

## Genesis 41:45-57

Genesis 41:41-44 "And Pharaoh said unto

Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

42: And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;

43: And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt.

44: And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt."

Usually when we hear the word *Pharaoh*, our minds turn to that notorious ruler that we read about in the book of Exodus.

He was the enemy of God's chosen people, and an enemy of God Himself.

His determination to keep the children of Israel in bondage, and his words--"**Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?**" makes him a fitting type of Satan himself.

And for that reason, most of us equate the name Pharaoh with extreme evil.

However, not all Pharaohs fit into this category.

In fact, the Pharaoh in Genesis 41, the one who promoted Joseph to the highest post in his kingdom, is anything but a type of Satan.

Actually, this particular man, because of his relationship to Joseph, is used to portray that very *special relationship* between our heavenly Father to His beloved Son.

For example, this man committed his entire kingdom into Joseph's hands: **"I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt."**

He also commanded his subjects to **"Bow the knee"** before Joseph.

And God the Father will do the very same thing when Christ returns to this earth to rule the nations.

Philippians 2:9-11 makes this very clear.

**"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:**

**10: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;**

**11: And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."**

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However, the fact that this man, like all the other Pharaoh, considered himself to be the incarnation of the sun god Ra, makes us a little cautious about applying the word *type* when referring to him.

However, the fact remains that his unique relationship to Joseph, his great power, and his general attitude fittingly portrays that special

relationship between our Heavenly  
Father and His beloved Son.

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Another example of Pharaoh's complete  
backing of his governor is found in V  
45: **"And Pharaoh called Joseph's name  
Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to  
wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-  
pherah priest of On. And Joseph went  
out over all the land of Egypt."**

And there would be a practical reason for  
Pharaoh's move.

I'm sure he realised that he had given  
Joseph a very difficult task.

After all, his governor's first job was to  
double the taxes, and even with the  
abundant crops, this tax might not be  
appreciated.

Of course, Pharaoh had complete control over his subjects, and he had transferred this power to Joseph, but the fact remained, Joseph was a foreigner.

So quite wisely, Pharaoh made Joseph as Egyptian as he could.

First of all, he gave him an Egyptian name, **"Zaphnath-paaneah."**

Scholars are not certain what this name means.

Some think it means "Saviour of the world," or "Revealer of secrets," both of which are true of our Lord Jesus Christ, but whatever the name means, it was certainly very Egyptian.

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And not only did Pharaoh give Joseph complete authority over his people as our Heavenly Father has done for His

Son, but he also gave him a Gentile  
bride.

And certainly this is exactly what God the  
Father is doing today.

During this Age of Grace, the Holy Spirit is  
gathering a bride for Christ, comprised  
of both Jew and Gentile.

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Yes, Joseph's marriage has great spiritual  
significance, and we will talk about  
that in a minute, but there was also a  
very practical side to Pharaoh's  
decision.

Just as he had given Joseph an Egyptian name  
to make him more acceptable, so he gave  
him a thoroughly Egyptian wife for the  
same purpose.

The name *Asenath* means "dedicated to Neith,"  
and Neith was an Egyptian goddess.

And not only that, but she came from a  
priestly family.

Her father was "**Poti-pherah priest of On.**"

Poti-pherah means "Given to the sun god,"  
and *On* was a dominant city in Egypt.

Actually, its name was later changed to  
Heliopolis, which means "city of the  
sun god."

So, considering the fact that Pharaoh  
himself was supposed to be the  
incarnation of the sun god Ra, Asenath  
would be an ideal fit for his governor.

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But what about Joseph?

How could this lady, raised in all the pagan  
traditions of Egypt, be an acceptable  
partner for Joseph?

He was probably quite aware of the problems  
his mother's household gods had caused,

and I'm sure he wouldn't want a wife with divided loyalties.

So how could this marriage work?

Well, scripture doesn't really give us an answer to that question.

However, knowing Joseph's clear and fearless testimony before Pharaoh, it is quite possible that he soon led his wife to his God.

Another reason for believing that Asenath became a believer is the fact that she is a type of the bride of Christ.

And now that we are on that subject, we need to take quite a detour in that direction.

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Actually, there are a number of wives in scripture that are a type of the Church of Jesus Christ.

There identity, as a type of the Church, is derived from their relationship to their husbands.

And this is not surprising, considering the fact that the Church owes all of its identity and its value to Christ.

Outside of Christ, we are nothing more than poor lost sinners, but in Christ, we are beloved of the Father.

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The very first woman we will mention is, in fact, the very first woman.

Eve, who at one point was simply a part of Adam's body, is a picture of the Church in its formation.

On the day of Pentecost, the Church, who is the spiritual body of the Second Adam, came into existence.

Ephesians 5:30    **"For we are members of his  
body, of his flesh, and of his bones."**

I won't take any more time to develop this point, as we have already studied Eve's portrayal as a type of the Church in our lesson on Genesis 2.

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Then, as we noted a few lessons back, Rebekah is a picture of the called out Church in this Age of Grace.

Having heard the testimony of Abraham's servant (a type of the Holy Spirit), and having never seen her future husband, she immediately said "I will go."

