

Joseph as Prime Minister

41: 37-46a

DIG: Has Joseph gone too far in taking on rings, robes, chauffeured chariot, name change, Gentile wife and all? How would becoming more like an Egyptian help him fulfill his new role? Why do you think the Bible does not criticize Yosef for taking a Gentile wife, contrary to his family values? How does Joseph's behavior differ from Esau's (see 26:34-35, 28:6-9, 36:2)? What **nine** ways did **Joseph foreshadow the life of Christ**?

REFLECT: When was the last time you wondered if the Lord had forgotten about you? How did He show you He hadn't? How might this story help you remember that **ADONAI Eloheinu is always there for you**?

Yosef had correctly interpreted Pharaoh's mysterious and disturbing dreams. That meant that **the land of Egypt** was headed for trouble. What would **Pharaoh** do about it? **His people** were used to a good life. But how would **they** react when the famine came? Would **they** blame him? Would **they** lose faith in **their** gods? Would revolution follow? Again, especially if this **Pharaoh** was a Hyksos Semite that dominated **the Egyptians**, thoughts such as these must have troubled him.⁶⁴³

Aside from his obvious spiritual giftedness, if Pharaoh were one of the hated Hyksos kings, Yosef would actually be closer in nationality to him than to the Egyptians. The Hyksos were tolerated, not accepted, by their Egyptian subjects. Therefore, because they found loyalty among the Egyptians so hard to come by, then all the more reason to put Joseph in charge. Faithfulness was certainly one of his greatest characteristics.

The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials who advised him. They were not only impressed with his interpretation, but his plan to meet the coming crisis. But there was more than that. There was a spiritual side of him that was unique, far beyond their own understanding. They couldn't quite put their finger on it, but they knew it was there nonetheless. So Pharaoh asked, already knowing the answer: **Can we find someone as qualified as this man, one in whom is the spirit of God (41:37-38)?** Obviously they couldn't. Pharaoh was a pagan king who did not believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But with his limited understanding, he did clearly acknowledge that God was with Joseph. Pharaoh's words remind us of what King Belshazzar would later say of Daniel, "I have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you and that you have insight, intelligence and outstanding wisdom" (Daniel 5:14). The choice was obvious. Who better than Yosef to

put in charge of this plan? Pharaoh said to him, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you" (41:39). Yosef had been faithful over all the little things ADONAI had sent him; now Joseph would become ruler over the whole land of Egypt under Pharaoh.⁶⁴⁴

48. Pharaoh recognized that Joseph's wisdom did not come from the world, but from the Spirit of God. The difference between Yosef wisdom and that possessed by Pharaoh's court magicians was beyond compare. So, too, did the words of the Lord Jesus make a profound impression upon those who heard Him. When Yeshua had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching because He taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law (Matthew 7:28-29). Coming to His hometown, He began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. They asked, "Where did this man get his wisdom" (Matthew 13:54). And just as Pharaoh and his advisors were struck by the wisdom of Joseph, so were those who listened to Christ and just as Pharaoh confessed: Can we find someone like this man? . . . there is no one so discerning and wise, so the hearers of Messiah acknowledged: No one ever spoke the way this man does (John 7:46).

49. As a result, Yosef was exalted, and set over all of Egypt. You shall be in charge of my palace, literally, *house*, and all my people are to submit to your orders (41:40a). What a blessed change this was: from shame to glory, from the pit to the palace, from being a slave in chains to being elevated with all in submission to him, Pharaoh being the only exception. How beautifully this speaks of the One who Joseph foreshadowed. He was here in humiliation and shame, but He is no longer here. ADONAI has highly exalted Him. He has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand, with angels, authorities and powers in submission to Him (First Peter 3:22).

Joseph would have the full authority to carry out his plan. This would be the third *house* in which Yosef had been placed. He had gone from Potiphar's *house*, to the *jailhouse*, to Pharaoh's *house*. The only thing that was withheld from Yosef's possession was Pharaoh's throne. Thus, Joseph's relation with Pharaoh parallels his relation with Potiphar. Only Potiphar's wife was withheld from Joseph, whereas Pharaoh only withheld his throne.⁶⁴⁵

50. Both Joseph and Jesus were seated on the throne of another. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you (41:40b). Today our Lord shares the throne of the Father, just as Yosef shared the throne of Pharaoh. As Joseph ruled over Pharaoh's house with his word, so today our Lord Jesus Christ rules over the Father's household, the household of faith, the Church, by and through His Word. And today, while the Lord Jesus Christ is on the throne of His Father, He is not on His own throne.

Yeshua tells us: **To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne (Revelation 3:21).** Our Savior makes a distinction between His own throne and the Father's throne, and promises a reward to the overcomer, not on the Father's throne, but on His own throne. His throne will be in **Jerusalem, the city of the great King (Matthew 5:35).** Today, He sits on His Father's throne as the rejected man and the rejected Jew.

So Pharaoh reemphasizes what he has just said: **I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt (41:41).** So just as Potiphar had raised Yosef up to be in charge of his household, and just as the warden had raised him up to be in charge of the prison, Pharaoh raised him up to be in charge of the whole land of Egypt.

