

Sent: Wednesday, May 08, 2019 10:48 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Genesis 40-41

Ah Lord God! You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for you! (Jeremiah 32:17)

Last week (at the end of our lesson on Genesis 39) we left Joseph "languishing" in prison! Disheartened! Questioning God's goodness! Bitter at how life was treating him after trying to do everything right! Right? Nope! He was, in fact, leading the first-ever "prison ministry," having won even the chief jailer's admiration and confidence for his attitude and zeal for life, and faith in God, even under the most dire circumstances! And, although "unbeknownst" to Joseph, God was working behind the scene, accomplishing His own plan and purpose through all that was happening in his life! (Ah Lord God!)

Scene two begins in Genesis 40 with Pharaoh, out of the blue, tossing his chief cupbearer (KJV calls him the "butler") and his chief baker into prison, apparently believing that one or the other must have been involved in some unspecified conspiracy! Verse 4 says "the captain of the bodyguard" (presumably Potiphar) "put Joseph in charge of them"! (How ironic!) After being in confinement "for some time," they both "just happened" to have strange and unsettling dreams, on the same nite, dreams no one apparently was able to interpret!

When they shared their dreams with Joseph, he made it clear to them that "interpretations belong to God"--but then proceeded to provide the "God-revealed" interpretations! The "good news" for the cupbearer--who dreamed of three branches blossoming and producing ripe grapes that were "squeezed into Pharaoh's cup--was that "within three more days" Pharaoh would "lift up his head and restore him to his former place"! The "bad news" for the baker, who dreamed of birds eating bread from three baskets with baked goods (on his head?) for Pharaoh, was that "within three days" Pharaoh would "lift up his head" as well--but to hang him on a tree"!

Turns out both dreams were fulfilled in accordance with Joseph's interpretation! But, for some reason, Joseph's request to the cupbearer, that he "keep him in mind when it all goes well with him" and "speak to Pharaoh" on his behalf, to "get him out of jail"--was not carried out! And so, Joseph remained in prison for at least another two years! (All in accordance, as we can all now see, with God's timing!)

Well, "just so happened," as we move on to Genesis 41, that Pharaoh himself had a "troubling" dream! (The Egyptians, and later the Babylonians, took their dreams very seriously, believing they "portended" future events! God would later use Daniel, just as He had used Joseph, to reveal the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, when his "wise men, conjurers, magicians, and diviners" could offer no answers! Here's how Daniel answered Nebuchadnezzar, in Daniel 2:28: "...There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days!" And Daniel proceeded to reveal the "mysteries" in great detail!)

Well, back to Pharaoh's dream--concerning the "fat and healthy cows" who came up from the Nile and were suddenly eaten up by seven "undernourished and ugly" cows! Then how "seven full and good ears of grain sprouted up on a single stalk" only to be "swallowed up" by seven "thin and scorched" ones!

You know the rest of the story! How the cupbearer "finally" remembered Joseph when all other options failed in Pharaoh's search for answers from his "magicians"! Joseph, after being called and brought out of the dungeon, first made it clear to Pharaoh that it "wasn't him, but God" who would reveal answers to Pharaoh's dream! There would be "seven years of great abundance...followed by seven years of famine"--as determined by God! And Pharaoh should "look for a man, discerning and wise," Joseph advised, to manage the food crisis by establishing "storehouses in the cities" for the upcoming years of famine, "so the land will not perish"!

We could see it coming! Pharaoh would choose Joseph to "be the man" to take charge of events--and people would "do homage" and "only in the throne" would Pharaoh be "greater than Joseph"! Wow!

And so, Genesis 41:46-52 says that Joseph was only thirty years old "when he stood before Pharaoh" and he "went through all the land of Egypt" gathering and "storing up" grain during the years of plenty! Meanwhile he was given a wife and "before the year of famine came" (yes, it came as predicted!), two sons were born to Joseph, with names and their meanings depicting, as MacArthur notes, "the centrality of God in Joseph's worldview"!

And "when the seven years of famine began to come, just as Joseph had said, then there was famine in all the lands (including the land of Canaan), but in all the land of Egypt there was bread!" Interestingly, verse 55 says that when the people cried out to Pharaoh for bread, he told them to "go to Joseph"! (J. Vernon McGee uses this, along with lots of other examples, to portray Joseph as a "type of Christ"! Remember how Jesus said, in John 6:35, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me will not hunger!")

And, finally, "when the famine was spread over all the face of the earth, Joseph opened all the storehouses...and people of all the earth came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the earth!" (Genesis 41:57) Wow! (Malachi 31:10 says: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it!")

"Ah Lord God!" As men of the Bible we long to be a little more like Joseph, who was more a "type of Christ" (at least according to J. Vernon McGee) than any other man in the Bible!

May God be with you until we meet again!

Lowell