

## Resetting the Table

- \* Well — I'm happy to return to Genesis ...
  - ◆ Though I found that I had to spend some time to get my head back in to the game
  - ◆ As such I thought it would be useful to begin our time today by “resetting the table” ... That is, to remind us where we were!
- \* Most recently, we had been in the Joseph's “dream narratives”

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## Resetting the Table

- \* First in Gen 37 his own dreams of “providing for” and “ruling over” his immediate family
- \* And then in Gen 40 his interpretation of the Cupbearer and Baker's dreams ...
- \* As we pick back up this week, we will see how God sovereignly positions Joseph to be the deliverer of his family — and Egypt — through interpreting Pharaoh's dream

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## Resetting the Table

- \* Before we do, remember that Joseph's dreams — and the events that ensue — are set in the 10<sup>th</sup> and final תּלְדוֹת of Genesis which records the generations of Jacob ...
- \* Covering chapters 37-50, Jacob's story is largely told through the life of Jacob ...
- \* Now, if you remember, I introduced an overarching "big picture" idea that is instructive for viewing these chapters ... **Do you recall what it was?**

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## Resetting the Table

- ◆ The parallels between Joseph and Christ
- \* There are many — though I would not go so far as to say Joseph is a type of Christ as many commentators do!
- \* That said, let's quickly review them — starting with the "biggie" ...
- \* **What Christ-like character does he illustrate?**
  - ◆ **Suffering for righteousness sake that ultimately triumphs**

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## Resetting the Table

- \* But there are more — **what comes to mind?**
  - ◆ Adaptable — A man for all seasons ... future heir, slave, prisoner, prime-minister
  - ◆ Stable — Adversity did not harden him, nor did prosperity ruin him
  - ◆ Resilient — He never complained nor compromised
  - ◆ Faithful — seems to have deeply trusted in God
  - ◆ The granddaddy — **FORGIVING!!!!**

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## Resetting the Table

- \* Next, we recall the ways that Joseph prefigures key aspects of Christ's incarnate life
- \* **Can you think of some?**
  - ◆ Envy and hatred "in the family" — paralleling the religious leaders envy and hatred of Christ
  - ◆ Being sold for 20 shekels of silver — paralleling Judas' betrayal of Christ for 30 pieces of silver
  - ◆ The rejected becomes the redeemer

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## Resetting the Table

- ◆ Last, God's redirecting man's evil for His good — resulting in the salvation of many ... both generally and particularly
  - Joseph "generally" fed millions, while "particularly" provided for his family, while ...
  - Christ "generally" died for sin, while "particularly" for the elect
- \* Now, one more thing ...
- \* Aspects of prefiguring can be traced back to Abraham and Isaac as well

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## Resetting the Table

- \* What might you say Abraham prefigures?
  - ◆ God's love in giving up his only begotten son
- \* What about Isaac?
  - ◆ The willing "sacrificial lamb"
- \* Which culminates in Joseph, picturing ...
  - ◆ The favored son — sent by his father to seek his "brethren"
  - ◆ The innocent son — betrayed by his "brethren"
  - ◆ The rejected son — who becomes the rescuer of his "brethren"

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## Resetting the Table

- \* There are many implications we can draw from Joseph's life ... but two strike me in particular
  - 📖 ONE GODLY MAN can make a "world-wide" impact when he trusts and submits to God
  - 📖 The importance of rejecting bitterness
- \* The final chapters of Genesis unfold as follows ...

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## The Big Picture

TEXT	TITLE
GEN 37	FROM "PREFERRED" TO "PUT-OUT"
GEN 38	THE RISK OF ENTANGLEMENTS (PARENTHETICAL)
GEN 39-41	FROM POTIPHAR TO PRISON TO PALACE
GEN 42-45	THE ROAD TO GOSHEN
GEN 46	THE FAMILY REUNION

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## Opening Thoughts

- \* Chapter 40 ended with the confirmation of Joseph's interpretation
  - ◆ The Cupbearer is restored
  - ◆ The Baker was hanged, AND ...
- \* Joseph is promptly forgotten — *Why do you think?*
  - ◆ I'd say Prov 16:9 [TURN ... READ]
- \* This is not to say that we should not think and plan, but serves to remind Joseph who controls the outcome

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## Opening Thoughts

- \* As we begin this chapter Joseph has languished in prison 2 years beyond the Cupbearer's release ...
- \* Yet he will soon go from "pining in prison" to "posted in the palace!"
- \* God will sovereignly position Joseph to preserve both Egypt — and subsequently his family — in this chapter

