's plea for deliverance. We term this as the providence of God in Joseph's life. We see that God is still using dreams to bring about the salvation of Israel.

10 Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, both me and the chief baker: 11 And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. 12 And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret. 13 And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged. 14 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.

We don't know for sure about shaving the beard, but can surmise and reason from history that prisoners didn't have the luxury of shaving and haircuts/personal grooming while in prison. There is historical evidence that the Egyptians were very clean and neat and did not have beards.

Joseph is being brought before the king, and he must be cleaned up and clothed, in clothes that were acceptable to be in the king's presence.

The Egyptians can give Joseph the outward appearance of being an Egyptian only. God will adorn Joseph, with the countenance, and robes of wisdom, and righteousness, in their presence. In other words; Joseph will be filled with the Holy Ghost.

15 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. 16 And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

Notice, Joseph's first response to Pharaoh. He introduces him to God. He doesn't account, that he is wise in his own eyes, but declares that God knows all things. He is not taking any glory to himself.

17 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river: 18 And, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fatfleshed and well favoured; and they fed in a meadow: 19 And, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill favoured and leanfleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness: 20 And the lean and the ill favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine: 21 And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke. 22 And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good: 23 And, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them: 24 And the thin ears devoured the seven good ears: and I told this unto the magicians; but there was none that could declare it to me. 25 And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do.

Notice that, as with the butler and baker, Joseph's response is immediate. He didn't need to go spend some time in prayer searching for the purpose of God. God has already prepared Joseph, and he is now making it manifest that God's presence is with Joseph.

We have similar scripture in the New Testament, seen in:

- *Mt 10:16-20; 16 "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. 17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; 18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. 19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. 20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."*
- *Mr 13:9-11; 9 "But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. 10 And the gospel must first be published among all nations. 11 But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."*

This text teaches that; just as Joseph is brought before the Pharaoh and put to test, God is the immediate giver of an answer and tells of his will and purpose that will come to pass. Likewise, in these texts, Jesus is telling the disciples; God will be your thorough furnisher when you are tried in court.

This has nothing to do with preaching and teaching God's word of truth. We know of certain people, Primitive Baptist, that use this text "**take no thought beforehand**" and apply it to the preachers saying; they are not to get up to preach with a prepared sermon, which they have studied upon. That is an absolute misuse of scripture, because it is taken completely out of context, and is in direct contradiction to what Jesus teaches us in:

- **2Ti 2:1-2; 1 "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."** Timothy is being charged into the ministry; teach other ministers, and people, of God's word of truth rightly. This text precludes the next I shall give from the same chapter for space saving:
- **2Ti 2:14-16; 14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. 15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness."** I testify to you; if you get up to preach unprepared you are disobeying God's word of truth.

Certainly, God can and does sometimes reveal things that the minister has not put together in preparing to preach, demonstrating that God is able to do what he will, that his people receive the proper teaching and rightly divided word of truth. Again, I stress; this is simply the Holy Spirit working in and through mankind.

26 The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. 27 And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine. 28 This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh. 29 Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: 30 And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; 31 And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. 32 And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

Joseph not only interprets the dream, he explains that God has revealed to Pharaoh what is coming to pass for the next fourteen years.

33 Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. 34 Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. 35 And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. 36 And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.

Joseph continues and gives instructions for Egypt to survive the famine. This is God's way of putting Joseph into his destined position, for the fulfillment of the dreams he gave Joseph, and for the preservation of Israel. This will set in motion the revealed purpose of God.

This is exactly what Jesus did when he was on the earth. Jesus revealed, the plan and purpose of God for the salvation of sinners, and he established the church of grace.

Faithful ministers, of the gospel of Jesus Christ, will tell you what to do with the revealed purpose of God, when your salvation has been made manifest. This is why; born again sinners are encouraged to join the church body, to be baptized, and thereby glorify God.

37 And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. 38 And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? 39 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: 40 Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. 41 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. 42 And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; 43 And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. 44 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

Pharaoh recognizes and acknowledges God, and the Holy Spirit presence in Joseph. This gives us some hope that this particular Pharaoh has been touched by God, because God has given him the ability to see and understand. So it should be in our Christian lives; people should be able to see the Holy Spirit of God manifested in us.

