

## Joseph and Pharaoh (Genesis 41)

*Joseph had been working for a man called Potiphar but Potiphar's wife had told lies about Joseph and he had been sent to prison. It had been two long, lonely years and Joseph was still in prison, wondering if he would ever get out.*

One morning, two of Pharaoh's guards came to the prison. They had come for Joseph - they took him out of the prison and put him in clean clothes. They said to Joseph, "You're off to see Pharaoh. He has been having some very strange dreams. Nobody has been able to tell him what the dreams mean".

Joseph was surprised and asked the guards, "Why has Pharaoh asked for me?"

They said, "Pharaoh's wine server told him that, when he was in prison with you, you were able to tell him what his dream meant". So they marched Joseph to Pharaoh and Pharaoh told him his very strange dream.

Pharaoh said: "In my dream, I was standing by the river when seven big fat cows came up out of the river - they looked really well fed. Then seven other cows came up - they were really thin. Then, while I was watching, what do you think happened? The seven thin cows gobbled up the seven fat ones. Just like that. Well that was it - I woke up".

"But that wasn't the only dream I had. Another time, I dreamt about seven ears of corn - really good ripe corn. Then seven other ears of corn sprang up - all thin and weak. And guess what happened? Yes, the skinny ears of corn ate up the big ears of corn. OK that's it - tell me then, what do my dreams mean?"

Joseph stepped forward and said, "Well, it's not really me, your majesty, it's God who tells me what the dreams mean. Think of the cows and ears of corn as years. You've got seven good years coming, when everything will go really well in Egypt and there will be lots and lots of food. But then, you will have seven terrible years - no rain will fall, the grass will die, the crops will not grow and your animals will have no food. There will not be enough food for everyone to eat. Things will be really bad".

Pharaoh was horrified. "What can we do?" he cried.

Joseph said, "What you need, your majesty, is a really good governor, someone wise and really clever, who listens to what God says and who can manage the harvest from the good years and save as much food as possible to see you all through the bad years".

"Good idea," said Pharaoh, "it's obvious that you, Joseph, are the right man for the job. From now on you are the second most important person in Egypt".

Pharaoh told the guards to take Joseph with them and make sure he had wonderful clothes to wear, a lovely house to live in and a special chariot to ride around in. They did all this and then they left Joseph to do his important work. Joseph did a really good job. He had a team of helpers who he gathered around him and he gave them instructions for big storehouses to be built and then he arranged for every bit of food that wasn't needed to be stored up. Then, seven years later, when the bad years came just as God had told him they would, there was food for all the people. Pharaoh was really pleased with what Joseph had done. God had put the right man, Joseph, in the job.

Joseph's life had had lots of ups and downs so far - being sold as a slave, then having a good job in Potiphar's house, ending up in prison, being forgotten by the wine server for all those years - but, finally, he had ended up in a really important job, in a really important country, Egypt.