

Genesis 41

Verses 1- 8

Now it happened at the end of two full years that Pharaoh had a dream, and behold, he was standing by the Nile. ² And lo, from the Nile there came up seven cows, sleek and fat; and they grazed in the marsh grass. ³ Then behold, seven other cows came up after them from the Nile, ugly and gaunt, and they stood by the *other* cows on the bank of the Nile. ⁴ The ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven sleek and fat cows. Then Pharaoh awoke. ⁵ He fell asleep and dreamed a second time; and behold, seven ears of grain came up on a single stalk, plump and good. ⁶ Then behold, seven ears, thin and scorched by the east wind, sprouted up after them. ⁷ The thin ears swallowed up the seven plump and full ears. Then Pharaoh awoke, and behold, *it was* a dream. ⁸ Now in the morning his spirit was troubled, so he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them to Pharaoh.

Now it happened at the end of two full years that Pharaoh had a dream, and behold, he was standing by the Nile.

This is two years after the dreams of the cupbearer and the baker.

See chart 4105

Ch	Person	Event	Age	Year
37	Joseph	Sold to Ishmaelites	17	1728
40	Joseph	Cupbearer and Baker	28	1717
35	Isaac	Isaac dies	180	1716
41	Joseph	Pharaoh's dream	30	1715
41	Joseph	Years of plenty	31-37	1714 - 1708
41	Joseph	Manasseh and Ephraim born	31-37	1714 - 1708
41	Joseph	Years of famine	38-44	1707 - 1701
45	Joseph	5 years of famine left	40	1705
46	Benjamin	5 years of famine left	33	1705
47	Jacob	5 years of famine left	131	1705
49	Jacob	Jacob dies	147	1689
50	Joseph	Joseph dies	110	1635

² And lo, from the Nile there came up seven cows, sleek and fat; and they grazed in the marsh grass. ³ Then behold, seven other cows came up after them from the Nile, ugly and gaunt, and they stood by the *other* cows on the bank of the Nile. ⁴ The ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven sleek and fat cows. Then Pharaoh awoke.

God wanted the king and everyone else to wonder what this dream could mean so that the one who could explain it would be seen as a prophet of God.

⁵ He fell asleep and dreamed a second time; and behold, seven ears of grain came up on a single stalk, plump and good. ⁶ Then behold, seven ears, thin and scorched by the east wind, sprouted up after them. ⁷ The thin ears swallowed up the seven plump and full ears. Then Pharaoh awoke, and behold, *it was a dream.*

This second dream was just as strange as the first dream if not more so. How could ears of wheat eat as though they had a mouth to chew?

See pic 4107



⁸ Now in the morning his spirit was troubled, so he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them to Pharaoh

It seems a bit odd that none of the magicians or the wise men could come up with an interpretation given the skills they demonstrated during the first few plagues.

See Exodus 7:11-12

¹¹ Then Pharaoh also called for *the wise men and the sorcerers*, and they too, *the soothsayer priests of Egypt*, did the same with their secret arts. ¹² For each one threw down his staff, and they turned into serpents. But Aaron's staff swallowed their staffs.

See Exodus 7:20 & 22

²⁰ So Moses and Aaron did just as the Lord had commanded. And he lifted up the staff and struck the water that was in the Nile in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants; and all the water that was in the Nile was turned into blood..... ²² But the soothsayer priests of Egypt did the same with their secret arts; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, just as the Lord had said.

Exodus 8:6 - 7

⁶ So Aaron extended his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. ⁷ However, the soothsayer priests did the same with their secret arts, making frogs come up on the land of Egypt.

Perhaps God blinded the minds of the king's wise men so Joseph would be elevated in the eyes of the king.

Verses 9 - 13

⁹ Then the chief cupbearer spoke to Pharaoh, saying, "I would make mention today of my *own* offenses. ¹⁰ Pharaoh was furious with his servants, and he put me in confinement in the house of the captain of the bodyguard, *both* me and the chief baker. ¹¹ Then we had a dream one night, he and I; each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his *own* dream. ¹² Now a Hebrew youth was there with us, a servant of the captain of the bodyguard, and we told him *the dreams*, and he interpreted our dreams for us. For each man he interpreted according to his *own* dream. ¹³ And just as he interpreted for us, so it happened; *Pharaoh* restored me in my office, but he hanged the chief baker."

⁹ Then the chief cupbearer spoke to Pharaoh, saying, “I would make mention today of my *own* offenses.