We see that God's plan and purpose are right on schedule. Joseph is made 2nd ruler in Egypt, with all authority, and none with greater authority except Pharaoh. Pharaoh carries Joseph, all over Egypt, making sure everyone knows Joseph's position and authority.

This sets the stage for Joseph to be the means of salvation for his family, Israel. This sets the stage for the fulfillment of the dreams that God gave Joseph. In the first dream his brethren bowed down to him. In the second dream, the whole family bowed down to him.

Likewise, God set Jesus as the ruler over all creation, and God sent Jesus to earth, in incarnation, manifesting Jesus's power and authority over all things. While here on earth, Jesus demonstrated power over things of the heavens, the earth, the seas, diseases, blindness, deafness, death and life, and the demonic spirits. Even power to resist the temptations of the devil himself.

Jesus never acknowledged but one having more authority, or power, than himself, and that was God the Father, as we see in: ***Joh 10:29 "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."***

God not only makes provision for his own people, but he also provides for the world at large. When the famine is sore upon the earth, people will come from all over to Egypt to buy corn. In application to our own lives; consider the scripture seen in: ***Mt 5:45 "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."*** This is exactly what we see happening here in Genesis; God is preserving the Egyptians and will be the preservation of the Israelites, and the rest of the world, which will come to Egypt to buy corn.

God often works in a way that is completely opposite to the ways of mankind. When the famine comes on Egypt, and the world, everyone will be coming to Egypt for bread. Jesus established the church, of salvation by grace, to which people are to come for bread, but Jesus sends his disciples out unto all the world with the preaching of the gospel.

When Joseph's family come to Joseph; Israel will be placed in the land of Goshen, which is the very best of the land of Egypt. The gospel of Jesus Christ has gone forth to all the world, and everywhere God has established an organized church body, we see another "land of Goshen" on earth, which is the best this world has to offer. There are multitudes of these little "land of Goshen" spots all over the world, for the habitation, of the multitudes, of those who have been saved by grace through Jesus Christ. Hallelujah!

45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

Pharaoh gives Joseph a new name. "**And Pharaoh called Joseph's name**" Jesus, as seen in the definitions below:

- Zaphnathpaaneah is from the Hebrew word Tsophnath Pa`neach (pronounced; tsof-nath' pah-nay'-akh) and means: *the one who furnishes the nourishment of life, the chief steward of the realm.* Isn't it interesting: the new name, that Pharaoh gives Joseph, is the definition of a Saviour, and of God?

Joseph's wife is an Egyptian, and she is the daughter of the religious leader of Egyptian idolatry. Joseph's children will be of the bloodlines of both Israelite (Jew) and Egyptian (Gentile). Jesus's future wife, the church, will be furnished with children which are both Jew and Gentile.

46 And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

"**Joseph was thirty years old**" We have here another comparison through which we see Jesus. How? **Lu 3:21-23; 21 "Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, 22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. 23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age.**" Thus, we see that both, Joseph, and Jesus, were about thirty years of age, when they began to rule with authority.

Joseph went out, from the presence of the one who had greater authority than he, and went over all the land of Egypt. Joseph will prepare and store up corn all over Egypt for the preservation of all of Egypt. Joseph will come to know where the best of the land of Egypt was. This is where his family will live when he calls them to come to him for sustenance of life.

Jesus went out, from the presence of the one who had greater authority than he, and came incarnate to the earth. Jesus created the church, which is the very best place in the world to live a Christian Life. Jesus made provision that the Gospel of Jesus Christ would go out over the whole world. As we see in the New Testament scriptures; as the gospel of Christ was preached and taught, churches were established and are still being established even today. These churches are representative of the cities where Joseph stored up corn. These churches are still proclaiming; come unto me, eat the bread of life and live. When Jesus calls his children to new life they will come where there is bread stored up.

