

Genesis 41:25-57 • From Degradation to Exultation

Introduction

Well before the arrival of Christ's First Coming, it had been established that there were two very important "types" or persons in the Old Testament pre-figuring the work of the Messiah which they called "Hamashiach Ben Joseph" (The Messiah the Son of Joseph) and "Hamashiach Ben David" (The Messiah the Son of David). They knew that Joseph taught of the suffering servant aspect of the Messiah's ministry and that David taught of the conquering king aspect. There were great debates about how these two ministries would be reconciled in one Messiah because they did not take into consideration the possibility that it described One Messiah, but two Comings. The life of Joseph teaches us about the Messiah's First Coming and His ministry as a suffering servant.

²⁵Now Joseph said to Pharaoh, "Pharaoh's dreams are one and the same; God has told to Pharaoh what He is about to do. ²⁶The seven good cows are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years; the dreams are one and the same.

²⁷The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven thin ears scorched by the east wind will be seven years of famine. ²⁸It is as I have spoken to Pharaoh: God has shown to Pharaoh what He is about to do.

²⁹"Behold, seven years of great abundance are coming in all the land of Egypt; ³⁰and after them seven years of famine will come, and all the abundance will be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and the famine will ravage the land. ³¹So the abundance will be unknown in the land because of that subsequent famine; for it will be very severe.

³²"Now as for the repeating of the dream to Pharaoh twice, it means that the matter is determined by God, and God will quickly bring it about.

³³"Now let Pharaoh look for a man discerning and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. ³⁴Let Pharaoh take action to appoint overseers in charge of the land, and let him exact a fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven years of abundance. ³⁵Then let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming, and store up the grain for food in the cities under Pharaoh's authority, and let them guard it. ³⁶Let the food become as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which will occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land will not perish during the famine."

[Read v.25-32]

Q: Why is one of the teachings concerning Joseph's life that God will turn what is intended for evil to good for His purposes?

A: Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers, thrown into prison because of a woman's lies, forgotten for 2 years by a man he helped, and yet all these circumstances are used by God to elevate him to become the ruler of all Egypt and to be in the position to best carry out God's will and help his family.

Application: Do you think because "bad things" happen that God has forgotten you or is not working in your favor? Do you know of anyone whose circumstances were used to God's glory as in the case of Joseph?

Q: What is Joseph's approach to interpreting the dream for Pharaoh? How is Joseph showing himself to be God's servant rather than his own?

A: Joseph gives all the credit to God and points Pharaoh to Him, not himself. Like all true prophets of God, the goal of the revelation given through them is to turn hearts to God.

Point: When studying prophecy, the person of Joseph is a very good example to come back to that reminds us not only of the proper mechanics of interpretation but the right attitude and heart for **both** the speaker and the listener.

[Read v.33-36]

Q: If they only needed food for 7 years, why store 1/5th per year instead of 1/7th?

A: This will provide the surplus necessary not only to feed the nations that would come to Egypt, but Joseph's family who will also come for food during the famine. (Note: God is a God of abundance, not minimum requirements.)

Q: How is Joseph's suggestion of an overseer a parallel of one's coming to know and accept Christ?

A: One must relinquish sole power over one's life, submitting to the direction and authority of Christ to address every issue in one's life. One must accept Christ's authority and direction to make preparations to endure both the good and the bad.

³⁷Now the proposal seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his servants. ³⁸Then Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find a man like this, in whom is a divine spirit?”

³⁹So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has informed you of all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you are.

⁴⁰You shall be over my house, and according to your command all my people shall do homage; only in the throne I will be greater than you.”

⁴¹Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.”

⁴²Then Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put the gold necklace around his neck. ⁴³He had him ride in his second chariot; and they proclaimed before him, “Bow the knee!” And he set him over all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁴Moreover, Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Though I am Pharaoh, yet without your permission no one shall raise his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” ⁴⁵Then Pharaoh named Joseph Zaphenath-paneah; and he gave him Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara priest of On, as his wife. And Joseph went forth over the land of Egypt.