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## Structure of Gen 41

- \* Pharaoh's dreams and dilemma - vv. 1-8
- \* God's providential intervention - vv. 9-13
- \* God's providential revelation - vv. 14-36
- \* Joseph's promotion and processional - vv. 37-45
- \* The years of plenty - vv. 46-49
- \* Joseph's progeny - vv. 50-52
- \* The years of famine - vv. 53-57

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## Pharaoh's Dreams

- \* After giving us the time marker — v. 1 jumps right to Pharaoh's dream
- \* Vv. 2-8 record the dream — **What details do you observe?**
  - ◆ There were two separate dreams — vv. 2-4; vv. 5-7 — though similar plot lines for each
  - ◆ Both dreams involve "food groups"
  - ◆ Both sets of cows arise from the same place

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# Pharaoh's Dreams

- ◆ Both dreams have “abnormal” circumstances
  - Cows don't eat cows
  - A “non-prevailing” east wind ...
  - An east wind is a dry hot wind off the desert, and often signified judgment in the OT (Hos 13:15 [READ]; Jonah 4:8; Jer 18:17)
- ◆ The imagery of both dreams startled Pharaoh ...
  - The first woke him up; the second elicited relief — “and behold it was a dream”

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# Pharaoh's Dreams

- ◆ The number “7” occurs in both dreams
- ◆ In both dreams, “abundance” precedes “want”
- ◆ In both dreams, the “want” consumes the “abundance”
- ◆ In both dreams, the “want” is subsequent sequential action ... note the word “after” in vv. 3, 6
- \* What other little fact about the dreams is most interesting?
- ◆ Note v. 8 — There was “NONE” who could interpret them!!

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# Pharaoh's Dreams

- \* Pharaoh gathered all the “best and the brightest” interpreters — but they were all stumped
- \* Now, why do I belabor the dream's details?
  - ◆ Because I don't think it was a particularly difficult dream to interpret — there are a number of straightforward clues!

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# Pharaoh's Dreams

- \* For instance ...
  - ◆ The dreams occurred in one place — Egypt
  - ◆ The numbers would indicate time periods (vs. quantity) with the inclusion of the preposition “after”
  - ◆ Abundance & scarcity of food groups indicate changing “supply” conditions — suggesting feast and famine
  - ◆ The repetition certainly indicated something unusually momentous — suggesting the dream be taken seriously

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# Pharaoh's Dreams

- \* So what conclusion might we draw from all the interpreters being “stumped?”
  - ♦ That God “shut up” their minds to understanding
- \* God providentially filled Pharaoh's mind with the dreams and blanked the minds of the magicians and wise men — Why?
- \* To pave the way for Joseph — God's chosen instrument of revelation and deliverance

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# God's Providential Intervention

- \* God did, however open the cupbearer's mind ... “bringing to mind” the prison dream translator extraordinaire
- \* What does the cupbearer mean by “I would make mention of my offenses (lit. “sins”) today” in v. 9?
  - ♦ The verb “make mention” literally translated means “I am caused to remember”
  - ♦ I think he is acknowledging his failure to remember Joseph ...
    - Though likely motivated more by personal gain in solving Pharaoh's dilemma than repenting of his “forgetfulness!”
  - ♦ In other words, he is more driven by “scoring points” with Pharaoh than by genuine remorse over forgetting Joseph

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## God's Providential Intervention

### \* What does the cupbearer do in v. 10-13?

- ◆ Obviously he is recounting his own personal experience with a dream ...

### \* But there is something more — What?

- ◆ First he prepares Pharaoh for Joseph's nationality, age, and current stature as he is essentially "recommending" Joseph
- ◆ Second, and more important, he is establishing Joseph's credibility ... "And just as he interpreted for us, so it happened"

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## God's Providential Revelation

### \* God's revelation of the dream's meaning will proceed in four parts ...

- ◆ Part 1 in v. 14-16 is the job interview
- ◆ Part 2 in v. 17-24 Pharaoh recounts ... and "adds-to" the dream
- ◆ Part 3 in v. 25-32 is God's revelation to Joseph ... AKA "the interpretation"
- ◆ Part 4 in v. 33-36 is God's directive to Pharaoh

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# The Job Interview

- \* In his desperation, Pharaoh summons Joseph — with little regard for who or what Joseph is, cautioning us ...
  - 🕯 To be mindful about who we turn to in the midst of urgent need
  - 🕯 And — think carefully about our source of help
- \* Joseph “cleans himself up” and is presented to Pharaoh
- \* Now — Despite his desperation, Pharaoh does pause briefly in v. 15

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# The Job Interview

- \* What do you think is going on in v. 15?
  - ◆ First, a full disclosure of what Joseph is getting in to — A dream that has stumped everyone!
  - ◆ But more so, Pharaoh seeks validation from Joseph regarding his abilities — and willingness to accept the task ... So and “interview” of sorts
- \* What is interesting about Joseph’s reply?
  - ◆ There are a number of things ...

