

Genesis Chapter 41 Continued

Genesis 41:42 "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;"

“Ring ... vestures ... gold chain”: Emblems of office and a reward of clothing and jewelry suitable to the new rank accompanied Pharaoh’s appointment of Joseph as vizier, or prime minister, the second-in-command (verse 40; 45:8, 26). Joseph wore the royal seal on his finger, authorizing him to transact the affairs of state on behalf of Pharaoh himself.

Verses 43-45: Other awards appropriate to promotion were also bestowed upon Joseph, namely official and recognizable transportation (verse 43), an Egyptian name (verse 45), and an Egyptian wife (verse 45). Further, the populace was commanded to show deference for their vizier (verse 43, “Bow the knee”).

All these dreams had been revealed by God, in a rare display of manifesting truth through pagans, so that Joseph would be established in Egypt as a leader and, thus elevated, could be used for the preservation of God’s people when the famine came to Canaan. Thus, God cared for His people and fulfilled His promises (see note on 45:1-8).

Genesis 41:43 "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."

“In the second chariot”: This signified to all that Joseph was second-in-command.

Pharaoh had Joseph ride “in the second chariot”.

Thutmose III gave the following charge to his newly appointed vizier: “Look thou to this office of vizier. Be vigilant over everything that is done in it. Behold, it is the support of the entire land. Behold, as to the vizierate, behold, it is not sweet at all, behold, it is bitter as gall.

God can and will elevate His own to the heights, if they are humble and obedient to Him. This ring of the Pharaoh's meant more than a valuable gift. This was a signet ring. This was the seal of the king. This ring gave Joseph great authority.

The fine linen (probably white), was a priestly robe. Pharaoh had noticed God's hand in Joseph's work. The gold chain was worn by people of great distinction. Now, Joseph was over Potiphar. These Egyptians were to bow to Joseph. We can see all through this a type and shadow of Christ.

Genesis 41:44 "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."

"And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh": Or I am king, which the word Pharaoh signifies.

As Josephus says; that this is not a proper name, but a title of office, seems plain from these words. And the sense either is, that though Pharaoh had raised Joseph to such high honor and dignity, yet he alone was king. Or this he said to show his power and authority to do what he had done, and would stand by him, and support him in his office and grandeur.

"And without thee shall not a man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt": Which is to be taken not in a strict literal sense, but proverbially, signifying, that nothing should be done in the nation of any moment or importance, but what was by his order and authority.

Genesis 41:45 "And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over [all] the land of Egypt."

"And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah": This name probably means "The salvation of the world", but various other proposals have also been suggested certainly of that meaning still eludes scholars. Foreigners are known to have been assigned an Egyptian name.

Which, according to the paraphrase of Onkelos, signifies one to whom hidden things are revealed. Or, as Jonathan: a revealer of secrets. And so most of the Jewish writers explain it; and which seems to be given him from his interpreting Pharaoh's dreams, and revealing what was hereafter to come to pass.

"And he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah": not the same with Potiphar, Joseph's master, as Jarchi says, not only their names differ, but also their offices. Nor would Joseph, it is imagined, marry the daughter of such a woman, so wicked as his mistress was, and had so much abused him, and been the cause of all his troubles.

She was an Egyptian woman, the daughter of the person before named: who was priest of On. The same with Aven (See Ezek. 30:17). About twenty two miles from Memphis.

And has been since called "Heliopolis", as it is here in the Septuagint version, which signifies the city of the sun, and is the same with Bethshemesh; the house of the sun (Jer. 43:13).

"And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt": Either the name and fame of him, as Aben Ezra interprets it (see Matthew 4:24); or rather he himself went forth in all his grandeur before related, and took a tour, throughout the whole land to observe the fruitfulness of it, and make choice of proper places to lay up his intended stores.

"Zaphnath-paaneah" means the salvation of the world. "Asenath" means she who is of Neith.

This daughter was of a family of a priestly order. These Egyptians were sun worshippers. This wife, however, was believed by many to be a Hebrew. Joseph's power was not localized. It was for all of Egypt.

Genesis 41:46 "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."

"And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt": Interpreting his dreams, and had such honor conferred upon him as to be made his prime minister; from whence it appears that Joseph had now been thirteen years in Egypt, partly in Potiphar's house, and partly in prison, since he was seventeen years of age when he was sold there (see Gen. 37:2).

(1884 B.C.). Only 13 years had elapsed since his involuntary departure from "the land of the Hebrews" (40:15). Joseph had been 17 when the narrative commenced (37:2).

"And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh": From standing before him, and ministering to him as his counsellor and chief statesman, or he went out from his court and palace for a while.

"And went throughout all the land of Egypt": This seems to be a second tour; before he went to survey the land, and pitch upon the most proper places for granaries to lay up store of corn in. Now he went through it, to gather in and give directions about it, and see it performed, for the years of plenty were now begun.

