



The Book of Genesis

Lesson Number 64



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED =Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB =Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV =English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT =Goodspeed (1923), GWN =God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

PHARAOH DREAMS AND JOSEPH IS CALLED

Gen 41:1 "And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river. ² And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine and fattleshed; 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: 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. 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. 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, fattleshed and well favored; 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 showed Pharaoh what He is about to do. 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 favored 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 showeth 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."

Genesis 41:1-32

Pharaoh has two dreams. After seeking their meaning from his magicians, and after being told of Joseph, he calls Joseph for help – Given O. Blakely

Pharaoh Dreams, Joseph Called 1 of 16

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A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

After two full years, and in strict concert with the purpose of God, Pharaoh had two dreams. Sensing they were significant, he sought among his magicians for someone who could interpret them. None were found who could interpret the dreams. In the process of all this, and according to God's time-table, the butler remembered Joseph, and told the Pharaoh of his ability to interpret dreams. Pharaoh immediately called Joseph from prison, bringing him "hastily" out of the dungeon. Joseph prepared himself to stand before Pharaoh. When arriving, he informed Pharaoh his ability was not in himself, but that God would give Pharaoh "an answer of peace." When Pharaoh told Joseph the dreams, Joseph told him that both dreams had a single meaning. He then identified the symbols in the dreams, and key periods of time that were involved. He told him that the two dreams established the certainty of what was about to take place, and that everything was going to happen "shortly." Thus the stage is set for fulfillment of the purpose of God.

INTRODUCTION

Again, as with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the determined will of the Lord is being done.

GOD'S MANAGEMENT OF PEOPLE

Until this point in Genesis, we have seen the management of people by the Lord. At no point are men permitted to stand in the way of the accomplishment of the will of God. Those to whom God gave promises were blessed by God to do what was necessary. Those whose lives, according to revelation, were specifically and favorably managed by the Lord with His eternal purpose in mind, included Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and now Joseph. Those who thought to hinder the people of God realized the overthrow of their intentions. There were others who were inclined to the people of God. Whether for or against them, all created personalities are governed by God, as confirmed in the records concerning the following:

- Satan: Gen 3:1-15
- Cain: Gen 4:4-16
- The whole world: Gen 6:5-7:24
- Ham: Gen 9:22-25
- The people at Shinar: Gen 11:1-9
- Pharaoh: Gen 12:15-20
- Abimelech: Gen 20:2-18
- The herdmen of Garar: Gen 26:20-22
- Abimelech: Gen 26:8-31
- Chedorlaomer and three kings: Gen 14:1-17
- Melchizedec: Gen 14:18-20
- The king of Sodom: Gen 14:21-24
- Hagar and Ishmael: Gen 21:9-14
- The men of Sodom: Gen 19:4-11
- Laban: Gen 31:6-13
- Joseph's brothers: Gen 37:2-31; 41:46
- The unnamed man who directed Joseph to his brothers: Gen 37:15-17
- The Ishmaelites and Midianites; Gen 37:25-28
- Potiphar's wife: Gen 39:7-21
- The prison keeper: Gen 39:21-22
- The butler and the baker: Gen 40:1-

23

➤ Pharaoh: Gen 41:14-16

THESE ARE RECORDS THAT CONFIRM THE TRUTH TO OUR HEARTS

These records are designed to increase and stabilize our faith, confirming the following:

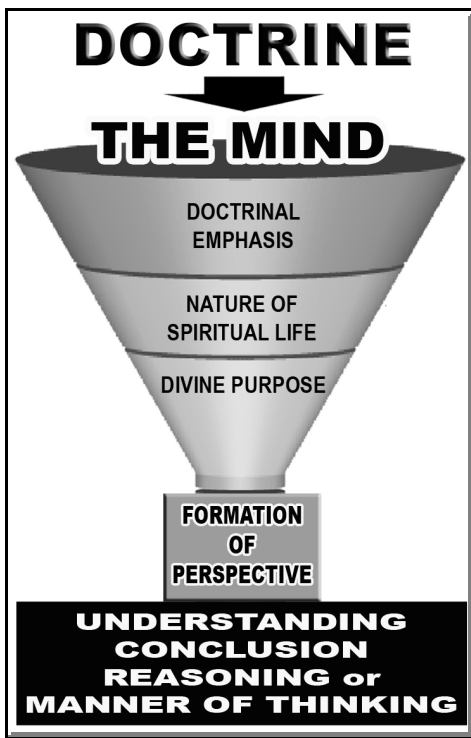
- The gifts and calling of God are without repentance (Rom 11:29).
- God works all things together for the good of them who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Rom 8:28).
- The Lord completes the work that He begins (Phil 1:9).
- If God is for us, no one can effectively be against us (Rom 8:31).
- God gives His people what they require to do His will (Eph 1:3; 2 Pet 1:3).
- God inclines the ones He has chosen (John 6:44,65).
- God is against those who are against His people (Gen 12:3; Matt 25:45).
- The kings of the earth are ultimately subject to God (Psa 2:2-6; 138:4; 1 Tim 6:15).
- God eliminates impossibilities (Lk 1:37).
- As required, God inclined people to treat His chosen ones favorably (Gen 39:1; Dan 1:9; Acts 7:10).
- God makes purposes that compete with His to fail (Gen 11:1-9; Prov 11:21).
- God can cause human projects to fail (Gen 11:1-9; 37:21; Esth 3:6;

8:7).

- ➔ God can protect His people under seemingly impossible circumstances (Prov 21:31; Rom 11:4; 2 Tim 4:18).
- ➔ In strict accordance with His will, God dispatches angels to do what men cannot do (Num 20:16; Dan 3:28; Acts 12:11).
- ➔ God is not hindered by nature, but rather controls it (Amos 4:7; 2 Kgs 8:1; Jonah 1:4).
- ➔ God’s people can flourish under most difficult circumstances:–i.e. famines, imprisonment, opposition, etc (Gen 39:22; 1 Kgs 17:4-6; Psa 33:19; Eph 3:12).

These are all things God’s people need to know if they are to survive. Furthermore, even though Satan extends himself to obscure these realities to the saints, if they will walk in the light, they will come to see them.