This was Joseph's golden moment, and what would he do with it? How would he react to years of abuse? How was he going to react to the cup-bearer who was standing there, who had let him rot in prison for two years? How was he going to react to Potiphar who was standing there? This was his moment. He had the power to get even. What would you do? Your choice is between the peace of God and the bitterness of revenge. Rabbi Sha'ul has a message for us: **Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you (Ephesians 4:31-32).** When you become petty and bitter, you lose the favor of the Lord. Remember, your attitude in adversity determines your attainment. Therefore, the reason for Yosef's thirteen years of suffering was made clear to him. He needed to learn patience and to trust ADONAI. Any other man raised from the pit to the palace in such fashion would have been destroyed by pride. But Joseph knew that ADONAI had prepared him to lead the whole land of Egypt.

Therefore, Yosef became *the grand vizier, or Prime Minister, of Egypt*. The phrase: **I hereby put you in charge of the whole land** literally means *and all my people will be obedient to you, or all my people will kiss the earth in submission to you*. The duties of the Prime Minister were critical and varied. He had total control of the government, assessed and collected taxes, appointed officials, controlled public work, built new monuments, supervised the royal graveyard, maintained records *and the food supply*. In other words, it was his responsibility to advise Pharaoh and see to it that the country ran smoothly.

51. Both Yosef and Yeshua were given symbols of their new positions. Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph's finger (see my commentary on **Esther Bh - The King Gave His Signet Ring to Mordecai**). He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck (41:42), **and the same is true for Jesus, who is now crowned with glory and honor (Hebrews 2:9).** **We also see Him dressed in a**

robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around His chest (Revelation 1:13). **The signet ring was Pharaoh's symbol of authority, which had the title of the Royal Seal Bearer, held only by the Prime Minister.**

52. Both Joseph and Jesus were acknowledged publicly. And he made him to ride in a chariot second only to Pharaoh and they cried before him, "Bow the knee!" "Bow the knee! And he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt (41:43 KJV). **On the day of Pentecost, Peter said to the Jews who had condemned and crucified the Savior:** Let all Isra'el be assured that God has made this Yeshua, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). *Have you recognized the glorious majesty of Christ, and by faith seen that the One who died on the cross is seated on the right hand of the Father in Heaven? Have you submitted to His Lordship, so that you live now only to please Him? Have you bowed your knee before Him? One day you will be compelled to do so, because God has sworn that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:10-11).*

The streets of Egypt were so narrow that it was customary to have an official run before him to warn the people to get out of the way. The men would shout before him, "Bow the knee!" "Bow the knee!" In the case of Yosef, the command would be to prostrate themselves, as they would do in the presence of Pharaoh himself. Joseph could hardly forget that earlier in his dreams, he had seen his brothers' bow down, but now he saw all Egypt bowing down before him.⁶⁴⁶

Then Pharaoh said to him, "I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one in Egypt will lift hand or foot in all Egypt" (41:44a). He was in complete control of Egypt, but he wasn't really an Egyptian. Therefore, to make it easier for him to be accepted by the masses, Pharaoh gave him an Egyptian name and an Egyptian wife.

53. Both Joseph and Yeshua are given a new name. After his period of suffering and shame was over, Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah (41:44b), which means *the revealer of secrets*. Rabbi Sha'ul also tells us that at the end of time, during God's righteous judgment, He will judge men's secrets through Yeshua Messiah, as the Gospel declares (Romans 2:16). *The Revealer of Secrets is coming.*

54. Pharaoh arranged Yosef's marriage. And Pharaoh gave Joseph Asenath to be his wife. And God the Father arranged Jesus' marriage. **The Kingdom of Heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son (Matthew 22:2).** Was not Isaac a type of Christ, and his marriage arranged by Abraham his father? She is the bride, the

wife of the Lamb (Revelation 21:9), chosen before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight (Ephesians 1:4).

55. Both Yosef and Jesus are given a Gentile bride. And Pharaoh gave Joseph Asenath, named after an Egyptian goddess, daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, the city of the sun, to be his wife. And Yosef went throughout the land of Egypt (41:45). **And Yeshua was given a Gentile bride** from every tribe and language and people and nation (Revelation 5:9c). **ADONAI had long ago told Abraham that** all the peoples on earth would be blessed through him (12:3b). **Yosef traveled throughout Egypt to make sure that the provisions for grain were made in each city.**

Because the rabbis don't like the fact that Joseph would take a Gentile bride, they teach that Asenath was really the daughter of Dinah and Shechem. They teach that she was driven from Jacob's house, and was supposedly adopted by Potiphera the priest of On and his wife, and eventually married Yosef.

56. Both Joseph and Jesus were about the same age when they began their life's work. Yosef was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh, king of Egypt (41:46a). **No detail, put here by the Holy Spirit, is without profound significance. How perfectly this foreshadows Christ.** Now Yeshua was about thirty years old when He began His ministry (Luke 3:23).

Yosef had gone from the pit, to Potiphar's household, to the prison, and finally to the palace as Prime Minister. But we get no suggestion from the text that **Joseph** got caught up in his success. **He** remembered where **he** came from and was not impressed with all the accolades, honors and freedoms of being the Prime Minister **of Egypt.** **He** worked hard and didn't let it go to his head. Wealth made no difference to **him.** Therefore, **Joseph** served **ADONAI** as **he** had served **Him** as a slave in prison. However, now **he** served **Him** in the court of **Pharaoh.** We should go and do likewise.