Here again, is a type of Jesus. Jesus was thirty years old when He began his ministry. Joseph began this work when he was thirty, both on orders from God.

Genesis 41:47 "And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls."

"And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls": Such as the gatherers take up in their hands when reaped, in order to bind up in sheaves. Now such was the fruitfulness of the land during the seven years of plenty, that either one stalk produced as many ears as a man could hold in his hand; or one grain produced a handful, as Ben Melech observes.

Though Onkelos paraphrases the words, "the inhabitants of the earth in the seven years of plenty gathered even into their treasuries". And this they did by the order and direction of Joseph as he passed through the land. What he bought of them that they brought was put into the granaries, as he directed them.

Genesis 41:48 "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."

"And he gathered up all the food of the seven years": That is, of plenty; not all the fruits of the earth, or all that was eatable, but the corn (as in Genesis 41:49). And not all of that the earth produced, but the fifth part of it, as he proposed, which he bought with Pharaoh's money, and therefore: had a right to sell it again as he did.

"Which were in the land of Egypt": In which only he had a concern, and where only was this plenty.

"And laid up the food in the cities": In places built for that purpose, and whither the people roundabout could easily bring it, and fetch it, when it was wanted.

"The food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same": Which was very wisely done, for present carriage, and for the convenience of the people in time of famine.

At this day, at old Cairo, is an edifice the most considerable in it, called Joseph's granary. It occupies a square, surrounded by a wall, and has different partitions contrived within it, where is deposited the corn, that is paid as a tax to the Gram Seignior, brought from different parts of Egypt.

Joseph had a chance to carry out the plans he had outlined to Pharaoh. The crops were plentiful. Joseph began to store up for the famine ahead.

Genesis 41:49 "And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for [it was] without number."

"And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering": At first he took an account of the quantities that were bought and laid up, how much there was in each granary, until it amounted to so much, that there was no end of numbering it. It was like the sand of the sea, a hyperbolic expression, denoting the great abundance of it.

"For it was without number": Not only the grains of corn, but even the measures of it, whatever were used.

Genesis 41:50 "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."

"And unto Joseph were born two sons": Ephraim and Manasseh.

"Before the years of famine came": Or "the year of famine"; meaning the first year.

"Which Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah priest of On, bare unto him": Which is observed, to show that he had them by his lawful wife.

Artapanus says, that Joseph married the daughter of the priest of Heliopolis, by whom he had children; and another Heathen writer mentions their names, Ephraim and Manasseh.

"On": One of the 4 great Egyptian cities also called Heliopolis, which was known as the chief city of the sun god, Ra. It was located 19 miles north of ancient Memphis.

Joseph had made good progress, now he had two sons.

Verses 51-52: “Manasseh ... Ephraim”: the names, meaning “forgetful” and “fruitful,” assigned to his sons together with their explanations depict the centrality of God in Joseph’s world view. Years of suffering, pagan presence, and separation from his own family had not harmed his faith.

Genesis 41:51 "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."

Joseph had two sons, “Manasseh” and “Ephraim.” His firstborn’s name means “One Who Causes Me to Forget.” The reference to all his “toil, and all my father’s house” only meant that the hardship brought upon him by his brothers was a thing of the past.

Joseph had been in Egypt over thirteen years. Joseph had put all the trials and problems of these years behind him. Everything was going fine. In good times and bad, Joseph praised God. He had even forgotten the hurt of his brothers' selling him.

Genesis 41:52 "And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

Ephraim, meaning “Fruitful,” signified “God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction”.

What a sweet, pleasant, and thankful spirit he showed in interpreting the events that had transpired in his life! The fulfillment of Pharaoh’s prophetic dreams set the stage for the final scene in the fulfillment of Joseph’s own dreams.

"Manasseh" means causing to forget. "Ephraim" means double fruit.

Genesis 41:53 "And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended."

"And the seven years of plenteousness that was in the land of Egypt were ended": Perhaps quickly after the birth of Ephraim, Joseph's second son. Since the account follows upon that, and it is certain that he was born before the years of famine began (Gen. 41:50).

Some connect the words, "moreover when" the seven years of plenty were ended, then began, as follows, seven years of famine. These events were fulfilled just as Joseph had predicted.

Verses 54-57: Use of hyperbole with “all” (verses 54, 56-57), emphatically indicates the widespread ravaging impact of famine far beyond Egypt’s borders. She had become indeed the “breadbasket” of the ancient world.

Genesis 41:54 "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."

"And the seven years of dearth began to come, as Joseph had said": In the interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams; as soon as the seven years of plenty were over, there were quickly some appearances of the famine coming on.

As particularly the river Nile was not flowing to its usual height at the season of it. Hence there was a drought, the earth was parched, and everything began to wither and decay, and the seed that was sown sprung not up.