ONE OF THE SERIOUS ERRORS OF OUR TIME



One of the serious errors of our time is the marked tendency for

religious men to rely upon the flesh, or natural aptitude. Since an intellectual shrine has been erected to give honor to psychology, “self” interests have been allowed to usurp Divine prerogatives. Now, men are attempting to find explanations for human conduct in the genetic makeup and psyche of men. A greater emphasis is also placed on the physiological, or fleshly, makeup of men: the brain, blood, DNA, etc. **The fact that man is “the offspring of God” (Acts 17:29) is conveniently ignored, and, consequently responsibility to God is either altogether denied, or placed on the back-burner of thought.**

Using the analytical principles of this age, the book of Genesis is either viewed or handled as nothing more than folklore. A method of religious thinking has been established that moves people to attach little significance to this book. That is why “church folk” are largely ignorant of the record of Genesis – the book of beginnings. It is not critical to their theology, nor required for what they believe to be sound religious thought. **If this is not seen to be the case, then I do not know how one could account for the general ignorance of the writings of Moses.**

However, allow me to develop this from a more focused perspective. In matters of religion, the doctrines persons believe and embrace shape the way they think. The doctrinal EMPHASIS is a critical matter. What is presented as the main thing?– or what is stressed the most? Is it what people are to do, or what the Lord has done and is doing. For example, in the teaching concerning Jacob and Joseph, is what they did or did not do the thing that is stressed? Or is it the manner in which the Lord was working. In salvation, which role is the emphasis? Is it what the Lord has done, or is it what men should do? Are the Scriptures presented as a rule book, living guide, or perhaps a body of proof texts for what is emphasized? Or are they set forth as a revelation of God and His purpose?

What view of spiritual life has been adopted? Is it basically inward or outward? Is what a person does

depicted as the result of what he IS, or is what he is set forth as the result of what he has DONE?

What about God’s purpose? Is there a clear presentation of what He has determined to do? Is He seen as doing anything at all? Is He perceived as being at a distance from men, with them functioning pretty much on their own? Are men being taught that they have by nature all that is needed to understand God’s Word, and that this is the way God intends for salvation to be worked out?

Now, what a person has received concerning these things forms their perspective of the things of God. It shapes their understanding, determines how they draw conclusions, and dictates how they reason, or the manner of their thinking.

A person’s values will be determined by how they think, which has been determined by the teaching they have accepted. What they think of assembling together with the saints, how they choose their friends, and the priorities they set for their lives are all the direct result of the teaching they have accepted. Their priorities are the reflection of their values.

How a person reads the Scriptures is decided by what he has accepted to believe. Some people read the Bible as though it has magical powers that work independently of human involvement. This view has moved some to say that reading five or six Psalms and five or six Proverbs every morning will transform ones life. The Spirit, however, teaches that man “lives by every word of God” (Lk 4:4). It must be ingested.

What a person does to improve their spiritual life is the result of their understanding of spiritual life – how it is derived, maintained, and brought to maturity. Some teach, for example, that fasting is the key to godliness. Others teach that praying is the most effective activity. Some even teach that the secret to spiritual growth lies in converting others. Still others feel that doing charitable works is the grand key to spiritual growth. The Scriptures

teach that living by faith (Heb 10:18) and walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16,25) are the appointed means of growth. This is helped along, according to Divine purpose, by the mutual

edification received from the saints and the various gifts that have been given to them. All of this is helped along by submitting to the various ministries of the body of Christ (1 Pet 5:5).

What a person receives as truth plays a key role in their understanding and desires, both of which are key factors in thinking and living out what is thought.

AT THE END OF TWO FULL YEARS

"¹ And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river. ² And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favored kine and fatfleshed; and they fed in a meadow. ³ And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favored 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 favored and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke."

AT THE END OF TWO FULL YEARS

"And it came to pass at the end of two full years . . ." Other versions read, "after two whole years," ^{NKJV} "after two years had gone by," ^{BBE} "After a lapse of two years" ^{NAB} and "two years of days." ^{YLT}

This is an exact period of time, not an approximation: *"two full years."* The literal translation is *"two years days,"* ^{INTERLINAR} or *"two years of days."* ^{YLT} That would be 720 lunar days, or 730 days according to our calendar.

This was *"two full years"* after Joseph had asked the butler to remember him. It was *"two full years"* that Joseph continued bound in prison (Psa 105:18-20). Of Joseph's tenure in prison the Scriptures say, *"the word of the Lord tried him"* (Psa 105:19). Other versions read, *"the word of the Lord kept testing him,"* ^{KJV} *"tested him through fiery trials,"* ^{GWN} *"the LORD tested Joseph's character,"* ^{NLT} *"the decree of the LORD purged him,"* ^{TNK} and *"the word of the Lord tried and tested him."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Two full years so far as the record is concerned, without a word from God. No explanation. No reaffirmation of the promise. Two full years of testing! Two

full years of trials! Two full years of waiting. This is nothing less than a testing of Joseph's faith. **If it is genuine, it will survive.** If it is nothing more than an empty profession, it will

hope was seen in Joseph's contact with the butler.

The test was not so God would know the strength of Joseph's faith. He

This test was so holy angels might see and know the potency of faith – something that is exclusive to men. It was also in order that Joseph might experience the resiliency of faith. In this two-year trial, the Lord removed any ground for hoping in men.

fail to hold up Joseph.

Will Joseph give up hope? Will he continue to cling to the promises he had heard from his father? Would he forget the dreams he had when he was seventeen? Would he discount them? Or, would these *"two full years"* confirm his faith? Would they douse the flame of hope, or cause it to burn more brightly? Those are the very things that were being tested.

We do not know the exact length of Joseph's imprisonment. When he went down into Egypt, he was seventeen (Gen 37:2). When Pharaoh brought him out of prison and set him over all Egypt, he was thirty (Gen 41:46). Unless Joseph remained the steward of Potiphar's house for a long time (which is not likely), that means he remained in prison for the better part of thirteen years. All of those years, Joseph was being tested – but particularly during the last two years – *"two full years"* – after a glimmer of

knows and declares *"the end from the beginning"* (Isa 46:10). This test was so holy angels might see and know the potency of faith – something that is exclusive to men. It was also in order that Joseph might experience the resiliency of faith. In this two-year trial, the Lord removed any ground for hoping in men. Additionally, it was so we might see the firmness of faith and hope, and how they can sustain a person throughout lengthy trials and testings. Truly, a lot is being accomplished in this extraordinary trial.

PHARAOH DREAMED HE STOOD BY THE RIVER

" . . . that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river. And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favored kine and fatfleshed; and they fed in a meadow. And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favored and leanfleshed; and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river. And the ill favored and leanfleshed kine did eat up

He was being shown a circumstance that would be controlled from heaven, and intended to have a predetermined conclusion.

the seven well favored and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke."

This is a dream about something Pharaoh himself would observe. It was not something that would merely be reported to him – *"he stood by the river."* He would see something good that would be overshadowed by something bad – seven gaunt cows eating up seven fat ones.

Both of these groups of cattle came from the river. That is, their

appearance was a controlled one, administered by something higher than themselves.

Ordinarily, the cattle that were fleshed out would have been stronger than the thin and gaunt ones, supposedly severely weakened from the lack of proper nourishment. In the animal kingdom, gaunt and weak animals become prey for the strong. However, that is not the case in Pharaoh's dream. **He was being shown a circumstance that would be controlled**

from heaven, and intended to have a predetermined conclusion.