It took a lot of courage for the cupbearer to admit his wrong in the presence of the king but it was the right thing to do because if he had chosen to remain silent God would have brought it to light by some other means and then the cupbearer would have had to face a very angry king.

His confession may have seemed somewhat late as far as Joseph was concerned but it came at just the right time according to God’s plan.

Verses 14 - 24

¹⁴ Then Pharaoh sent *word* and called for Joseph, and they hurriedly brought him out of the dungeon; and when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came to Pharaoh. ¹⁵ Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, but no one can interpret it; and I have heard it said about you, that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.” ¹⁶ Joseph then answered Pharaoh, saying, “It has nothing to do with me; God will give Pharaoh an answer for his own good.” ¹⁷ So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “In my dream, there I was, standing on the bank of the Nile; ¹⁸ and behold, seven cows, fat and fine-looking came up out of the Nile, and they grazed in the marsh grass. ¹⁹ Then behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and thin, such as I had never seen for ugliness in all the land of Egypt; ²⁰ and the thin and ugly cows ate the first seven fat cows. ²¹ Yet when they had devoured them, it could not be detected that they had devoured them, for they were just as ugly as before. Then I awoke. ²² I saw also in my dream, and behold, seven ears of grain, full and good, came up on a single stalk; ²³ and behold, seven ears, withered, thin, *and* scorched by the east wind sprouted up after them; ²⁴ and the thin ears swallowed the seven good ears. Then I told it to the soothsayer priests, but there was no one who could explain it to me.”

¹⁴ Then Pharaoh sent *word* and called for Joseph, and they hurriedly brought him out of the dungeon; and when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came to Pharaoh.

Proper etiquette for anyone appearing before the king would have included shaving and wearing clean clothes.

The rest of this paragraph is a repeat of facts stated in verses 1- 8.

Verses 25 - 32

²⁵ And Joseph said to Pharaoh, “Pharaoh’s dreams are one *and the same*; God has told 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 *and the same*. ²⁷ The seven thin and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven thin ears scorched by the east wind will be seven years of famine. ²⁸ It is as I have spoken to Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do. ²⁹ Behold, seven years of great abundance are coming in all the land of Egypt; ³⁰ and after them seven years of famine will come, and all the abundance will be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and the famine will ravage the land. ³¹ So the abundance will be unknown in the land because of that subsequent famine; for it *will be very severe*. ³² Now as for the repeating of the dream to Pharaoh twice, *it means* that the matter is confirmed by God, and God will quickly bring it about.

²⁵ And Joseph said to Pharaoh, “Pharaoh’s dreams are one *and the same*; God has told to Pharaoh what He is about to do.

This was valuable knowledge that the king of Egypt had received from God and as we will see the king used it wisely.

As time passes we will see a number of kings receiving a message from God. Some of the messages will be for good and others will be in the form of a judgment.

²⁹ Behold, seven years of great abundance are coming in all the land of Egypt; ³⁰ and after them seven years of famine will come, and all the abundance will be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and the famine will ravage the land.

The king now knows what the next 14 years will bring. Without this knowledge, Egypt and other nations would have starved to death.

³¹ So the abundance will be unknown in the land because of that subsequent famine; for it *will be very severe*.

God was warning the king not to waste any of the grain during the good years because the coming famine will require every bit of grain that can be gathered and stored during the good years.

Verses 33 - 36

³³ So now let Pharaoh look for a man discerning and wise, and appoint him over the land of Egypt. ³⁴ Let Pharaoh take action to appoint overseers in charge of the land, and let him take a fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt as a tax in the seven years of abundance. ³⁵ Then have them collect all the food of these good years that are coming, and store up the grain for food in the cities under Pharaoh's authority, and have them guard it. ³⁶ Let the food be used as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which will occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land will not perish during the famine."

³³ So now let Pharaoh look for a man discerning and wise, and appoint him over the land of Egypt.

Joseph was humble and didn't assume it would be him.

³⁴ Let Pharaoh take action to appoint overseers in charge of the land, and let him take a fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt as a tax in the seven years of abundance. Then have them collect all the food of these good years that are coming, and store up the grain for food in the cities under Pharaoh's authority, and have them guard it.

A fifth of the produce would amount to a 20% tax on the crops of the land during the 7 good years. Taking 20% of the grain each year would amount to 1.4 years' worth of grain if these were normal years of productivity. But given that these were the 7 years of abundance it is reasonable to assume that it was twice that amount. Even so how would the people survive during the 7 years of famine with only 3 extra years of grain? Also, this does not account for other nations coming to Egypt to buy food.

