

Joseph Finds Favor

Key Verse:
***“Pharaoh said
unto his servants,
Can we find such a
one as this is, a
man in whom the
Spirit of God is?”***
—Genesis 41:38

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 41:1-52

JOSEPH HAD BEEN IN prison for two years, and seemingly had been forgotten by those associated with Pharaoh. The Lord, however, had not forsaken Joseph, and was about to use him in an amazing way.

Verses 1-10 and 17-24 of our lesson describe two dreams which Pharaoh had, neither of which his magicians nor wise men could interpret. His first dream was of seven well-favored and fat cattle, which were consumed by seven ill-favored and lean cattle, but after consuming the fat cattle, the lean cattle remained lean. The second dream was of seven ears of corn, well developed and fat, which were consumed by seven thin ears. Like the lean cattle, after consuming the fat ears of corn, the thin ears remained parched and withered.

It happened that Pharaoh's chief butler heard of these two dreams. He was reminded of Joseph and told Pharaoh (verses 9-13) that Joseph had correctly interpreted his and the chief baker's dreams while in prison. Pharaoh had Joseph brought forth from prison, and said to him, “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.” (vs. 15) We now note an important lesson. Joseph said to Pharaoh that it was not his power that could reveal these dreams, but that of God only. (vs. 16) He gave God the glory and

honor even before giving the interpretation, because he knew that God was the source of his ability. We, too, should give God the credit and thanks for any talents and abilities he providentially extends to us.

In verses 25-32, Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's two dreams, saying that both dreams had the same meaning. The seven fat cattle and the fat ears of corn represented seven years of plenty in the land. These would be "consumed" by seven years of famine and drought, shown by the seven lean cattle and the thin ears of corn. The seven years of famine would be so severe, Joseph said, that the previous years of plenty would be forgotten. The fact that Pharaoh had two dreams with the same interpretation was a surety that "this thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass."—vs. 32

Immediately after interpreting the two dreams, Joseph further showed great wisdom. In verses 33-36, he suggested to Pharaoh that because of the impending famine seven years hence, someone be appointed to oversee the seven years of plenty. Their responsibility would be to see to it that in each of those years twenty percent of the land's yield would be layed up in storage, to be used during the seven years of famine that would follow. Pharaoh quickly realized the wisdom of this course and appointed Joseph in this capacity. Not only this, but he made Joseph second in command over the entire kingdom, saying, "Only in the throne will I be greater than thou."—vs. 40

We see that although Pharaoh put Joseph in this high position, it was really God who was overruling the entire matter for the eventual blessing of Joseph's family and, ultimately, the formation of the nation of Israel. For us, we must remember that no matter how we may be used to bless others, temporally or spiritually, it is ultimately God who is guiding these experiences and to whom we should be submissive. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."—Phil. 2:13 ■