Also, consider that Egypt was noted for its religious veneration of cattle (Ex 12:12). There is something affirmed in this dream that revealed the vanity of all Egyptian gods. **In it a circumstance is revealed about which the Egyptian gods could do nothing.** They could not stop a foretold famine from happening, and they did not possess the wisdom to properly prepare for it, or show the people how to successfully live through it with sufficient food. They were false gods, for any professed god that cannot determine and control circumstance is really no God at all.

Nothing or no one is superior that can be overcome.

THE SECOND DREAM

"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."

While the text may appear that it is about Pharaoh and what would happen in his kingdom, it was really about the Lord, and what He would do within His kingdom. Further, it had to do with a purpose in which Egypt was secondary, not primary. **This has to do with how God is going to develop Jacob's seed, so that the promise made to Abraham could be precisely fulfilled:**

- ➔ Abraham's seed would be a stranger in a land that was not theirs (Gen 15:13a).
- ➔ Abraham's seed would serve that nation (Gen 15:13b).
- ➔ That nation would afflict Abraham's seed for four hundred years (Gen

15:13c).

- ➔ God would judge that nation that afflicted His people (Gen 15:14a).
- ➔ After that judgment, Abraham's seed would come out *"with great substance"* (Gen 15:14b).

The dreams of Pharaoh were declaring things related to those promises, and how God would go about fulfilling them. **At the time of the dreams – about 200 years after God's promise to Abraham – only one of Abraham's seed was in the land: Joseph.** This account, therefore, is a revelation pertaining to how God was going to move Abraham's offspring into Egypt, where they would multiply until the time of their appointed deliverance.

HE DREAMED A SECOND TIME

"And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good. And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them. And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears..."

This apparently occurred in a single evening. That is, as soon as he awoke the first time, he fell asleep again, and dreamed the second time. Joseph's later interpretation of the dream clarifies that



God was making a single point with two dreams. If there had been a large gap of time between the dreams, the point would not have been as clearly made as it was when they were dreamed in a single night.

"Seven ears of corn came up on one stalk." These were not ears of corn as we are accustomed to in the USA. Even in English, the word "corn" means "A SMALL HARD SEED . . . THE SEEDS OF A CEREAL GRASS AND ESPECIALLY OF THE IMPORTANT CEREAL CROP OF A PARTICULAR REGION (AS WHEAT IN BRITAIN, OATS IN SCOTLAND AND IRELAND, AND INDIAN CORN IN THE NEW WORLD AND AUSTRALIA)." MERRIAM-WEBSTER

The first ears are described as *"rank and good:" "plump and good,"*

NKJV *“healthy and good,”* NIV *“full and healthy,”* CEB *“fat and good,”* DARBY *“choice and good,”* SEPTUAGINT *“full and ripe,”* NJB *and “solid and healthy.”* TNK

The lexical meaning of *“rank”* is “1) FAT 2) FAT, FATTER, FED, FIRM, PLENTEOUS.” STRONGS
The word *“good”* means, “GOOD, EXCELLENT (OF ITS KIND) . . . BETTER (COMPARATIVE).” STRONGS
This was grain that was both excellent and plenteous – a rare combination.

These were stalks of grain – wheat, barley, etc. Here were differing kinds of grain: full and productive grain versus thin and blasted grain.

BEHOLD, IT WAS A DREAM
“ . . . And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream.”

From the wording of the text, the

From the wording of the text, the dream had made such impression upon Pharaoh that it was difficult to believe it had not been an actual experience.

dream had made such impression upon Pharaoh that it was difficult to believe it had not been an actual experience. Of course, many people have had dreams that, upon awakening, were considered to have really taken place.

While God is in this whole matter, there is something we should note

about this experience. **When we are asleep** (about one third of the time), **we are vulnerable – unable to control the activities of the mind.** Were it not for the gracious keeping power of God, Satan could do a significant amount of work in our minds. Solomon said this of wisdom and discretion, which reach their apex in Christ: *“My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion: So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet”* (Prov 3:21-24). Solomon also said in the 127th Psalm, *“Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is*

vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so He giveth His beloved sleep ” (Psa 127:1-2) The NIV reads, for He grants sleep to those He loves,” with a footnote, *“for while they sleep He provides for.”* NIV

Once the Lord appeared to

Jeremiah confirming His love to him. Afterward Jeremiah wrote, *“Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me”* (Jer 31:26).

You see, then, how there is an unseen part of us that is not reliant upon sleep. If the Lord did not keep us, we could lose ground during the time our bodies are resting. In view of this, may God’s people experience what the Job referred to as *“songs in the night”* (Job 35:10). The chief musician wrote in the forty-second Psalm, *“Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life”* (Psa 42:8). Paul and Silas had this experience after they had been beaten and imprisoned (Acts 16:25). After having such an experience, Asaph wrote, *“I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search”* (Psa 77:6).

It is possible to have the experience of the Psalmist: *“At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee because of Thy righteous judgments”* (Psa 119:62). And again it is written, *“Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds”* (Psa 149:5).

Of course, the impact of Pharaoh’s dreams upon him was quite different. However, God was in this matter as He was working out what He had purposed for the future.

PHARAOH’S SPIRIT WAS TROUBLED

“ 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.”

PHARAOH’S SPIRIT WAS TROUBLED
“And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled...”

Other versions read, *“his mind was troubled,”* NIV *“he was disturbed,”* CEB *“he found himself so upset,”* CJB *“being struck with fear,”* DOUAY *“his mind was agitated,”* NAB *“was very disturbed,”* NLT *“his spirit is moved,”* YLT and *“he became very concerned as to what the dreams might mean.”* LIVING

As used in this text, the word *“troubled”* means, “BEAT REGULARLY; HENCE

(GENERALLY) TO IMPEL OR AGITATE: — MOVE, TROUBLE.” STRONGS

Pharaoh could not shake himself loose from his dreams. It is as though the images kept appearing before him, compelling him to think upon them, although his thoughts brought no satisfaction to him, only agitation. His thoughts were pummeling him. Behind the scenes, God would not let him

forget what he had dreamed. He seemed to sense the dreams were foretelling something of great consequence, but knew not what it was. All natural aptitude failed him.

Something We Can Learn from This

For approximately one third of our lives, we have no volitional control over our minds. Yet, God can stir us up to not be able to forget what coursed through our minds at that time. During the night, the thoughts Pharaoh had were not summoned up by his will. They were not the way he wanted to think. As if that were not enough, now, during his conscious hours, he was troubled by what he dreamed when he was asleep. **Considering these things should move the saints to give thanks for Divine protection during the night hours.** It is the Lord who keeps Satan from dominating us at that time.

