

# INTENDED FOR GOOD

## 2. COAT TALES

HVC, 6/14/20

Genesis 40-41

Do you dream a lot or struggle to remember your dreams?

Have you ever had a dream come true? Share with the group ...

What is the *weirdest* dream you have ever had?

What would be the hardest part for *you* about being in prison?

**Genesis 40:3-4a (NIV)**

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

*The captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph, and he attended them.*

What do you think Potiphar's motive was for putting the cupbearer and baker under Joseph's care?

**Genesis 40:4b-5 (NIV)**

*After they had been in custody for some time, 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.*

What do you think Joseph might have thought when he heard this?

**Genesis 40:7-8 (NIV)**

*So he asked Pharaoh's officials who were in custody with him in his master's house, "Why do you look so sad today?"*

*"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."*

What do you think of the practice of dream interpretation?

What "principles" of witnessing can you find in these verses?

**Genesis 40:10-11 (NIV)**

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

How hard does it seem to you to interpret this dream?

**Genesis 40:14-15 (NIV)**

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

What do you think was Joseph’s “tone” when he said this?

What does this tell you about Joseph’s thoughts?

How do you think he is feeling about what happened to him?

**Genesis 40:16-17 (NIV)**

*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**. 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.”*

What’s different about this dream from the cupbearer’s dream?

**Genesis 40:19 (NIV)**

*“Within three days Pharaoh will lift **off** your head and impale your body on a pole. And the **birds** will eat away your flesh.”*

Again, what do you suppose Joseph’s tone was while delivering these words?

**Genesis 40:23-41:1 (NIV)**

*The chief cupbearer, however, did **not remember** Joseph; he forgot him. When **two full years** had passed, Pharaoh had a **dream** ...*

Given the extraordinary turn of events, why do you think the cupbearer forgot all about Joseph?

Why do you think two more years had to pass before Pharaoh had this dream?

Can you fill in the blanks in this statement that Frank made in the message? What might God be using in *your* life right now to prepare you for something up the road?

God is using the \_\_\_\_\_ to shape \_\_\_\_\_  
Primarily to shape US for tomorrow  
Don’t let what is \_\_\_\_\_ ruin the \_\_\_\_\_

[ANSWER] God is using the **PRESENT**  
to shape **TOMORROW**  
Primarily to shape US for tomorrow  
Don’t let what is **PAST** ruin the **FUTURE**

Discuss this quote: *The meaning of earthly existence lies, not as we have grown used to thinking, in prospering, but in the development of the soul.*

**Solzhenitsyn**

What is different in this perspective from that of our surrounding culture?

**Genesis 41:14 (NIV)**

***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.***

What would have been going through your mind at this point?

When have you experienced a sudden turnaround in your “fortunes” or prospects?

**Genesis 41:15 (NIV)**

***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.”***

How might this statement have been a kind of temptation for Joseph?

**Genesis 41:16 (NIV)**

***“I cannot do it,” Joseph replied to Pharaoh, “but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires.”***

Could Joseph expect the Pharaoh to understand what God he was talking about?

Why do you think he felt compelled to mention God here?

How could Joseph be sure God would give him the interpretation of the dream? What if that had not happened?!

Think through together and list all the “providential” events that have occurred in Joseph’s life so far.

Where are some areas you are tempted to take pride in your own abilities?

**Genesis 41:25 (NIV)**

***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.***

In what way is this verse a good way of “witnessing” to Pharaoh?

**Genesis 41:32 (NIV)**

***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.***

What is the difference between this verse and “fatalism”?

*[NOTE: tough thought-question, but basically fatalism says it does not matter what you do. It is cold and impersonal. This, on the other hand, is a message from a loving God that calls you to action.]*

*[NOTE: FYI, this is not “predestination.” The proper term for it is “foreordination.”*

Does this interpretation sound harsh or merciful to you? Why? How do you think Pharaoh heard it?

What are some of the contrasts between the famine that Pharaoh faced and the Covid crisis *we* are facing?

**Genesis 41:33 (NIV)**

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

Who do you think Joseph had in mind here? Why?

How risky do you think it was for Joseph to propose this? Why would he take that risk?

**Genesis 41:34-36 (NIV)**

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

How different do you think *our* situation would be with the pandemic if we'd had leaders with the foresight and courage to prepare like this?

**Genesis 41:37-39 (NIV)**

***The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. So Pharaoh asked them, “Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?”***

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

What are some of the things that made Joseph appear “discerning and wise” to Pharaoh? What do you suppose might have been different about Joseph from all of Pharaoh’s *other* “wise men”?

**Genesis 41:40-41 (NIV)**

***“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.” So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt.”***

Do you think Joseph was surprised by this development? Why/not?

**Genesis 41:51-52 (NIV)**

***Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh and said, “It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father’s household.” The second son he named Ephraim and said, “It is because God has made me fruitful in **the land of my suffering.**”***

For what does Joseph praise God here? What else is significant about the names of his children?

**Genesis 41:57 (NIV)**

***And all the world came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe everywhere.***

What are the parallels between this statement and the “gospel message”?

What do you learn about God in this story?

If you had to identify a “dungeon” that you are in right now, what would it be? How does this story give you hope?