

JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Lesson 15: JOSEPH – The Dreamer, The Dream Interpreter

Aim: To show how despite Joseph becoming a slave in Egypt, God causes him to prosper in the midst of difficult circumstances. This leads Joseph to interpret the dreams of 3 men.

Key Scriptures: Genesis 39:21-23; 40:9-23; 41:17-32

In the last lesson we saw that Joseph's brothers, after throwing him into the Pit in the wilderness, sold him to foreign traders going down to Egypt.

Q: What does the Pit represent in Scripture, and can you find a verse that shows this?

A:

Our mini-series within a bigger series is entitled: '**Joseph, a Type of Christ**' and we have discovered that Joseph being consigned to the Pit by his jealous brothers paralleled the death and burial of Jesus Christ. Now clearly Joseph did not actually die, but the brothers stripped him of his tunic of many colors and killed a goat to spread its blood on the tunic. When their father Jacob saw the tunic he believed that Joseph was no more, having been savaged by a wild beast. Joseph was Jacob's favorite son and he mourned his loss bitterly, refusing to be comforted.

Just as Joseph had been lifted up from the Pit and taken to Egypt, a far country, so Jesus on the 3rd Day after his death and burial in the tomb, was

resurrected by the power of the Spirit, and 40 days later He ascended to heaven, a 'far country'.

Once in Egypt the Ishmaelite traders sold Joseph to Potiphar, a captain of Pharaoh's guard. Despite the Lord being with him and prospering his work and position in Potiphar's house, Joseph ended up in prison wrongly accused.

However, once in prison, the Lord was with him yet again:

***Genesis 39:21** But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.*

22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing.

23 The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper.

Can you see how despite his circumstances the Lord continued to raise Joseph up into positions of authority? We had learnt in previous lessons that at the age of 17 Joseph was wise for his age and because of that his father Jacob loved him and gave him a splendid tunic befitting his love of him and his wisdom.

Q: What similarities do you see between Joseph and the Prophet Daniel?

A:

We had previously read in **Genesis 37:7-9** that Joseph had two dreams that depicted one day he would be in a position of rulership over his brothers. The favor of the Lord towards Joseph where he was given positions of authority in Potiphar's house, and again in the prison, were steppingstones towards the fulfillment of those dreams.

Meanwhile Pharaoh's butler and baker also found themselves in the prison, and they each had a dream:

Genesis 40:9 Then the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "Behold, in my dream a vine was before me,

10 "and in the vine were three branches; it was as though it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes.

11 "Then Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand."

12 And Joseph said to him, "This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days.

13 "Now within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner, when you were his butler.

14 "But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house.

15 "For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon."

Then the baker told his dream:

Genesis 40:16 When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, "I also was in my dream, and there were three white baskets on my head.

17 "In the uppermost basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the birds ate them out of the basket on my head."

18 So Joseph answered and said, "This is the interpretation of it: The three baskets are three days.

19 "Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat your flesh from you."

Q: How were the two dreams similar?

A:

Q: How did the interpretations of the dreams differ?

A:

Let's now read the outcome of Joseph's interpretation of the 2 dreams:

Genesis 40:20 Now it came to pass on the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants.

21 Then he restored the chief butler to his butlership again, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand.

22 But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them.

23 Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

Joseph's interpretations were correct, and they came to pass just as he said they would on the **third day!**

Q: Why is the Third Day so important in Scripture?

A:

However, the chief butler did not remember Joseph after his restoration to his former position. Fortunately, the Lord's plans for Joseph would still come to pass!

Two years after the butler was restored Pharaoh had 2 dreams that brought him great distress but none of the magicians and wise men of Egypt could interpret them. And it was then that the butler remembered Joseph in the prison and told Pharaoh what had happened to him there. As a result, Joseph was quickly removed from the dungeon, and he shaved, and changed his clothes to appear before Pharaoh. When Joseph arrived Pharaoh recounted his dreams to him:

***Genesis 41:17** Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: "Behold, in my dream I stood on the bank of the river.*

18 "Suddenly seven cows came up out of the river, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow.

19 "Then behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such ugliness as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt.

20 "And the gaunt and ugly cows ate up the first seven, the fat cows.

21 "When they had eaten them up, no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were just as ugly as at the beginning. So I awoke.

22 "Also I saw in my dream, and suddenly seven heads came up on one stalk, full and good.

23 "Then behold, seven heads, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them.

24 "And the thin heads devoured the seven good heads. So I told this to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me."

Q: Describe the 2 sets of 7 cows.

A:

Q: What happened in the dream?

A:

Q: What happened in the 2nd part of the dream?

A:

Obviously cows don't normally eat other cows; and grain stalks don't eat grain stalks. None of Pharaoh's wise men and magicians could explain Pharaoh's dreams. Can you see that the dreams are connected with agriculture, food and eating? What do you think the dreams are indicating? Why do you think Pharaoh's magicians couldn't explain them?

Let's read what Joseph told Pharaoh about his dreams which the magicians were unable to explain:

Genesis 41:25 *Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do:*

26 "The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads are seven years; the dreams are one.

27 "And the seven thin and ugly cows which came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty heads blighted by the east wind are seven years of famine.

28 "This is the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do.

29 "Indeed seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt;

30 "but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land.

31 "So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it will be very severe.

32 "And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

Q: What did the various sets of 7 represent?

A:

Q: What will the 2 periods of 7 years reveal?

A:

Q: How is the famine described?

A:

Q: If we now take the 2 periods of 7 years over into the antitype what do the 2 sets of 7 years portray?

A: 7 Years of plenty =

7 Years of famine =

Q: Re-read v.32. How does it equate with Joseph also having 2 similar dreams?

A:

Q: By way of revision, what did Joseph's 2 dreams reveal that God would bring to pass?

A:

Both Pharaoh and Joseph's dreams were prophetic. We have already established that Joseph is a Type of Christ in various ways. We also know that Moses who wrote about Joseph was a prophet and that types are prophecy. Therefore when the written word became flesh at His first Advent, He came as PROPHET (Deut.18:18). We know that Christ is currently fulfilling the role of PRIEST. At His 2nd Advent He will be KING.

In the final session on Joseph as a Type of Christ, we shall see Joseph's dreams finally brought to pass. And we will also see that the Lord's plans for Joseph to attain to a position of power and authority are not for the purpose of triumphing over his brothers who sold him into slavery. Rather, there is a bigger purpose and it is linked to his role as a TYPE of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the World.

Final Activity:

Complete the 4 ovals on the next page.



