



Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it." (Genesis 41:15)

Holy God, you are the source of all strength in our lives. Without you we are weak and tend to give up easily. Grant us the courage and strength you gave to Joseph, that we might endure hardships and trials with your grace. We thank you for always being with us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Introduction

Joseph had been sold into slavery and unjustly thrown into prison in Egypt. When the great Pharaoh of this land began to have troubling dreams, Joseph was called before the king that God might reveal the meaning of the strange images he saw.

Read: Genesis 41:15-43

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

The Biblical Context

The Pentateuch (the first section of Scripture) tells the story of Israel's ancestors. Scripture is honest about the real life struggle of this family, not hiding the sin and jealousies they dealt with.

The story of Joseph in Genesis is an example of great hardship, but also of God's ever-present support. Though Joseph endured much, in God's wisdom, the misfortune of being sold off to slavery was not the end for him. He was placed in a position to save many lives.

The Book of Genesis concludes with the family of Israel moving to Egypt, where Joseph provided them a new home. This corresponds to the time in Egyptian history known as the Hyksos Dynasty (16th and 15th Centuries B.C.) and the rule of the Canaanite Shepherd Kings. Over time, the Israelites entered a long period of slavery in Egypt, summarized briefly in Exodus 1-2.

Discussion Questions

1. At this point in the story, where was Joseph? What was his situation? How did he get there? (For a hint, skim the previous chapters in Genesis.)
2. What is a "Pharaoh"? What did this Pharaoh see in his troubling dream? What did he do when he awoke?
3. How did Pharaoh hear about Joseph? What did Joseph do differently from the magicians? According to verse 16, where did Joseph's ability come from?
4. According to Joseph, what did Pharaoh's dream mean? What did the cows and the heads of grain represent? How did this show what was going to happen in Egypt?
5. From what you see here, does it seem that the Pharaoh trusted Joseph? Why or why not? What happened to Joseph after he translated the dream?
6. Read Acts 2:17-18. Do you think that dreams can have a symbolic or hidden meaning? Have you ever felt that God was saying something to you through a dream? How would a person of faith verify whether something is or is not a message from God?
7. How did God use Joseph as instrument of his will? Through Joseph, what did God accomplish in this story? How did this save many lives?
8. Joseph had suffered much before he reached this point. What if circumstances in his life had never brought him to Egypt? What can this story teach us about trusting in God and God's timing?