And so it is with those who by faith accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour.

1 Peter 1:8-9 **"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:  
9: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."**

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And then we have Zipporah, the shepherd girl that Moses married after he had fled from the land of Egypt.

She pictures the Church united with Christ in His rejection, as is her status in this present age.

And, finally, we have Asenath, whom we will be studying more fully in this lesson.

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However, before we get into that, let me summarize the types that I have just mentioned.

As I said before, each wife gets her  
identity from her husband.

Adam is a type of the Second Adam, and his  
wife was part of his own body, as the  
Church is of Christ's.

Isaac portrayed our Lord Jesus Christ most  
graphically on Mount Moriah as he lay  
on the altar of sacrifice.

Moses delivered his people from slavery, as  
Christ has delivered the poor lost  
sinner from the slave market of sin.

And, of course, Joseph was the saviour of  
his own brethren and the Gentile world.

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So then, because of these men, who were all  
types of Christ, we have:

**Eve**, a picture of the *formation* of the  
Church.

**Rebekah**, a picture of the *faith* of the  
Church.

**Zipporah**, a picture of the *fellowship* of the  
Church, with her rejected Lord.

And finally **Asenath**, a picture of the *future*  
Church.

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Asenath, like many who come to Christ, was  
religious but lost.

She believed in many gods, but before she  
met Joseph, she knew nothing of the one  
true God.

And she had never been a partaker in  
Joseph's years of rejection.

She had not shared his anxious hours in the  
pit or his long years in prison, but  
she would share in his triumph.

She was taken from relative obscurity and placed in the exalted position of wife of the governor.

Yes, she was the wife of His exultation, and as such, she is a type of the glorified Church, the Church as we see it in the book of Revelation.

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And also Asenath's husband would suffer no more, as Christ will suffer no more. Having risen victorious from the grave, never again will He be called upon to suffer for man's sin.

Yes, when Christ comes the second time for His Church, it will be nothing but glory.

Hebrews 9:28 makes the nature of His second coming quite clear.

**"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins  
of many; and unto them that look for  
him shall he appear the second time  
without sin unto salvation."**

And having arrived from prison and from his sufferings, Joseph was exulted immediately to the highest position in Egypt.

In like manner, Christ, having risen from the grave, walked the dusty roads of this earth no more, but became the first *real man* to tread the streets of gold.

And when He comes for His Church, they will share in His glory.

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However, this present world is a mixture of sunshine and shadow.

Like Zipporah, the wife of Moses, we are called upon to suffer with Christ:

**"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."**

But we need not, indeed, we *should not* wait for the marriage supper of the Lamb, to be united with Christ in His exultation.

Ephesians 2:4-6 tells us that "-- **God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,**

**5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)**

**6: And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."**

And that's right now.

As His blood-bought church, our gathering point is our exulted Lord.

As His *body*, we are gathered around our exulted Head, who even now is at God's right hand.

We are not gathered around an ordinance, as important as true ordinances are.

We are not even gathered around a truth, as indispensable and essential as sound doctrine is.

No, the risen exulted Christ, seated at the right hand of God, is our centre and our gathering place.

If Christ were on earth, our gathering point would also be on this earth, but our exulted Head is in heaven, and that is where we take our true character from.

We are a *heavenly* people, "**For our conversation (or citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.**"

That's why Christ, in His High Priestly prayer, could say of His disciples, "**They are *not of the world*, even as I am not of the world.**"

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Although we shouldn't stray too far from our lesson in Genesis, before we leave this subject, I would like to say a few words about our *inheritance* in Christ.

As we all know, a wife shares equally in her husband's possessions.

However, when it comes to the subject of inheritance, there is a difference between Israel and the bride of Jesus Christ.

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When Abraham raised his knife on Mount Moriah to slay his son, he was a picture or type of God the Father.

Also, in Jeremiah 31:32, God says, "**I was an husband unto them,**" thereby establishing Israel as the wife of Jehovah.

So because Abraham pictures Jehovah, and Jehovah is the husband of His Chosen People, then Sarah, because of her relationship to Abraham, automatically becomes a type of Israel.

Abraham's inheritance was earthly, that is the land of Canaan, and this was also true of Sarah's inheritance.

So by Covenant and by type, Israel, the wife of Jehovah, is the inheritor of the Promised Land.

Yes, Israel's inheritance is on this earth,  
and someday when Christ reigns from  
Jerusalem, His people will share in His  
blessing.

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On the other hand, the Church of Jesus  
Christ, typified by Rebekah, is looking  
forward to her inheritance in *heaven*.  
Certainly Rebekah received gifts from her  
bridegroom even before she started out  
on her journey, but she was only his  
*espoused* bride.

She had to wait for the marriage supper  
before she could enter into his full  
inheritance.

Likewise the Church is waiting for that day  
when she will be called to the marriage  
supper of the Lamb.

It is only then, when she has reached the full status of Asenath, that she will participate in the full glory of her exulted Lord.

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We can now return to Genesis 41, but in order to continue our study of Joseph's wife, we must skip ahead to V 50.