Aren't you thankful for the revelation of the definition of the new name of Joseph, Zaphnathpaaneah, and the knowledge of what it means? In application to our own spiritual lives; Jesus is "the one who furnishes the nourishment of life" and he is "the chief steward of the realm." Praise the Lord! for a Saviour, who even today still does it all!

47 And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls. 48 And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same. 49 And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number.

Here we see the comparison of Joseph and Jesus again, How? In the Old Testament scripture there is the prediction of a famine: ***Am 8:11 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:*** This predicted famine came with the first coming of Christ and the establishment of the grace church. Who are the only people who have a hunger to hear the words of God? The born-again sinner is the only one who wants to hear God's words. The rest of the world does not care at all.

Jesus is the picture of the abundance of corn of the seven years of plenty, and he is the emblem of the stored up corn in the seven years of famine. Jesus is the bread of life and came before the famine set in, seen in:

- ***Joh 6:35 "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."***
- ***Joh 6:48 "I am that bread of life."***
- ***Joh 6:51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."***

The famine began when Christ fulfilled the demand of the sacrificial law, which declared that there must be the shedding of blood for the remission of sins. However, we see that the laying up was in the time of plenty. This is what happened with the incarnate Christ in the world. Christ revealed the plenteousness of forgiveness of sins, and of salvation and eternal life, while he was on the earth. Christ established the church of grace, and he set up the distribution system through his disciples, which is what Joseph was doing here.

We see that Joseph gathered the corn of plenty to the cities, not out in the rural area where it is inconvenient for people to come, so that it was easily distributed to the people in their need. In the NT scriptures we see that the grace church was established in the cities where the people gathered. This was a place where the gospel of Christ could easily be accessed and should be a lesson to us today.

This gives us the distribution system of the gospel that Christ established and gives us the comparison to the work accomplished by Joseph.

I was once asked this question: What is the purpose of the church? In my mind the answer is clear as we consider this text and God's revelations: The purpose of the church is to be a distribution center for the Bread of Life, the gospel of Christ, which leads to eternal life in the eternal heaven with our Saviour and King, Christ Jesus.

50 And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him. 51 And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. 52 And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

- Manasseh is from the Hebrew word M@nashsheh (pronounced; men-ash-sheh') and means: *causing to forget*.
- Ephraim is from the Hebrew word 'Ephrayim (pronounced; ef-rah'-yim) and means: *double fruit*.

53 And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended. 54 And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. 55 And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do. 56 And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. 57 And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands.

We see in these last verses a prophetic picture of the world today. How? Because the famine was worldwide, Egypt and all the world had to come to Joseph for bread to sustain life. Joseph's brethren will come to him also. Joseph will send for all his family to come to him to be preserved from the famine. He will also have them housed in the very best of the land in Egypt.

The church is the very best place in the world to live. The church is the only place on earth where the bread of life is stored up. Being born-again, every child of grace must come to Jesus for sustenance of life. Jesus has sent forth his call to his family to come unto me, seen in:

- **Mt 11:28 "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."**
- **Joh 7:37 "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."**

This has special application to God's people; God has made provision, for the sustenance and salvation of his own people Israel, through Joseph. Comparatively, today, God has made provision, for the sustenance and salvation of his own people, the church, through Christ. God has provided for our natural and spiritual lives, as well as our eternal life in Christ, according to the purpose of God.

As pointed out in the text above, all life, natural and spiritual, is given and controlled by God for the fulfilling of His own divine purpose.

Lesson: God will work out everything in the lives of his people for their own good as stated in:

- **Ro 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."**
- **2Co 9:8 "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:"**
- **Php 1:6 "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:"**

As Joseph has set an example for us: let us live our lives sold out completely to God and Christ. If our trust and faith is in Christ, no matter what comes our way in life, we should be able to keep our eyes on God and live to his honor and glory. Look at all the evil that befell Joseph before God brought him to his purpose to save his family. No matter how much evil we must endure here on earth, we have an eternal destination; where there are no more tears, sorrows, sins, or anything that will bring grief of any kind into our lives in eternity. Praise the Lord Jesus for securing our eternal salvation!