1. During a severe famine a land owner can still get a crop that equals about 50% of a normal year. That being the case they would need to collect about 3.5 years' worth of crops during the good years and they collected close to that amount.

2. During the years of famine there would be a natural decrease in usage.

3. While these numbers could vary depending on a number of factors it is probably safe to assume that this 20% tax was determined by the Lord, not by Joseph. God knows all that would happen in these 14 years and He gave Joseph an appropriate tax to levy.

Verses 37 - 45

³⁷ Now the proposal seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his servants. ³⁸ Then Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find a man like this, in whom there is a divine spirit?” ³⁹ So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has informed you of all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you are. ⁴⁰ You shall be in charge of my house, and all my people shall be obedient to you; only *regarding* the throne will I be greater than you.” ⁴¹ Pharaoh also said to Joseph, “See, I have placed you over all the land of Egypt.” ⁴² Then Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen, and put the gold necklace around his neck. ⁴³ And he had him ride in his second chariot; and they proclaimed ahead of him, “Bow the knee!” And he placed him over all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁴ Moreover, Pharaoh said to Joseph, “*Though* I am Pharaoh, yet without your permission no one shall raise his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” ⁴⁵ Then Pharaoh named Joseph Zaphenath-paneah; and he gave him Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, to *be his wife*. And Joseph went out over the land of Egypt.

³⁹ So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has informed you of all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you are.

You have to give the king some credit for believing that this message came from God because there was no indication of a famine at this point in time. Is that not a good indication of faith?

⁴⁰ You shall be in charge of my house, and all my people shall be obedient to you; only *regarding* the throne will I be greater than you.”

Joseph was given complete control over Egypt with only one exception.

⁴⁵ Then Pharaoh named Joseph Zaphenath-paneah; and he gave him Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, to be his wife. And Joseph went out over the land of Egypt.

This new name most likely means “Salvation of the World”.

Joseph married the daughter of a priest who was named after one of the pagan goddesses of Egypt.

“On” is a city named Heliopolis, 7 miles northeast of Cairo; it was a center of worship for the sun-god Re.

See Map 4110



What a difference a day can make! Joseph went from ruling a prison to ruling all of Egypt. However, it should be noted that while this change took place in one day, the events leading up to that day took many years. God's plan for us can come together at any time but it often takes decades to prepare us for that moment.

Verses 46-53

⁴⁶ Now Joseph was thirty years old when he stood in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went through all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁷ During the seven years of plenty the land produced abundantly. ⁴⁸ So he collected 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 its own surrounding fields. ⁴⁹ Joseph stored up grain in great abundance like the sand of the sea, until he stopped measuring *it*, for it was beyond measure. ⁵⁰ Now before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara, priest of On, bore to him. ⁵¹ Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh; "For," *he said*, "God has made me forget all my trouble and all of my father's household." ⁵² And he named the second Ephraim; "For," *he said*, "God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."

⁴⁶ Now Joseph was thirty years old when he stood in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went through all the land of Egypt.

Joseph was 17 when he was sold into slavery and he is now 30 years old.

See chart 4115

Joseph			
Ch	Age	Year	Event
37	17	1728	Sold into slavery
39			In charge of Potiphar's house
39			Put in prison
39			In charge of the prison
40	28	1717	Cupbearer and Baker
41	30	1715	Before the King

His time as a slave and/or in prison covered a period of 13 years.

⁴⁹ Joseph stored up grain in great abundance like the sand of the sea, until he stopped measuring *it*, for it was beyond measure.

The 7 years of abundant crops was between 1714 and 1708 BC

See Pic 4120 Grain storage area



See Video 4120 8.5 Grain stored by Joseph

<http://www.levickfamily.com/8.5.html>

Now before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, bore to him.

See chart 4130

Ch	Person	Event	Age	Year
37	Joseph	Sold to Ishmaelites	17	1728
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⁵¹ Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh; “For,” *he said*, “God has made me forget all my trouble and all of my father’s household.” ⁵² And he named the second Ephraim; “For,” *he said*, “God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.”

1. The first-born son was Manasseh meaning “God has made me forget all my toil, and my father's house”.

The years spent serving in Potiphar’s house, those spent as a slave, and the years in charge of the prison had been difficult years. Having his own family helped him forget his family in Canaan

2. The second son he called Ephraim meaning “For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction”.

From slave to second in command of all of Egypt, getting married and having 2 kids qualifies as being quite fruitful.