HE CALLED FOR ALL THE MAGICIANS AND WISE MEN

“ . . . and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream . . . ” Other versions read, *“all the wise men of Egypt and all the holy men,”* ^{BBE} *“all of Egypt’s religious experts¹ and all of its advisors,”* ^{CEB} *“all the scribes of Egypt, and all the sages,”* ^{DARBY} *“all the interpreters of Egypt, and to all the wise men,”* ^{DOUAY} *“all the soothsayers of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof,”* ^{GENEVA} *“all of sacred scribes of Egypt, and all of the wise men of her.”* ^{INTERLINEAR}

The word “*magician*” is translated from a word meaning, “*DIVINER, MAGICIAN, ASTROLOGER . . . WRITER (ONLY IN DERIVATIVE SENSE OF ONE POSSESSED OF OCCULT KNOWLEDGE.*” ^{STRONGS} Here, these words are used in a religious sense, having to do with the purported

acquisition of knowledge under the power of some professed god or occultic power.

THERE WAS NONE THAT COULD INTERPRET

“ . . . but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.”

It is in a spiritual sense that Pharaoh sought for an understanding among the religious experts of the land. However, in this matter, they were not even able to feign an answer concerning the dreams. They were dealing with things that were outside the boundaries of their religion. Here was an intelligent communication – a

wisdom from above (James 3:17), the ministry of Jesus (Eph 4:20-21; 1 John 5:20), the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:12), spiritual understanding (Col 1:9), and the spiritual gifts God has placed in the church (1 Cor 12; Rom 12:1-6; Eph 4:11). **It seems to me that the modern church has not done well in coming to grips with these things.**

God does not make a practice of using the world’s wise men to give interpretations of what He has said, done or is doing. Both Pharaoh (Gen 41:8,24) and Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2:2-12) – both heathen – learned this. There is no justifiable reason for the

Many professed Christians are placing more reliance upon men than upon the God they pretend to be following.

dream – that, when it came to understanding it, transcended all human aptitude. **There is a body of very real and legitimate knowledge to which worldly wisdom and dark powers have no access.** All worldly wisdom withers when dealing with knowledge and wisdom that comes from above. Like Pharaoh, men seek in vain for the world to give any understanding concerning such things. Whether men wish to acknowledge it or not, such things as homiletics, hermeneutics, principles of interpretation, philosophy, psychology, linguistics, statistics, motivational wisdom, and the likes can add nothing to the understanding of the things of God. If they could, there would be little or no need for revelation (Eph 1:15-19),

professing church to be ignorant of it.

The contemporary practice of Christian organizations calling for the world’s wise men to assist them in understanding Scripture, or do the work of the Lord reveals the dominancy of practical atheism. **Many professed Christians are placing more reliance upon men than upon the God they pretend to be following.** When it comes to life in Christ Jesus, God has counted the wisdom of this world to be foolishness (1 Cor 1:21; 3:19). No perception or activity of men can nullify that pronouncement. Further, to conduct our lives as though those words were not true is a sin of greatest magnitude.

THE BUTLER MAKES JOSEPH KNOWN TO PHARAOH

⁹ Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day: 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.”

The time has now come for

was first restored to his position “he did not . . . remember Joseph, but forgot him” (Gen 40:23). Now we are told that Pharaoh had his dream “*at the end of two full years.*” During that time,

God will work through what appears to be mere circumstance – a seemingly chance-dream by a ruler, the recollection of a butler, and the Pharaoh who is in a position where he has good reason to value Joseph.

Joseph’s appointed release. The way is being prepared for all of the seed of Abraham to move into Egypt, where God has appointed they will increase to the number of people required to possess the promised land.

God will work through what appears to be mere circumstance – a seemingly chance-dream by a ruler, the recollection of a butler, and the Pharaoh who is in a position where he has good reason to value Joseph.

I REMEMBER

“Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day: 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: And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. . . .”

We do know how long the butler had been restored to his position of chief butler. Joseph had interpreted the dreams of the baker and the butler three days before their release from prison and restoration to Pharaoh’s court (Gen 40:13,19). When the butler

Joseph did to come into the mind of the butler. Now, however, the appointed time had arrived, and the Lord saw to it that the butler remembered Joseph.

THERE WAS A YOUNG MAN WITH US

“ . . . 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. . . .”

There is something important to be seen in this text. When Joseph had told the butler the interpretation of his dream, he added, *“I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon”* (Gen 40:14-15). **At that time, Joseph appealed to justice.** He had been forced to leave the land of the Hebrews against his will, and was innocent of the charges that were brought against him in Egypt. However, this is not the way God had chosen to have Joseph released, and that would be made apparent to Joseph.

A Lesson to be Learned

While justice is an important matter with the Lord (Lev 19:15; Isa 59:15; Jer 22:3), His will being fulfilled is more important. **Joseph will not be released from prison because of appropriate justice, but because of a need – a need arranged by God Himself, that was to be used to fulfill His promise to Abraham.**

The premier example of this kind of work is the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. We are saved through Christ’s death, which was carried out in an unjust manner – *“by the hands of wicked men”* (Acts 2:23; 3:13-15). He was condemned as One who *“made Himself king and spoke against Caesar”* (John 19:12). The Jews said, *“We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made himself the Son of God.”* (John 19:7). Who but God can bring *“so great salvation”* (Heb 2:3) from such a glaring act of injustice!

IT CAME TO PASS AS HE INTERPRETED

“And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged.”

For the first time, Pharaoh hears of a man who declared what Pharaoh was going to do before he actually did it – perhaps even before he considered doing it. He learns that the butler knew he was going to be exalted to his original office, and the baker would be hanged.

I would imagine that the magicians of Egypt could not produce such prognostications, with their accompanying fulfillment. This was probably Pharaoh’s first encounter of a man whose God was vastly superior to those of Egypt.

PHARAOH CALLS FOR JOSEPH

“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.”

God’s appointed time had come – as the Psalmist said, *“his word came”* (Psa 105:19). Consequently, things are

going to move along rather swiftly. As it is written of God, *"He sendeth forth His commandment upon earth: His word runneth very swiftly"* (Psa 147:15). **In other words, what God sets in motion is not marked by delay.** A prophecy may be uttered thousands of years before it is to be fulfilled, such as His Word concerning the Seed of the woman (Gen 3:15). **However, when the time comes, things gather sudden momentum.** This confirms that the Lord is, in fact, *"the Governor among the nations"* (Psa 22:28). No personality in any place can stall what the Lord is doing, or cause it not to come to pass. God hurls out the challenge to humanity, *"I will work, and who can hinder or reverse it?"* ^{AMPLIFIED} (Isa 43:13).

PHARAOH SENT AND CALLED JOSEPH

"Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph . . ." Other versions read, *"summoned Joseph,"* ^{CEB} *"Forthwith at the king's command"* ^{DOUAY} and *"sent for Joseph at once."* ^{NLT}

God working on the heart of Pharaoh, and turning it wherever he wanted (Prov 21:1), Pharaoh immediately sends one of his servants to the prison, and calls for Joseph. That is the rightful prerogative of a king.

