



Relevant Discipleship



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Joseph before Pharaoh

Acts 17:11 (NASB)

Now, these (Bereans) were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.



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Egypt



Egypt



We continue the story of Joseph in Egypt. This is a longer chapter but most of the narrative is straight forward.

The thing for us as Followers of Jesus is to note all the parallels and similarities between Joseph and Jesus. We'll call these out as we work through the chapter.

Genesis 41:1-4

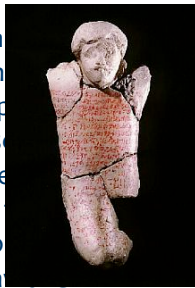
(Genesis 40:23 Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.)

After two whole years, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile, [2] and behold, there came up out of the Nile seven cows, attractive and plump, and they fed in the reed grass. [3] And behold, seven other cows, ugly and thin, came up out of the Nile after them, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile. [4] And the ugly, thin cows ate up the seven attractive, plump cows. And Pharaoh awoke.

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- In Hebrew, the phrasing is “at the end of two full years...”
 - The name of this passage is Miketz, “the end”
 - Lancaster and others see a hint of Messiah.
 - At the end of days, Messiah will be elevated and bring about the final redemption and lead us into the Messianic Era.
- Ancient chronology makes it difficult to determine which Pharaoh this is
 - This may be God’s supernatural blindness.
 - An ancient form of cursing is to never invoke the name of your enemy.
 - Execration texts: they would take a piece of pottery, write the name of your enemy on it and smash it. (Ancient voodoo doll).
 - The first extra-Biblical mention of Jerusalem is from an Egyptian execration text. 1900 BC
 - No Pharaoh’s name is ever mentioned in the bible since Pharaoh was considered by his people to be a deity.
- Note that the first dream involves the cows coming up out of the Nile and eating other cows (both are things normal cows don’t do).
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Genesis 41:5-7

[5] And he fell asleep and dreamed a second time. And behold, seven ears of grain, plump and good, were growing on one stalk. [6] And behold, after them sprouted seven ears, thin and blighted by the east wind. [7] And the thin ears swallowed up the seven plump, full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and behold, it was a dream.

- This is the third pair of dreams that will involve Joseph (the two dreams with Joseph's family and the two with the Cupbearer and the baker are the other two pairs).
- A double-dream was thought to invoke special emphasis on the subject.
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Genesis 41:8-9

[8] So in the morning his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was none who could interpret them to Pharaoh. [9] Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, "I remember my offenses today.

- These could have been a specific job classification of dream interpreters.
- This foreshadows Daniel in Babylon. Those wise men were also unable to interpret the King's dream and God would raise up another Hebrew captive.
- Yes, the cupbearer forgot and yes, if Joseph had his preference he probably would not have wanted to spend two more years in prison; but this is all happening according to God's timeline.
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Genesis 41:10-13

[10] When Pharaoh was angry with his servants and put me and the chief baker in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, [11] we dreamed on the same night, he and I, each having a dream with its own interpretation. [12] A young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. When we told him, he interpreted our dreams to us, giving an interpretation to each man according to his dream. [13] And as he interpreted to us, so it came about. I was restored to my office, and the baker was hanged."

- Up until now, Joseph seemed to be living out Murphy's law (if anything can go wrong, it will). Yet, through it all Joseph remained confident in God even though his world was in shatters.
- When things in our world aren't going well, we need to remember that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose. Even if we can't muster up the mindset to praise God in the midst of our struggles (sometimes there's no explanation for evil), we CAN have a "this too shall pass" attitude.
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Genesis 41:14-15

[14] Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they quickly brought him out of the pit. And when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came in before Pharaoh. [15] And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.”

Genesis 41:14-15

[14] Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they quickly brought him out of the pit. And when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came in before Pharaoh. [15] And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.”

Psalms 30:3 O LORD, you have brought up my soul from Sheol; you restored me to life from among those who go down to the pit.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 Behold, I am telling you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, [52] in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

- Psalms 30:3 O LORD, you have brought up my soul from Sheol; you restored me to life from among those who go down to the pit.
- It’s interesting the Bible tells us about Joseph’s preparation. Had he not shaved or had a change of clothes in the years he was in prison?
- Shaved could also mean it was the Egyptian custom to be completely shaved (Yul Brenner) whereas, even to this day, most observant Jewish men have beards.
- Joseph may look like an Egyptian but his soul and spirit are pure Hebrew.
- He was “quickly” brought out. We know Messiah will come “in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Corinthians 15:52).
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Genesis 41:16-17

[16] Joseph answered Pharaoh, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.” [17] Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Behold, in my dream I was standing on the banks of the Nile.



