

# JOSEPH INTERPRETS PHARAOH'S DREAMS

Old Testament Lesson #29

Two years passed after Pharaoh's cupbearer was restored to his position in Pharaoh's court. Then one night, Pharaoh had two different dreams that troubled him. No one could explain the dreams. The cupbearer remembered Joseph's ability to interpret dreams and told Pharaoh about him. Pharaoh immediately sent for Joseph and told him his dreams.

In the first dream, Pharaoh recalled, he saw seven fat cows grazing along the Nile River. Behind them came seven scrawny cows, who ate the fat ones. However, even after eating the fat cows, the scrawny ones looked no better.

The second dream was similar. Seven full and good heads of grain grew on a single stalk. Then seven withered and thin heads of grain appeared. The thin heads of grain swallowed up the full heads.

Joseph explained what God had revealed through these two dreams. Both dreams had the same meaning, and the message was given twice to emphasize the certainty of what would happen and that God would take action soon. The seven fat cows and seven good heads of grain represented seven years of great harvests in Egypt. This was to be followed by seven years of famine, as represented by the lean cows and thin heads of grain.

Joseph advised Pharaoh to appoint a wise man to be in charge of Egypt's land. This man should oversee the collecting of one-fifth of all the harvests during the seven years of plenty, so that enough food would be available during the seven years of famine. Pharaoh liked this idea and appointed Joseph.

Joseph was 30 years old when he was appointed into service in Pharaoh's court. Before the famine came, Joseph married and had two sons named Manasseh and Ephraim.

The famine came as predicted, and it affected all the nations around Egypt. These nations heard about the grain in Egypt and came to buy grain for their own peoples.

## POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- Joseph gave God the credit for interpreting the dreams (Genesis 41:16).

## Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dreams

- I. Pharaoh had two dreams that troubled him.
  - A. When no one could interpret them, the cupbearer remembered Joseph.
  - B. Pharaoh called for Joseph's help.
- II. Pharaoh explained his two dreams.
  - A. He saw seven fat cows and seven thin cows.
  - B. The thin cows ate the fat ones but still looked scrawny.
  - C. He saw seven full heads of grain and seven withered heads of grain.
  - D. The thin heads swallowed the fat heads.
- III. Joseph told Pharaoh what God was revealing through the dreams, which had the same meaning.
  - A. The fat cows and full heads of grain represented seven years of great harvests for Egypt.
  - B. The thin cows and withered heads of grain meant severe famine for the following seven years.
  - C. Joseph told Pharaoh to appoint a man to oversee Egypt's land to make sure some harvest was saved in the good years to eat in the famine years.
- IV. Pharaoh appointed Joseph to the new position.
  - A. Joseph was 30 years old when he started the job.
  - B. Before the famine, he married and had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.
  - C. The famine came as predicted.
  - D. Nations near Egypt were all affected by the famine.

## ANSWER KEY:

fat, cows, grazing, scrawny, ugly, cows, behind, ate, look, full, good, heads, grain, grew, single, stalk, withered, thin, heads, grain, appeared, swallowed, up, full, heads

Both dreams had the same meaning. God would take action soon. The 7 fat cows and good heads meant 7 years of good harvest. 7 years of famine would follow. Joseph advised Pharaoh to appoint a wise man to be in charge of Egypt's good harvests. The overseer would collect 1/5 of the harvest of plenty to use in years of famine. Pharaoh liked the idea and appointed Joseph to the job. Joseph was 30 years old.