A Higher Calling

Much more, this is an attribute of the God of heaven who calls people to Him self. Paul was *"called"* from being a Pharisee to being an apostle (Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1). Those who are in Christ are referred to as *"the called"* (Rom 1:6; 8:28). They have been *"called to be saints"* (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:2), for God has *"called"* them (Rom 9:24). They have been *"called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord"* (1 Cor 1:9). God has *"called us to peace"* 1 Cor 7:15). God called us *"into the grace of Christ"* (Gal 1:6), and to liberty as well (Gal 5:13). We have been *"called into His kingdom and glory"* (1 Thess 2:12), and *"to holiness"* as well (1 Thess 4:7). God called us by the Gospel, and *"to the obtaining of glory"* (2 Thess 2:14). We have been *"called with a holy calling"* (2 Tim 1:9). In Christ we are called *"to inherit a*

blessing" (1 Pet 3:9).

I do not know why there is not more preaching about God's calling. Our own calling is something we are to *"see"* (1 Cor 1:26). We are also to give diligence to make our calling *"sure"* (2 Pet 1:10).

THEY BROUGHT HIM HASTILY OUT

" . . . and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon . . ." Other versions read, *"they brought him out quickly,"* ^{NKJV} *"hurriedly brought him out,"* ^{NASB} *"immediately,"* ^{GWN} *"rushed from the dungeon,"* ^{TNK} and *"caused him to run out."* ^{YLT}

An appropriate response was given to the king's command, and Joseph was immediately brought out of the *"dungeon,"* which was a pit, probably an empty cistern. As David once said, *"the king's business required haste"* (1 Sam 1:8).

The Manner of Divine Working

This manner of a call being executed immediately reflects a characteristic of the Kingdom of God. Take, for example, the various conversions that are mentioned in the book of Acts.

- ➔ 3,000 on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:37-41).
- ➔ 5,000 when Peter and John preached in the Temple (Acts 4:4).
- ➔ Multitudes added when the Apostles were in Solomon's porch (Acts 5:12-14).
- ➔ Cornelius and his household upon hearing the Gospel (Acts 10:43-48).
- ➔ Much people added to the Lord when Barnabas was in Antioch (Acts 11:22-24).
- ➔ Sergius Paulus, political official, after hearing Paul's doctrine (Acts 13:12).
- ➔ Lydia and her household upon hearing Paul preach (Acts 14:14-15).
- ➔ The Philippian jailor and his household when he heard Paul speak

the Word of God (Acts 16:30-34).

- ➔ Crispus, the chief ruler of a synagogue, his house, and many Corinthians upon hearing Paul (Acts 18:7-8).

All of these were immediate responses – answers to the call of the Almighty. Among other things, this confirms that the call of God is certainly no less effective than that of a government official.

HE SHAVED HIMSELF AND CHANGED HIS RAIMENT

" . . . and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment . . ." Other versions read, *"when his hair had been cut and his dress changed,"* ^{BBE} *"after a quick shave and change of clothes,"* ^{LIVING} and *"But Joseph [first] shaved himself, changed his clothes, and made himself presentable."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The word *"shaved"* is not used here as we are accustomed – the shaving of the face. This was the shaving of the head, resulting in baldness. The word translated shaved means, *"PROPERLY, TO BE BALD, I.E. (CAUSATIVELY) TO SHAVE; FIGURATIVELY TO LAY WASTE: — POLL, SHAVE OFF."* ^{STRONG'S} (Num 6:9,18; Deut 21:12; Judges 16:19). It can also refer to the removal of the beard (Lev 14:9), the eyebrows (Lev 14:9), And even the hair of the feet (Isa 7:20).

Here, the emphasis appears to be the head and facial hair. Egyptian historians write, *"Wilkinson states that 'THE CUSTOM OF SHAVING THE HEAD AS WELL AS BEARD WAS NOT CONFINED TO THE PRIESTS IN EGYPT, BUT WAS GENERAL AMONG ALL CLASSES'"* (RAWLINSON'S ^{HERODOTUS,} VOL. 2. P. 49; CF. ^{ANCIENT EGYPTIANS,} VOL. 2. PP. 330-332. ED. 1878)

EGYPTIAN SHAVING PRACTICE

"ELITE MEN AND WOMEN CUT THEIR HAIR SHORT OR SHAVED IT COMPLETELY, EITHER TO KEEP COOL, TO FIT UNDER A WIG, OR AS A PRECAUTION AGAINST LICE. THEY WORE WIGS MADE OF HUMAN HAIR, AND HAIRPIECES OF ARTIFICIAL CURLS OR BRAIDS THAT COULD BE ADDED SEPARATELY. WIGS WERE PROBABLY WORN IN PUBLIC AND AT PARTIES. MEN AND WOMEN ALSO SHAVED THEIR BODY HAIR AND EGYPTIAN PRIESTS WERE REQUIRED TO SHAVE THEIR HEADS AND BODIES AS PART OF A PURIFICATION PROCESS DURING THEIR TERMS OF SERVICE IN A TEMPLE." ^{WWW.QUERYCAT.COM}

It appears as though Joseph did this to honor the King, and also that undue attention would not be drawn to himself.

It appears as though Joseph did this to honor the King, and also that undue attention would not be drawn to himself. In this he reflected the wisdom of Solomon who wrote, *"Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and do not claim a place among great men; it is better for him to say to you, "Come up here," than for him to humiliate you before a nobleman. What you have seen with your eyes; do not bring hastily to court, for what will you do in the end if your neighbor puts you to shame?"* (Prov 25:6-8). The wise man also said, *"My son, fear thou the LORD and the king"* (Prov 24:21).

Jesus Himself spoke after this manner: *"But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee"* (Luke 14:10).

The apostles also admonished us concerning giving proper honor to dignitaries: *"Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor"* (Rom 13:7). And again, *"Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king"* (1 Pet 2:17).

Paul not only taught this kind of honor, but practiced it as well. When addressing Felix, even in a corrective manner, Paul said, *"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness"* (Acts 26:25). When standing before king Agrippa, and being told he could speak in his own defense, he said, *"I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews: Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently"* (Acts 26:3).

While this may be a touchy subject with many, Peter said those who were not afraid to speak evil of dignities were presumptuous and self-willed: *"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord"* (2 Pet 2:9-11).

All of this must be viewed in light

of the revelation that it is God Himself who *"removeth kings, and setteth up kings"* (Dan 2:21). Nebuchadnezzar was told something that was decreed by heavenly *"watchers"* and the *"demand of the holy ones"* – namely, *"that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men"* (Dan 4:17).

That should suffice to confirm what God has said about our attitude toward those who are in authority. It does not mean their personal sin must never be rebuked, as John did to Herod (Matt 14:3-4). That rebuke, however, was owing to his infraction of the commandment of the Lord.