"And the dearth was in all lands": Adjoining to Egypt, as Syria, Arabia, Palestine, Canaan, etc.

"But in all the land of Egypt there was bread": Which was in the hands of everyone, and remained of their old stores in the years of plenty not yet exhausted, and which continued for some time after the dearth began.

This famine was not just in Egypt, it was in all the surrounding countries, as well. There was food in Egypt, because Joseph prepared by following God's orders.

Verses 55-56: "Go unto Joseph": After 7 years, Joseph's authority remained intact, and Pharaoh still fully trusted his vizier. He dispensed the food supplies by sale to Egyptians and others (verse 47).

Genesis 41:55 "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."

"And when all the land of Egypt was famished": Their old stock and store eaten up, and the inhabitants ready to starve with hunger.

"The people cried to Pharaoh for bread": As their common father, and knowing that he had stores of provision laid up in all cities against this time.

"And Pharaoh said to the Egyptians, go unto Joseph": Whom he had appointed over this business of providing and laying up corn against this time, and of distributing it.

"What he saith to you, do": Give the price for the corn he fixes or requires; for this was the principal thing they had to do with him, to get corn for their money.

Pharaoh had given this authority to Joseph. He would not overrule Joseph.

Genesis 41:56 "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."

"And the famine was over all the face of the earth": Not over the whole world, but the land of Egypt; all the inhabitants of it were pinched with it, rich and poor; it reached all parts and all sorts of men.

"And Joseph opened all the storehouses": In the several cities throughout the land where he had laid up corn.

"And sold unto the Egyptians": For, as he had bought it with Pharaoh's money, it was no injustice to sell it; and as it could be sold at a moderate price, and yet Pharaoh get enough by it, being bought cheap in a time of plenty, no doubt but Joseph, who was a kind and benevolent man, sold it at such a price.

"And the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt": There being no overflow of the Nile year after year, and nothing left of the old stock but what was in the storehouses.

Not only had Joseph saved food for Egypt's people, he now was adding to Pharaoh's wealth. He was selling food to starving people.

Genesis 41:57 "And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy [corn]; because that the famine was [so] sore in all lands."

"And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn": All the neighboring nations (Syria, Arabia, Palestine, Canaan, etc.), when they heard there was corn there for money, came from all parts for it, and were glad to get it at such expense and trouble.

"Because that the famine was so sore in all lands": That there was no bread to be got for money elsewhere. It is thought by many, that for this care of Joseph in laying up provision against this time of need, and which was the preservation of the Egyptians.

He was worshipped by them under various names; as the Apis, which was an ox, a sign of fruitfulness; and Serapis, sometimes figured as a young man carrying a basket of bread on his head; and Osiris, who is sometimes represented with a bushel on his head

However, this is certain, that he was an eminent type of Christ in all this, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation. As Joseph was wrongly charged by his mistress, so was Christ falsely accused by the Jews; as he was cast into prison and bound there, so Christ was taken and bound as a prisoner.

As Joseph was raised to great honor and glory in Pharaoh's court, so Christ was exalted by his Father, and crowned with glory and honor. If the new name given him, "Zaphnath-paaneah", signifies the Savior of the world, as some interpret it, it agrees well with Christ, who was sent into the world for that purpose.

And indeed, if it means a revealer of secrets, it suits him, who hath declared his Father's mind and will, and revealed the mysteries of his grace to the sons of men. As Joseph had all the stores of corn under his care, and the needy were bid to go to him for it, so Christ has all the treasures of grace in his hand, and all that are sensible of their need of it are directed to go to him for it.

And it is from him that men of all nations and countries receive grace for grace, and have all their supplies, and spiritual sustenance and nourishment.

Joseph was feeding many countries around Egypt and making money for the Pharaoh. We will see in the next lesson, that the dream Joseph had many years ago, about the sun, moon, and stars bowing before Joseph, would indeed come true.

Genesis Chapter 41 Continued Questions

1. What was the first gift Pharaoh gave Joseph?
2. What great signification was this?
3. What was the second gift?
4. What special meaning did this gift have?
5. What was the third gift?
6. God will elevate His own, if they will do what two things?
7. Joseph was now over the man that once owned him. Name him.
8. Without Joseph, no one in the land could do what?
9. What was Joseph's wife's name?
10. Who was she the daughter of?
11. The new name Pharaoh gave Joseph meant what?
12. "Asenath" Means what?
13. How old was Joseph when he became second in command?
14. In the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth _____?
15. What did Joseph gather like the sand of the sea?
16. How many sons did Joseph have?
17. What was the name of the first born?
18. What does it mean?

19. What was the name of the second born?
20. What does this name mean?
21. In all times, Joseph does what?
22. Where did the famine extend to?
23. Why was there food in Egypt?
24. What did Joseph require when they came for food?
25. The famine was severe, what people came for food?