

# Joseph Interprets Dreams

*Opportunities through Compassion*

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# What We Will Learn

- Joseph's compassion in Potiphar's jail creates for him an opportunity
  - The one he sensed did not materialize
  - The one he didn't see blossomed later
- Opportunity for grand blessing presented as opportunity to be compassionate
- Competence comes from God
- Genesis 39:21–23, 40:1–23, and 41:1–40

# Joseph in Potiphar's Jail

- Joseph was recognized
  - Child of God
  - Cares about people
  - Successful in everything he did
- Placed in charge of other prisoners and prison activities
- Remained a prisoner himself
- Genesis 39:21–23





## Genesis 39 (NIV)

But while Joseph was there in the prison,

21 the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden.


22 So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there.

23 The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.

# Joined by Pharaoh's Prisoners

- Pharaoh's chief cupbearer and chief baker were imprisoned in the same jail
- They were placed in Joseph's care
- Each of the two men had a dream that appeared meaningful
- They were troubled by the dreams
- Genesis 40:1–5





## Genesis 40 (NIV)

1 Some time later, the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their master, the king of Egypt.

2 Pharaoh was angry with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker,

3 and put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the same prison where Joseph was confined.

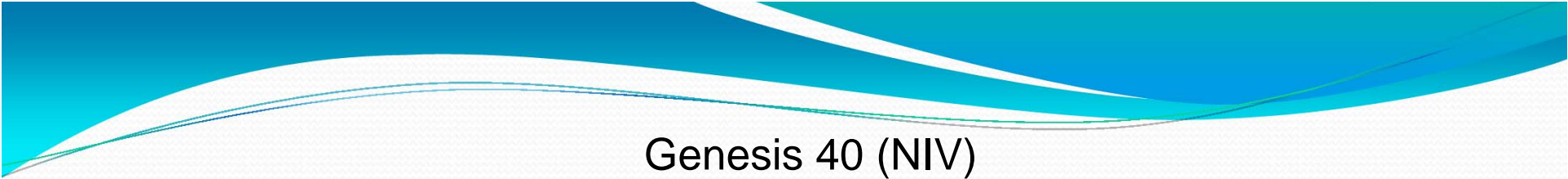
4 The captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph, and he attended them. After they had been in custody for some time,

5 each of the two men--the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were being held in prison--had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own.

# Joseph Was Compassionate

- Joseph recognized the two men looked sad
- They needed their dreams interpreted
- Joseph had no experience as dream interpreter
- He offered to interpret the dreams
- Motivated by compassion and faith in God
- Pivotal event in Joseph's life
- Genesis 40:6–8





## Genesis 40 (NIV)

6 When Joseph came to them the next morning, he saw that they were dejected.


7 So he asked Pharaoh's officials who were in custody with him in his master's house, "Why are your faces so sad today?"

8 "We both had dreams," they answered, "but there is no one to interpret them." Then Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams."



# Joseph Interprets Dreams for Pharaoh's Chief Cup-Bearer

- Chief cup-bearer told his dream
- Joseph predicted Pharaoh will restore chief cup-bearer to his position in three days
- Genesis 40:9–13



## Genesis 40 (NIV)

9 So the chief cupbearer told Joseph his dream. He said to him, "In my dream I saw a vine in front of me,

10 and on the vine were three branches. As soon as it budded, it blossomed, and its clusters ripened into grapes.

11 Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup and put the cup in his hand."

12 "This is what it means," Joseph said to him. "The three branches are three days.


13 Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand, just as you used to do when you were his cupbearer.



# Joseph Interprets Dreams for Pharaoh's Chief Baker

- Chief baker told his dream
- Joseph predicted Pharaoh will execute chief baker in three days
- Genesis 40:16–19





## Genesis 40 (NIV)

16 When the chief baker saw that Joseph had given a favorable interpretation, he said to Joseph, "I too had a dream: On my head were three baskets of bread.

17 In the top basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head."

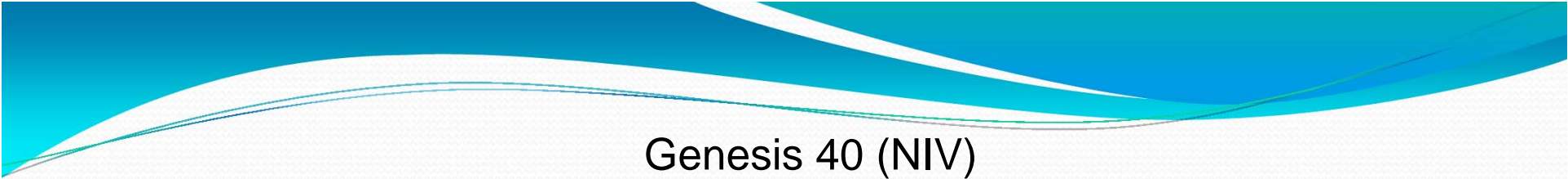
18 "This is what it means," Joseph said. "The three baskets are three days.