I say these things because in our time, and under the system of government that we have, men may imagine they can ignore what God has said on this matter.

HE CAME IN UNTO PHARAOH

" . . . and came in unto Pharaoh."

After preparing himself appropriately, Joseph comes before Pharaoh. **He does not come to register a complaint, or to present a case for the injustice that has been done to him.** Rather, it is because he has been summoned to appear before Pharaoh. **At this point he does not know why he is there.** Perhaps he concluded it was because the butler had told Pharaoh what Joseph had requested (Gen 40:15). However, God is governing this occasion in every detail.

IT IS NOT IN ME: GOD SHALL GIVE AN ANSWER

"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."

I want to draw your attention to the boldness and confidence that Joseph exudes throughout this encounter. **There is nothing about him in the flesh that can account for his posture.** He was a Hebrew, and the Egyptians had no respect for the Hebrews – in fact, it was considered an abomination for them to eat with a

Hebrew (Gen 43:32). He was also a prisoner, and that certainly did not bring any honor to him. In addition to all of that, he was a young man, which would seem to exclude him from the category of the wise

Yet, Joseph stands before the king as one who is in charge of the

situation. He does not tremble or stammer, but is in control of himself in a most admirable way.

We are witnessing the impact that faith has upon the one possessing it. Let us posture ourselves in a learning mode, for what the Scriptures say about faith and those who possess it is being lived out in this account.

At this point, Joseph does not know why he is there. Perhaps he thought the butler had, at last, delivered the message of the injustice he had experienced, as Joseph had instructed him to do (Gen 40:14-15).

The thing to be seen in this is that

The thing to be seen in this is that faith can bring boldness to those who possess it, even though they may not be aware of the circumstances.

faith can bring boldness to those who possess it, even though they may not be aware of the circumstances.

I HAVE DREAMED A DREAM

"And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it . . ."

So far as the Scriptural record is concerned, Joseph has confronted four dreams, two of them being his own.

➔ **DREAM #1:** AGE = 17 YRS. While he and his brothers were binding sheaves in the field, his sheaf arose and stood upright. His brother's sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to his sheaf (Gen 37:7). His brothers responded, *"Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?"* (Gen 37:8) JOSEPH GAVE NO INTERPRETATION.

➔ **DREAM #2:** AGE - 17 YRS. The sun, moon, and stars made obeisance to him (Gen 37:9). His father, Jacob, responded, *"Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to*

bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" (Gen 37:10). JOSEPH GAVE NO INTERPRETATION.

➔ **DREAM #3:** AGE, BETWEEN 17 AND 30. It is said of the imprisoned former chief butler of Pharaoh, *"And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me; And in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes,"* *And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand"* (Gen 40:11). JOSEPH INTERPRETED THE DREAM,

WHICH INTERPRETATION CAME TO PASS (Gen 40:13,20-21).

➔ **DREAM #4:** AGE, BETWEEN 17 AND 30. The imprisoned former chief baker of Pharaoh said, *"I also was in my dream, and, behold, I had three white baskets on my head: And in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of bakemeats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head"* (Gen 40:17). JOSEPH INTERPRETED THE DREAM, WHICH INTERPRETATION CAME TO PASS (Gen 40:18-19,20-21).

I do not suppose there is a worldly-wise person who would consider Joseph competent to give authoritative interpretations of dreams – but he had been qualified by God.

What we are seeing here is not an industrious young man working his way up the ladder of fame. **We are being exposed to the working of God, who places a zero-value on worldly credentials, the wisdom of the world, and the evaluation of men.** If we fail to perceive this, we will gain no lasting

benefit from this record. When God looks for a man – whether it is for kingship or as a dispenser of wisdom, He does not look for worldly credentials. His eyes are running too and fro upon the face of the whole earth, looking for a man *"whose heart is perfect toward Him"* (2 Chr 16:9). Stated another way, He is in quest of a man who is *"after His own heart"* (1 Sam 13:14). He has found such a man in Joseph.

I HAVE HEARD SAY OF THEE

" . . . and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. . ." Other versions read, *"I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it,"* ^{NKJV} *"when you hear a dream, you can interpret it."* ^{NIV} *"I heard that when you are told a dream, you can say what it means,"* ^{GWN} and *"I have heard concerning thee, saying, Thou understandest a dream to interpret it,"* ^{YLT}

Joseph is not being addressed by a fellow prisoner now. This is the king of Egypt, and he had heard of the reputation of Joseph – based upon two incidents that were reported by a former prisoner who had previously angered Pharaoh. If we take God out of the matter, how likely is it that anything good will come from this? **But God is not out of the matter, He is driving this whole thing along.** How will Joseph respond to this? Will he cite his success rate, which amounted to two dreams being interpreted correctly?

Learn This

As thoroughly as you can, learn to avoid thinking as though God was not present, or that He no longer works signs and wonders. God does not change – yea, He cannot change. **That being true, His people cannot be in a situation that is totally hopeless – even though it may seem that is the case – something that Paul himself experienced** (2 Cor 1:8).

IT IS NOT IN ME

" . . . And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me . . ." Other versions read, *"I cannot do it,"* ^{NIV} *"It is not I."* ^{NRSV} Some versions totally miss the point–i.e. *"Without me, God*

shall give Pharaoh a prosperous answer," ^{DOUAY} "Without me God shall answer," ^{GENEVA} "Without me -- God doth answer," ^{YLT} and "God [not I] will give Pharaoh a [favorable] answer." ^{AMPLIFIED}

I do not know how anyone could miss a point that is so significant. Joseph was saying that he did not have any **inherent** ability to interpret the dream – which is the same thing he told the butler and the baker (Gen 40:8). However, that did not mean God would give Pharaoh the interpretation without Joseph. **In fact, the record clearly states that God gave the interpretation through Joseph.** That interpretation did not originate with Joseph, but he was the appointed vehicle through which it was given to Pharaoh. It is pitiful that we are living in such a time that this kind of rudimentary explanation has to be given. Joseph was neither saying n o r insinuating that God would give an answer to Pharaoh without him.

GOD SHALL GIVE PHARAOH AN

Joseph was saying that he did not have any inherent ability to interpret the dream – which is the same thing he told the butler and the baker (Gen 40:8). However, that did not mean God would give Pharaoh the interpretation without Joseph.

ANSWER

" . . . God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Other versions read, "Joseph then answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer," ^{NASB} "God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires," ^{NIV} "an answer that will set his mind at peace," ^{CJB} "a prosperous answer," ^{DOUAY} "God shall answer for the wealth of Pharaoh," ^{GENEVA} "the answer that he needs," ^{GWN} "for the well-being of Pharaoh," ^{NAB} and "God can tell you what it means and set you at ease." ^{NLT}

Here again, some of the versions are rather sloppy. Joseph is not saying God will give Pharaoh the particular answer he desires, as the NIV states. **Rather, the desire that will be answered is that the dream be properly interpreted.** Secondly, by saying that it would be in peace, Joseph is saying the dream is not the announcement of Pharaoh's curse, or his demise – like some dreams Nebuchadnezzar had (Dan 2:38-39; 4:26).