- Joseph again refuses to take any credit

Genesis 41:18-21

[18] Seven cows, plump and attractive, came up out of the Nile and fed in the reed grass. [19] Seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and thin, such as I had never seen in all the land of Egypt. [20] And the thin, ugly cows ate up the first seven plump cows, [21] but when they had eaten them no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were still as ugly as at the beginning. Then I awoke.

- The repetition underscores the significance

Genesis 41:22-24

[22] I also saw in my dream seven ears growing on one stalk, full and good. [23] Seven ears, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprouted after them, [24] and the thin ears swallowed up the seven good ears. And I told it to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me.”

Genesis 41:25-28

[25] Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. [26] The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years; the dreams are one. [27] The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty ears blighted by the east wind are also seven years of famine. [28] It is as I told Pharaoh; God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do.

Genesis 41:25-28

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- Many forms of Jewish and Christian eschatology (end times) anticipates a final seven-year period, characterized by increased suffering, natural disasters, plagues and the like, preceding the coming of Messiah. One of the names of this period is the “seven year tribulation”, or the time of Jacob’s trouble
- If you’ve heard the term “Great Tribulation” that generally refers to the last 3.5 years of the seven year tribulation, when things get REALLY bad.

Genesis 41:29-32

[29] There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, [30] but after them there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt. The famine will consume the land, [31] and the plenty will be unknown in the land by reason of the famine that will follow, for it will be very severe. [32] And the doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about.

Revelation 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place.

- Remember Egypt wasn’t used to famine. The Nile rose every year like clockwork and watered the fields.
- Revelation 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place.
- Shortly/soon is not necessarily a time reference (although it could be) but it is more in the sense of certainty.
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Genesis 41:33-35

[33] Now, therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. [34] Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land and take one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plentiful years. [35] And let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it.

Proverbs 27:12 A prudent person sees evil and hides himself; But the naive proceed, and pay the penalty.

- This is 20% on top of whatever else they had to pay. What you might call a special assessment.
- Wisely planning ahead is a basic principle of good stewardship.
- Proverbs 27:12 A prudent person sees evil and hides himself; But the naive proceed, and pay the penalty.
- Our lives on earth can be compared to the first seven years. We have an opportunity to store up treasure in heaven (Matthew 6:19). However we have a limited window. Once we die, our opportunity to do kingdom acts of goodness also dies.
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Genesis 41:36-38

[36] That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that are to occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine.” [37] This proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. [38] And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?”

Isaiah 11:2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

- Another stunning declaration from a pagan ruler of the world.
- Pharaoh has an entire staff of diviners, yet he says none of those turkeys are as discerning and wise as Joseph. Quite a compliment, acknowledging Joseph’s supernatural wisdom.
- One of the main signs of the Messiah is that the Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him (Isaiah 11:2)
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Genesis 41:39-40

[39] Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. [40] You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you.”

Luke 16:10 “The one who is faithful in a very little thing is also faithful in much; and the one who is unrighteous in a very little thing is also unrighteous in much.

Matthew 28:18: All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

- Joseph has proven faithful in the small things; now he is in charge of many things.
- Luke 16:10 “The one who is faithful in a very little thing is also faithful in much; and the one who is unrighteous in a very little thing is also unrighteous in much.
- The exaltation of Joseph illustrates the exaltation of Messiah.
- <click>Pharaoh bestowing this authority on Joseph can be compared to God bestowing His authority upon Jesus the Messiah. Matthew 28:18: All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”
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Genesis 41:41-42

[41] And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.” [42] Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck.

- Joseph gets another coat befitting his status.
- Linen and gold are the two primary materials used to make the Tabernacle and the priestly garments.
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Genesis 41:43-44

[43] And he made him ride in his second chariot. And they called out before him, “Bow the knee!” Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt. [44] Moreover, Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no one shall lift up hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.”

Philippians 2:9-11 For this reason also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, [10] so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11] and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- In the days of Messiah, “every knee will bow” (Philippians 2:10).
- Effectively, Joseph is now Prime Minister over Egypt.
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Genesis 41:45-46

[45] And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphenath-paneah. And he gave him in marriage Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On. So Joseph went out over the land of Egypt. [46] Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went through all the land of Egypt.

Genesis 41:45-46

[45] And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphenath-paneah. And he gave him in marriage Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On. So Joseph went out over the land of Egypt. [46] Joseph was **thirty years old** when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went through all the land of Egypt.