19 Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat away your flesh."

# Joseph Solicited Help from Pharaoh's Chief Cupbearer

- When all goes well with you remember me
  - Plead my case with Pharaoh
  - Forcibly brought here from land of Hebrews
  - Did not deserve imprisonment
- The chief cupbearer was restored to his position, but he forgot Joseph
- Genesis 40:14–15 and 20–23






## Genesis 40 (NIV)

14 But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison.

15 For I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon."





## Genesis 40 (NIV)

20 Now the third day was Pharaoh's birthday, and he gave a feast for all his officials. He lifted up the heads of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker in the presence of his officials:

21 He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, so that he once again put the cup into Pharaoh's hand,


22 but he hanged the chief baker, just as Joseph had said to them in his interpretation.

23 The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.

# Joseph Remembered Because of Pharaoh's Dreams

- Two years later, Pharaoh had two dreams that troubled him
- Magicians and wise men could not help
- Chief cupbearer remembered Joseph
- A young Hebrew that interpreted dreams accurately
- Genesis 41:1–13





## Genesis 41 (NIV)

1 When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream: He was standing by the Nile,

2 when out of the river there came up seven cows, sleek and fat, and they grazed among the reeds.

3 After them, seven other cows, ugly and gaunt, came up out of the Nile and stood beside those on the riverbank.


4 And the cows that were ugly and gaunt ate up the seven sleek, fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up.

5 He fell asleep again and had a second dream: Seven heads of grain, healthy and good, were growing on a single stalk.

6 After them, seven other heads of grain sprouted--thin and scorched by the east wind.

7 The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy, full heads. Then Pharaoh woke up; it had been a dream.





## Genesis 41 (NIV)

8 In the morning his mind was troubled, so he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for him.

9 Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, "Today I am reminded of my shortcomings.

10 Pharaoh was once angry with his servants, and he imprisoned me and the chief baker in the house of the captain of the guard.

11 Each of us had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own.


12 Now a young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard. We told him our dreams, and he interpreted them for us, giving each man the interpretation of his dream.

13 And things turned out exactly as he interpreted them to us: I was restored to my position, and the other man was hanged."

# Joseph Invited from Jail to Interpret Pharaoh's Dreams

- Joseph demonstrated competence two years earlier by interpreting dreams for Pharaoh's chief cup bearer
- Pharaoh brought him from jail to interpret the dreams
- Up to now, Joseph was a forgotten prisoner
- Genesis 41:14–16





## Genesis 41 (NIV)

14 So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought from the dungeon. When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came before Pharaoh.


15 Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it."

16 "I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."



# Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dreams

- Joseph explained that Pharaoh's dreams were a revelation from God
- Egypt was about to experience seven years of abundance
- Followed by seven years of severe famine
- Famine will wipe out the abundance of previous seven years
- Genesis 41:25–32




## Genesis 41 (NIV)

25 Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one and the same. God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do.

26 The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads of grain are seven years; it is one and the same dream.

27 The seven lean, ugly cows that came up afterward are seven years, and so are the seven worthless heads of grain scorched by the east wind: They are seven years of famine.





## Genesis 41 (NIV)

28 "It is just as I said to Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do.

29 Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt,

30 but seven years of famine will follow them. Then all the abundance in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will ravage the land.


31 The abundance in the land will not be remembered, because the famine that follows it will be so severe.

32 The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon.



# Joseph Proposes Plan to Pharaoh

- Appoint wise and discerning man in charge of special program
- Build up grain reserves during the seven years of abundance
- Hold the reserve to be used during seven years of famine
- Genesis 41:33–36



## Genesis 41 (NIV)

33 "And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt.

34 Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance.

35 They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in the cities for food.


36 This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine."



# Joseph Appointed Pharaoh's 2<sup>nd</sup> In Command

- Pharaoh recognized that Joseph's expertise came from God
- He appointed Joseph in charge of all Egypt to implement his plan
- Second only to Pharaoh and only on matters of the throne
- Genesis 41:37–40





## Genesis 41 (NIV)

37 The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials.

38 So Pharaoh asked them, "Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?"

39 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you.

40 You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you."

# What We Learned

- To set yourself up for blessing
- Be consistently attentive to needs
- Seek to provide for the needs
- Commit to doing what you can to provide for the needs



## What We Learned cont'd

- Joseph was attentive to needs and committed to providing for the needs
- Faced with fellow prisoners needing dream interpretation, he prayed God to interpret the dreams through him
- Faced with Pharaoh's revelation dreams, he proposed a policy plan for Pharaoh



## What We Learned cont'd

- Recognize and acknowledge that competence comes from God
- Joseph acknowledged and relied on God for competence to interpret dreams in jail
- Did the same to interpret Pharaoh's dreams
- His belief influenced Pharaoh to acknowledge that Joseph's expertise was from God