THERE WAS NONE THAT COULD DECLARE IT

" 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 favored; and they fed in a meadow: ¹⁹ And, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill favored and leanfleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness: ²⁰ And the lean and the ill favored 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 favored, 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."**

PHARAOH TELLS HIS DREAM

"And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river: And, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fatfleshed and well favored; and they fed in a meadow: And, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill favored and leanfleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness: And the lean and the ill favored kine did eat up the first seven fat kine: And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill favored, as at the beginning. So I awoke. And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good: And, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them: And the thin ears devoured the seven good ears . . ."

The components of the dream are particularized.

- Pharaoh is standing on the bank of the river.
- Seven "kine" (female cattle) came up out of the water.
- They were "fatfleshed," "fat and well favored" or "sleek." (well-groomed). ^{NASB}
- These "kine" were feeding in a meadow (a good crop of grass).
- Seven additional "kine" came up "after them."
- They were "poor," or scrawny, "very ill favored," or ugly, and "leanfleshed," or thin.
- Pharaoh had never seen such bad

cattle in all of Egypt.

- ➔ The lean cattle ate up the fat cattle.
- ➔ After they had eaten the fat cattle, there was no evidence that they had eaten anything at all. They still looked the same.
- ➔ Pharaoh then awoke.
- ➔ Immediately, apparently upon falling asleep again, his dream resumed.
- ➔ This time he saw seven ears, or heads, of grain come up on a single stalk, *“full and good.”*
- ➔ After them, seven ears, or heads, *“withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind,”* sprung up.
- ➔ The *“thin ears devoured the seven good ears.”*

I do not doubt that God enabled Pharaoh to remember every detail of his dream so he could better grasp the

I do not doubt that God enabled Pharaoh to remember every detail of his dream so he could better grasp the interpretation that would be given to him.

interpretation that would be given to him.

AS WITH THE FIRST DREAM, NONE COULD INTERPRET IT

“ . . . and I told this unto the magicians; but there was none that could declare it to me.” Other versions read, *“no one could explain it to me,”* ^{NASB} *“not one of them was able to give me the sense of it,”* ^{BBE} *“no one can tell me what it means,”* ^{CSB} *“no one has given me the answer.”* ^{NJB}

I do not doubt that these *“magicians”* could not even fabricate a meaning of the dreams. They were completely stymied by them – left

“speechless” because they were confronted with the wisdom of God and simply did not know what to do with it.

This is involved in sayings like, *“hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?”* (1 Cor 1:20), and, *“For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God”* (1 or 3:19).

When religious men attempt to wed the wisdom of this world with the wisdom of God, it is nothing more than an exercise in vanity. They cannot blend together, and those who attempt such things are deprived of all wisdom, and confined to error.

GOD HAS SHOWN WHAT HE IS ABOUT TO DO

“²⁵ And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath showed Pharaoh what He is about to do.”

Joseph has been led by God in such a manner as prepared him for this hour. He had learned to care for another man’s house, and doubtless to give an account of himself. In both Potiphar’s house and in the prison, he had learned to consider the interests of others, not living for himself alone. You will now behold how a man with confidence in the Lord speaks.

THE DREAM IS ONE

“And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one . . .” Other versions read, *“Pharaoh’s dreams are one and the same,”* ^{NASB} *“These two dreams have the same sense,”* ^{BBE} *“Pharaoh has actually had one dream,”* ^{CEB} *“Pharaoh’s dreams mean the same*

thing,” ^{CSB} *“Pharaoh had the same dream twice,”* ^{GWN} *“Both dreams of Pharaoh have the same meaning,”* ^{NET} and *“Pharaoh’s dreams are identical.”* ^{ISV}

Immediately Joseph is given to recognize the situation. Pharaoh has had two dreams, but they both mean the same thing. **This is an example of enlightenment or illumination.** Joseph does not act surprised, even though this is wisdom that has come down from above (James 3:17). He is not in a stupor, not knowing what is coming out of his mouth. Experientially Joseph sees the matter clearly, just as though it had been studied out by himself.

Something For Us to See

When Paul prayed that God would give His people *“the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him”* (Eph 1:17), and cause them to *“be filled with the knowledge of His will in all*

wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Col 1:9), he was seeking for the saints to have this kind of understanding. It was an understanding accompanied by wisdom and confidence. It would be characterized by clarity and persuasion.

This Is Not Clear to the Flesh

There is no way to explain this kind of understanding and wisdom to the carnal mind. Unlike the wisdom of this world, it is not the result of a disciplined procedure, or a comparative analysis of a variety of things. While there is a very small place for academics in the matter of articulation, they do not have a critical part in the acquisition of wisdom itself.

The clarity that Joseph experienced was, in fact, the work of faith. After all, *“faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”* (Heb 11:1). What

Joseph makes known is both substantive and evidential. It is solid and persuasive.

GOD HATH SHOWED PHARAOH

“ . . . God hath showed Pharaoh what He is about to do.” Other versions read, *“God has told to Pharaoh what He is about to do,”* ^{NASB} *“Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do,”* ^{NIV} *“what God is about to do he hath declared unto Pharaoh,”* ^{ASV} *“made clear to Pharaoh what he is about to do”* ^{BBE} and *“that which God is doing he hath declared to Pharaoh.”* ^{YLT}

There are two important things to be seen in these words:

That This Revelation Has Come from God

This has not been made known by one of the Egyptian gods! In Pharaoh’s court there were *“magicians”* who purported to have contact with the gods. But their gods were not really gods. It could very well be said of them, *“They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat”* (Psa 115:5-7).

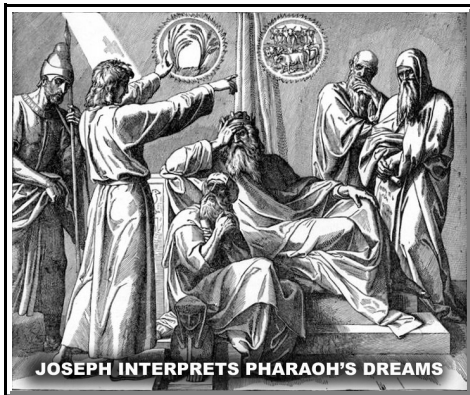
Joseph does not represent a god that has been graven by the hands of

men, and is like unto them. This is the true God, who is transcendent to men. Joseph does not identify this God for Pharaoh, as though He is one God among many. At this point, it is enough to know that it is **the** God whom Joseph serves – *“the Lord God of the Hebrews”* (Ex 3:18; 5:3; ; 7:16; 9:1,13; 10:3).