- This is a chronological clue. He was 17 with his brothers in chapter 37, and apparently 28 in Chapter 40. Likely in his mid-20's when he had the incident with Potipher's wife.
- 30 is an important number. Jesus started his public ministry when He was “about 30.”
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Asenath, daughter of Potiphera, priest of On. So Joseph went out over the land of Egypt.



Obelisk of Senusret I, 12th dynasty, Tell Hisn, Heliopolis

Gen 41:45

Heliopolis is biblical 'On in Genesis 41:45, 50; 46:20 and Ezekiel 30:17; probably City of the Sun in Isaiah 19:18 and Beth Shemesh in Jeremiah 43:13. According to legend, Jesus, Mary and Joseph were refused welcome by the inhabitants of Heliopolis. Heliopolis was the site of an ancient Egyptian temple to the sun god Re. Today, it is surrounded by a suburb of Cairo.

It seems highly unlikely that Joseph would have married an idolator; we assume Asenath somehow "converted" to faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Thus we have Asenath a "gentile bride" marrying Joseph, a type of Messiah.

There is a tradition that Potipher and Potiphera are the same person, but this is not well-attested.

As we mentioned previously, Many suspect Potipher from chapter 39 was a eunuch; if so it seems unlikely he would have had a daughter.

Genesis 41:47-49

[47] During the seven plentiful years the earth produced abundantly, [48] and he gathered up all the food of these seven years, which occurred in the land of Egypt, and put the food in the cities. He put in every city the food from the fields around it. [49] And Joseph stored up grain in great abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be measured.

- The grain supply was virtually unlimited. That's a lot of grain!
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Genesis 41:50-52

[50] Before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph. Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, bore them to him. [51] Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh. "For," he said, "God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house." [52] The name of the second he called Ephraim, "For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."

In Hebrew, נשח in "Manasseh" is an infrequent verb meaning "to forget."
פרי in "Ephraim" is a very common word meaning "fruit." Ephraim means "double fruitfulness"

- Manasseh was the firstborn, but Ephraim will be preeminent.
- In Hebrew, נשח is an infrequent verb meaning "to forget."
- פרי is a very common word meaning "fruit." The suffix ayim means double. Double-fruit is a possible acknowledgment that Joseph will receive the double-portion of inheritance from Jacob.

Genesis 41:50-52

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- Joseph and Asenath had to raise their children in a society that was in all respects antithetical to their faith.
 - Jewish commentators would point out this has been the story of the Jewish people for nearly their entire history.
 - This is why the festivals, including Passover and the weekly Shabbat meal, serve as remembrances of who they are and where they came from.
 - For the most part, Christians have no such identity. Maybe Christmas, but that is not a biblically commanded feast. At least in the West, Christians have not had to raise our children in a society antithetical to our faith. Perhaps, now that this is changing, perhaps this is why Christian parents are caught off guard, and children raised in seemingly Christian homes are getting picked off.
 - What if we had been having a weekly family meal where we shut out all distractions and reminded our children of God's goodness and faithfulness? Not at church on Sundays, but in the home on Friday or Saturday nights?. Would society look a bit different? I think it might.
 - Even today every Friday night, Jewish fathers lay their hands upon the heads of their sons and bless them saying, "May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh."

Genesis 41:53-57

[53] The seven years of plenty that occurred in the land of Egypt came to an end, [54] and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. There was famine in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. [55] When all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph. What he says to you, do.” [56] So when the famine had spread over all the land, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. [57] Moreover, all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe over all the earth.

- Joseph is the savior of the earth!
- The nations had to go through Joseph for their physical survival, even though he was estranged from his family. This is another parallel for Yeshua the Messiah. The nations receive His salvation while He remains concealed from His Jewish family members.

Psalms 105:16-22

And He called for a famine upon the land; He broke the whole staff of bread. [17] He sent a man before them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave. [18] They forced his feet into shackles, He was put in irons; [19] Until the time that his word came to pass, The word of the LORD refined him. [20] The king sent and released him, The ruler of peoples, and set him free. [21] He made him lord of his house, And ruler over all his possessions, [22] To imprison his high officials at will, That he might teach his elders wisdom.

Messianic Parallels in Chapter 41

- Linen clothes (John 20:6-7)
- Delivered by the hand of God
- Only says what God tells him (John 12:49)
- Warned of danger, offered remedy (Mt. 24 & 25)
- Doubling for emphasis (“verily, verily”)
- Pharaoh identifies Joseph as a Wonderful Counselor
- Gentile bride; marriage arranged by “Father”
- 30 years old
- Dispensing Bread of Life to a perishing world
- A savior to all peoples
- Unlimited resources to meet the need