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# The Job Interview

- ◆ First we see the outworking of Prov 3:5 in his response ... “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding”
- ◆ Second we see that Joseph never misses an opportunity to point to and glorify God
- ◆ Third we see that Joseph will not distort the truth in any way for personal gain, reminding us that ...
- 📖 Guarding God's honor and glory should supersede our desire for personal gain

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# The Job Interview

- ◆ Fourth — I think that Joseph is indirectly asking Pharaoh if he wants to proceed
  - ▶ The English versions obscure this with the translation ... God will give Pharaoh a “favorable” answer
  - ▶ A better translation of the Hebrew word translated “favorable” is “complete or full”
  - ▶ So the idea is — God will give you a complete answer
  - ▶ And the implied question is left hanging in the air — namely, God won't hold back ... Do you REALLY want to hear it?

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# The Dreams Recounted

\* What does v. 17 indicate?

- ◆ That Pharaoh had “hired” Joseph for the job!

\* Anything materially different about the dreams in v. 18-24?

- ◆ No, but note the embellishments in v. 19b and 21 ...
- ◆ Gaunt cows like Pharaoh had never seen (v. 19b) and there was no fattening them up! (v. 21)
- ◆ With this embellishment, Pharaoh seems to emphasize what he does not understand

\* Pharaoh concludes by reinforcing that these dreams have heretofore defied interpretation ...

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# God’s Interpretation

\* What is Joseph doing in v. 25?

- ◆ He is asserting God’s sovereignty over Pharaoh
- ◆ This is risky business & astounding as the Pharaoh’s thought themselves to be and were worshipped as “god”
- ◆ So, by accepting Joseph’s interpretation, Pharaoh is tacitly subordinating himself to THE GOD!
- 📌 Reminding us of the first commandment — There shall be no other gods besides ME!

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## God's Interpretation

\* What aspect of God's will is demonstrated in vv. 26-36?

- ◆ His decretive will — God is revealing to Joseph what will transpire over the next 14 years, namely ...
- ◆ 7 years of abundance followed by 7 years of famine

\* The interpretation is ...

- ◆ First — Joseph reveals that two dreams are one event

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## God's Interpretation

- ◆ Next he reveals the duration of the events described in the dreams — 14 years
  - ▶ The '7' good cows and '7' good ears represent an initial "7" year period
  - ▶ The '7' gaunt cows and '7' withered ears represent a subsequent "7" year period of famine
- ◆ In v. 28 Joseph pauses to reaffirm God's sovereignty and the imminence of the dreams fulfillment — "God has shown to Pharaoh what He is about to DO!!!"

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## God's Interpretation

- ◆ Joseph is intent that Pharaoh understand who is in charge and that these are God's words!!
- ◆ Next, we are told the abundant "meat" and "grain" of the first 7 years denote a time of "great plenty"
- ◆ Which will be followed by famine that will consume all of the great plenty — a "severe famine"
- ◆ And Joseph closes by explaining that the dreams repetition serves to confirm the certainty of their fulfillment — and again the fulfillment's imminence

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## God's Directive

- \* Now, what is going on in vv. 33-36?
  - ◆ First — what it is not ... It is not part of the dream, therefor not part of the interpretation
  - ◆ Rather it is a "bonus round" — and epilogue that I've called God's directive
- \* Why would I label this "God's Directive?"
  - ◆ Because Joseph would never have taken the initiative in vv. 33-36 unless from God!!!

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## God's Directive

- ◆ And to highlight that this is not a self-serving suggestion conjured up by Joseph for his benefit!!
- ◆ He is still speaking “under inspiration” — which Pharaoh affirms in v. 39
- \* So what is vv. 33-36 all about?
- ◆ God's revealed and divine directions for dealing with this 14 year period of time

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## God's Directive

- ◆ Not only does Pharaoh receive God's interpretation, but also God tells him how to govern through this crisis
- \* What are the details of the solution?
- ◆ Select a discerning and wise “over-all” administrator ...
- ◆ Implement a 20% tax in the years of plenty

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