Verses 54-57

⁵⁴ and the seven years of famine began to come, just as Joseph had said, then there was famine in all the lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

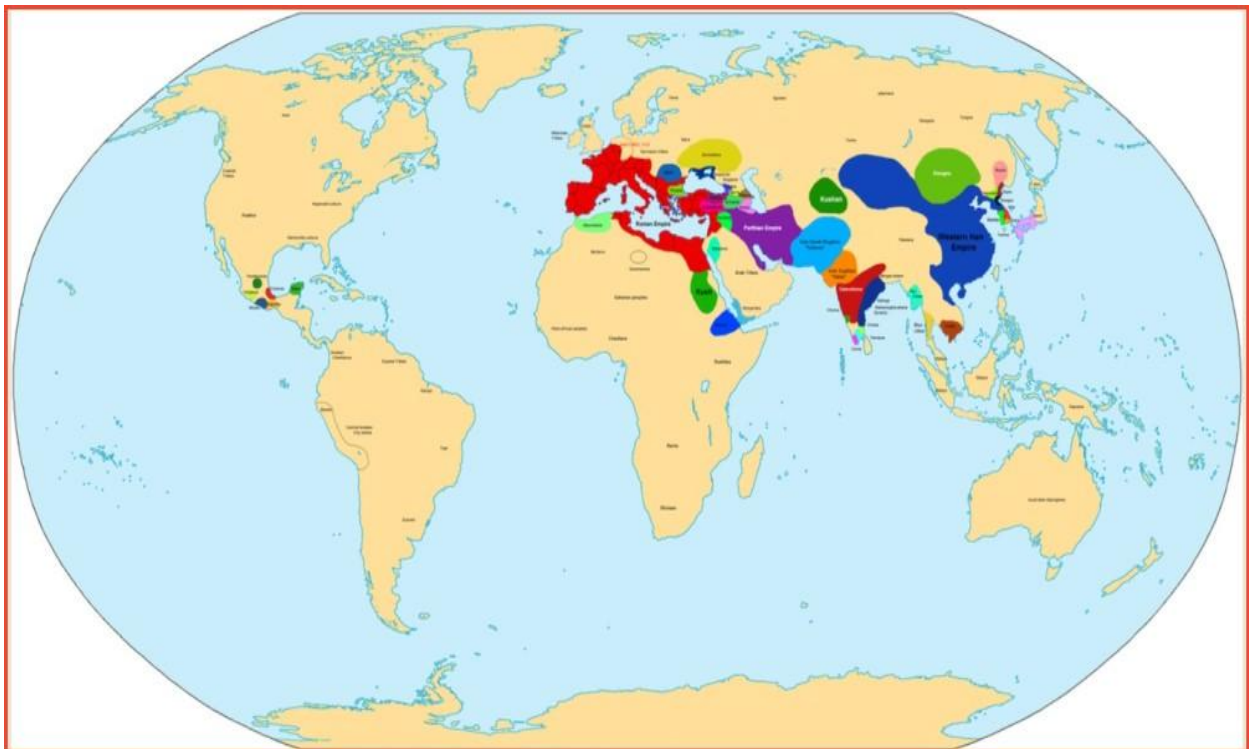
⁵⁵ So when all the land of Egypt suffered famine, the people cried out to Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, you shall do.” ⁵⁶ When the famine was *spread* over the entire face of the earth, then Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians; and the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. ⁵⁷ Then *the people of* all the earth came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the earth.

⁵⁴ and the seven years of famine began to come, just as Joseph had said, then there was famine in all the lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

Since the text says “in all the lands” we know this was a worldwide famine. This is verified in verse 56 where it says “When the famine was spread over the entire face of the earth”.

Some people believe that in 1700 BC that only a small part of the world was populated.

See Map 4135



⁵⁶ **When the famine was *spread* over the entire face of the earth, then Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians; and the famine was severe in the land of Egypt.**

Is there any evidence that this account is trustworthy? Well, for those who don't believe the bible is the Word of God, maybe they will be convinced by some current findings of Archeology.

See Video 4140 8.6 Egyptian famine and Archeology

<http://www.levickfamily.com/8.6.html>

⁵⁷ **Then *the people of all the earth* came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the earth.**

This was a worldwide famine and God used Egypt under the control of Joseph to save the world from starvation.

Some of the nation's coming to Egypt had to travel very long distances to buy food.

From Rome to Egypt is 1500 miles.

From China to Egypt is 4300 miles.