That This Is Something About to Happen

To confirm that what he is saying is not mere speculation, Joseph tells Pharaoh his dreams speak of something that is about to take place. That is, it will soon be confirmed that the events that Joseph is making known to Pharaoh are, in fact, very real.

THE DREAM IS ONE



JOSEPH INTERPRETS PHARAOH'S DREAMS

“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 favored 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.”

Joseph will now specify the details of the dreams, and declare their meaning. Again, he is doing this with the utmost confidence that is found in his faith. He knows there is no chance that what he is declaring is not the absolute truth of the matter.

TWO PERIODS OF SEVEN YEARS

“The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are

seven years . . . And the seven thin and ill favored kine . . . and the seven empty ears . . . shall be seven years of famine.”

Two distinct and equal periods of time characterized by radically different circumstances. One period is productive, the other period is not. One is unrestricted, and the other is limited. One is good, and the other bad. What is even more, the bad follows the good, and the unproductive follows the productive. That will allow for proper preparation. What may appear to be chaotic is actually being meticulously managed from heaven.

THE INTERPRETATION

“²⁸ This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do he showeth 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.”

WHAT GOD IS ABOUT TO DO

“This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do he showeth unto Pharaoh...”

Notice, Joseph does not say, *“This is about what is going to happen.”* He rather affirms that this is *“what God is about to do.”*

There is a certain manner that characterizes those who are trusting in the Lord. In particular, when an unusual thing is done that does not have a satisfactory explanation *“under the sun”*

(Eccl 1:9), those who know not the Lord are *“astonished”* (Lev 26:32; 1 Kgs 9:8; Lk 4:32; Acts 10:45; 12:16). Faith, however, moves those possessing it to say, *“This is the LORD’S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes”* (Psa 118:23).

So it is that Joseph makes clear that what is going to take place is something that *“God is about to do.”*

SEVEN YEARS OF PLENTY

*“ . . . Behold, there come seven years of **great plenty** throughout **all** the land of Egypt . . .”* Other versions read, *“great abundance,”* ^{NIV} *“great wealth of grain,”* ^{BBE} *“plenty of food,”* ^{GWN} *“a period of great prosperity,”* ^{NLT} *“The next seven years will be a period of great prosperity throughout all the land of Egypt.”* ^{LIVING}

Seven consecutive years of bumper crops! That is long enough to prepare for hard times – it is also long enough to forget that such prosperity can come only from the Lord.

A GRIEVOUS FAMINE

“ . . . And there shall arise after

As depicted by Pharaoh’s dreams, the famine would be like the seven thin cows eating up the seven fat ones, and the seven empty and blasted heads of grain devouring the seven good ears.

them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous.”

Notice what is said about this famine.

- ➔ It is unusually long – seven full years.
- ➔ It is a famine that will impact all of Egypt.
- ➔ All of the plenty of Egypt will be

forgotten.

- ➔ The famine will progress from bad to worse – it will consume the land.
- ➔ It will be a time of hopelessness – The plenty will not be known during that time.
- ➔ The famine would be *“very grievous,”* or *“very severe.”* ^{NASB}

As depicted by Pharaoh’s dreams, the famine would be like the seven thin cows eating up the seven fat ones, and the seven empty and blasted heads of grain devouring the seven good ears. It would, unless met with Divine wisdom, consume every bit of food.

THE THING IS ESTABLISHED BY GOD

“ 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 now delivers the essential message. **This is not something that can be changed, averted, or turned away.** The fact that the dream was *“doubled”* (fat and lean), and *“twice”* (kine and wheat) confirmed this.

THE THING IS ESTABLISHED

Other versions read, *“it means that the matter is determined by God,”* ^{NASB} *“the matter has been firmly decided by God,”* ^{NIV} *“the thing is fixed by God,”* ^{NRSV} *“this thing is certain,”* ^{BBE} *“the matter has been definitely decided by God,”* ^{GWN} *“the saying which is from*

God shall be true” ^{SEPTUAGINT} *“the matter has been decreed by God,”* ^{NET} *“the thing is established by God,”* ^{YLT} and *“this thing . . . is fully prepared and established by God.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Here are earthly events that are initiated, governed, and brought to an appointed conclusion solely by the Sovereign God of heaven.

- ➔ Both of the events – the years of plenty and the famine – have been established, or decreed, by God.
- ➔ The length of these has also been Divinely determined – seven years for each period.
- ➔ The sequence of the events has also been put in place by God – first the

seven years of plenty, followed by the seven years of famine.

- ➔ The effectiveness of the famine has also been decided by God Himself – it would thoroughly overshadow agricultural productivity, which would be forgotten by reason of the consuming famine.

No personality on earth or in the region occupied by the spiritual powers aligned against God, will be able to in anyway change or modify these determinations. The period of prosperity will not be able to be lengthened, and the time of famine will not be able to be shortened. No part of Egypt or the surrounding areas will be exempted – not even Canaan.

This record should lead us to the conclusion that things we are powerless to alter or change have been decreed by God – whether it destruction as experienced by Job, or prosperity as experienced by Solomon.

We should also learn from this to trust in the Lord with all of our heart, and lean not to our own understanding (Prov 3:5).

GOD WILL SHORTLY BRING IT TO PASS

Other versions read, "God will

quickly bring it about," ^{NASB} "God will do it soon" ^{NIV} "God will shortly bring it about." ^{NRSV} "God will quickly make it come about," ^{BBE} "He will do it very soon," ^{GWN} "God will hasten to accomplish it," ^{SEPTUAGINT} "God will make it happen soon," ^{NET} "God is hastening to do it," ^{YLT} and "this thing which God will very soon bring to pass." ^{AMPLIFIED}

Unless these two seven-year periods had been made known, there was no way either of them could have been anticipated. That is why God made known what He was going to do

to Pharaoh. However, He did it in such a way as to prove only those who are chosen by Him will be used as the vehicle of understanding.

Now, everything is ready to commence the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. The outcome of these two periods will be the means through which Jacob and all of his posterity are brought into Egypt. They will remain there for over four centuries, until they have multiplied, to the point where they will be able to begin their occupation of the promised land.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 9/6/13. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The sixty-fifth lesson will cover verses 33 thru 46 of chapter forty-one: "THE EXALTATION OF JOSEPH." After interpreting Pharaoh's dreams, Joseph admonishes him to seek out a man who is discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. He then told Pharaoh what this man should do in order to prepare for the famine that was approaching. Pharaoh accepted Joseph's words and concluded that Joseph himself was the man who was needed, because the Spirit of God was in him. He then made Joseph "ruler over all the land of Egypt." Thus was the way prepared for the sustenance of Israel, as well as their significant expansion in the land of Egypt – thus fulfilling the word God has spoken to Abraham (Gen 15:13-14). Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.