⁴⁶Now Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went through all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁷During the seven years of plenty the land brought forth abundantly. ⁴⁸So he gathered all the food of these seven years which occurred in the land of Egypt and placed the food in the cities; he placed in every city the food from its own surrounding fields. ⁴⁹Thus Joseph stored up grain in great abundance like the sand of the sea, until he stopped measuring it, for it was beyond measure.

[Read v.37-45]

Q: What tells us that God has positively impacted Pharaoh’s heart?

A: He knows that this is from God and that he himself falls short of the qualifications needed to follow through with God; he therefore appoints Joseph on the basis of his relationship with God without taking into consideration any other earthly qualifications.

Q: What are the similarities to the life of Christ in the life of Joseph here?

1. Joseph went from a life of degradation to exultation in a single day in going from prisoner to ruler; so Christ does in a single day, going from the grave to resurrection and being given all power and authority by God the Father. Joseph undergoes a change that is symbolic of going from death (prison) to life (ruler), a “type” of resurrection.
2. Joseph is given all power and authority by the king; Christ is given all power and authority by God the King.
3. All Egypt had to bow their knee before Joseph; all mankind will bow their knee before Christ.
4. Joseph is given a new name; Christ is given a new name.
5. Joseph takes a Gentile bride; Christ takes a Gentile bride (the church) until such time as he also takes Israel as His bride as well.
6. Joseph will feed the earth with grain; Christ will feed the earth with God’s Word.
7. Discuss any others...

[Read v.46-49]

Q: What is the meaning of the phrase “stood before Pharaoh”?

A: It’s a phrase meaning to serve the king. Such courts were attended by a great many “standing” in and near the throne that they may carry out the king’s commands.

Q: Who else was 30 years old when they “stood before” their King and began service?

A: Jesus of Nazareth.

⁵³When the seven years of plenty which had been in the land of Egypt came to an end, ⁵⁴and the seven years of famine began to come, just as Joseph had said, then there was famine in all the lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. ⁵⁵So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried out to Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, you shall do." ⁵⁶When the famine was spread over all the face of the earth, then Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians; and the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. ⁵⁷The people of all the earth came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the earth.

[Read v.53-57]

Q: How might this speak of the ministry of Christ?

A: Just as they could only get bread to sustain life from Joseph, so Christ is the only Bread of Life from Whom eternal life can be acquired. Just as the king of Egypt designated that the grain for life could only be acquired through the one man Joseph, so the King of Heaven designated that life can only be acquired through His One Son Jesus Christ.

Q: What might be the biblical parallel to God's working through Joseph during these 7 year periods and His working in Israel in the final 7 year period of the End Times?

A: Just as the sons of Israel will be reconciled with Joseph through these events, so in the End Times the sons of Israel will be reconciled to Christ.

Epilogue

Make a list of the similarities to Christ's life from the events leading up to this chapter:

1. Joseph was the favorite son of his father who delivered a bad report concerning his brothers; Jesus was the favorite Son of His Father who delivered a bad report concerning His brothers.
2. Joseph was handed over to the Ishmaelites so his brothers could say they were not guilty of bloodshed; Jesus was handed over to the Romans that his brothers could say they were not guilty of bloodshed.
3. Joseph was betrayed by his brother Judah for 20 pieces of silver; Jesus was betrayed by his brother Judah (Greek "Judas") for 30 pieces of silver.
4. Joseph's brothers invented a deception to make it look like he died; Jesus' brothers invented a deception to refute His being raised from the dead.
5. Joseph was caught between two prisoners, one for which he predicted life, the other death; Jesus was hung between two prisoners, one to which He granted life, the other death.
6. Joseph's brothers used his garment; Jesus' captors cast lots for His garment.
7. List others...

Make a list of the such similarities from the events after this chapter:

1. Joseph's brothers did not recognize him the first time, but wept bitterly when they recognized him the second time; Israel did not recognize Jesus at His First Coming but will weep bitterly when they recognize and accept Him at His Second Coming.
2. Joseph provides his brothers complete and unrestricted forgiveness; Jesus provides the same to all that have, do, and will come to Him.
3. List others...