

Chapter Nine – Joseph in Egypt

Joseph was brought down to Egypt. The merchants sold him as a slave to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guards. He was a good man and when he saw how God blessed Joseph, he made him his housekeeper. Unfortunately Joseph was a handsome young man, a picture of his mother Rachel, and Potiphar's wife fell in love with him. When he refused to have an affair with her, she falsely accused him to her husband. Potiphar believed her and Joseph was thrown into prison.

In the prison he was always so well-behaved and cheerful that the jailer put him in charge of all the prisoners, among whom were Pharaoh's wine steward and chief baker. One night each of them had a dream which greatly troubled them.

The wine steward told Joseph his dream, "Last night in my dream, I was standing by the side of Pharaoh and his cup was in my hand. I took three bunches of grapes and squeezed the juice into the cup and handed it to Pharaoh and he was pleased." Then the baker told him, "In my dream, I was carrying three trays of cakes for Pharaoh on my head. As I was walking to the palace, the birds came and ate all the cakes."

Joseph replied, "God has shown me what your dreams mean. The three bunches of grapes mean in three days' time, Pharaoh's birthday, he will forgive you and you will be his steward again. Remember to help me when you are back. I am innocent and have done nothing wrong." To the baker he said, "I am sorry. In three days, you will be put to death and your dead body will be eaten up by birds." Everything happened as Joseph had said.

One day Pharaoh had two dreams. In the first one he was beside the River Nile when he saw seven fat cows feeding on the bank. Then, seven thin cows came out from the river, and ate the fat cows. He was so startled that he woke up. He went to sleep again and had another dream. This time he was at the same place and he saw seven full heads of wheat swaying in the breeze. Then, next to them, were seven dried-up heads of wheat in the desert wind. As they moved in the breeze the seven bad ones attacked the seven good ones. No one could explain these dreams to the Pharaoh. Then the wine steward remembered Joseph and his talent. Joseph was at once sent for, and when he had heard the two dreams, he said, "Your Majesty, God has told me the meaning of your dreams. They both mean the same thing. The seven fat cows and the seven full heads are seven years of good harvests which will come upon Egypt. The seven thin cows and the seven dried-up heads are seven years of bad harvests that will follow and there will be famine everywhere. So, my advice to you, Your Majesty, is to appoint a good Governor who will store up all the extra wheat during the seven years of plenty, so that, when the famine comes, Egypt will not starve."

Pharaoh was very pleased with this advice and he appointed Joseph the Governor of the whole land. Without wasting any time, Joseph built store-houses all over Egypt and into them he put all the wheat that was not needed. When the famine came, Egypt had plenty of wheat to sell, but the people in the other countries around were starving.



Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams

Questions:

1. Why was Joseph thrown into prison in Egypt?
2. What special talent did Joseph show when he was in prison?
3. What personal talent can you use to help others?
4. Why was Joseph allowed to leave prison?
5. Why do you think the Pharaoh was pleased with Joseph's advice?
6. What attitude should we have towards dreams?