V 50-52 **"And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On bare unto him.**

**51: And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.**

**52: And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to**

**be fruitful in the land of my affliction."**

What a joy those sons must have been to a man who at one time had almost despaired of ever being married.

Asenath's fruitfulness and the joy it brought her husband reminds us that the bride of Christ should also be fruitful.

And like Joseph's wife, our fruitfulness is a direct result of our relationship to Christ.

In John 15:4-5, Jesus said "**Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.**

**5: I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him,**

**the same bringeth forth much fruit: for  
without me ye can do nothing."**

Of course our relationship to Christ should produce the fruits of the Spirit, but in addition to that, the natural result of this relationship should draw others into the fold.

And it is in that sense, that is the increase of the Church of Jesus Christ, that we will now look at Joseph's two sons.

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Joseph's family was completed "**before the  
years of famine came.**"

So Christ's family will be completed before the Great Tribulation comes upon this earth.

And not only that, but as the famine was used to drive Jacob's brethren to

himself, so the coming Tribulation will drive Israel to their Messiah.

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Also there is significance in the names Joseph gave his sons.

As far as Joseph was concerned, their names commemorated his own unique experiences.

God had greatly elevated him and had made him fruitful, and in so doing, the years of tribulation had been forgotten.

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But also I think there is a message here for the Church.

Manasseh means "forgetting," which reminds us that our new life in Christ has swallowed up all the sins and the dead works of our old life: **"Therefore if**

**any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."**

And as Joseph's exultation had made him forget his past sufferings, so our future glorification in Christ will swallow up all of earth's sorrows.

As the hymn writer so wisely put it:

*♪♪ Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal.*

We have the confirmation of this truth in Revelation 21:4 **"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."**

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His second son was called Ephraim, which means "fruitfulness."

We have already spoken about fruitfulness in connection with Joseph's wife Asenath.

And since Jesus said "**Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit,**" we have to ask the question, *Are we bearing fruit?*

Yes, fruitbearing should be one of the natural consequences of our relationship to Christ.

Romans 7:4 says, "**Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.**"

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So, having considered the significance of Joseph's bride and family, we can now return to V 46 and consider Joseph's *work*.

V 46-49    **"And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.**

**47: And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls.**

**48: And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same.**

**49: And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he**

**left numbering; for it was without number."**

Joseph's program of conservation was well supervised and well run.

I don't know if the general populace was aware of his predictions, but certainly it would be obvious to everyone that this increase was not normal.

In fact, it was so great that 20% of that great abundance would be sufficient to sustain Egypt and their neighbours during the seven years of famine.

So we are talking about an awful lot of corn here, and you would wonder what the Egyptians did with the other 80%?

Certainly it was more than enough to take care of their personal needs, and almost more than they could get rid of in their export business.

Yes, there's no doubt that they pocketed an amazing amount of money during those seven plenteous years.

Certainly they would have been rich beyond their dreams, but you can't eat money in a famine.

So the question is, *Did they personally stockpile any of their tremendous surplus for a rainy day, or, to be more accurate, against a day when there was no rain?*

Probably some of the wiser ones did, but apparently not even they saved nearly enough.

Either they were unaware of Joseph's prediction, or they didn't take it seriously.

V 53-54    **"And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of**

**Egypt, were ended.**

**54: And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread."**

As we all know, it was God Himself who had sent the abundance and the famine, but as is often the case, He probably used natural means to accomplish His purpose.

So no doubt, as in all famines, the key element was rainfall.

However, in the case of Egypt, rainfall, or a lack thereof, was always translated into the behaviour of the Nile.

And certainly, as far as the general populace was concerned, the Nile would be the determining factor.

So let's look at the probable scenario that led up to the years of plenty and the years of famine.

John Phillips gives a very good explanation of these natural events, so I am going to quote a few lines from his book:

*"Far away every year the waters of the Blue Nile thundering down from Ethiopia met the waters of the White Nile coming down from "Livingstone's Lake."*

*The turbulent Nile from the Ethiopian highlands carried on its swell the rich treasure of fertilizing mud that, each year, brought life to the land.*

*The ancient Egyptians knew little if anything of those things.*

*Their world ended south of Nubia.*

*The life-giving flood, the yearly miracle, was the gift of Ra.*

*At Thebes and other towns along the serpentine length of the Nile, the priests with their gauges measured the floodwater and compared their findings with their records of other years.*

*In a good year the river would begin to rise in August, and the Egyptians held the High Nile Festival in thanksgiving to the gods.*

*It would reach its crest in September, and by late October the floods would begin to subside.*

*Planting began in November.*

*For seven long and wonderful years, the Egyptians rejoiced in their "good" Niles.*

*There never had been such Niles.*

*The prodigality (or lavishness) of those years was so great that the 20% levy on*

*grain imposed by Joseph and garnered into Pharaoh's barns was so abundant that it fed all of Egypt for the seven famine-stricken years with plenty left over for sale to stricken surrounding lands.*

*But now the seven-year drought had come.*

*The bountiful Nile failed to rise, failed to provide its life-giving mud, failed as Joseph said it would.*

*Year after year, for seven long years, the watchers along the Nile sent back the same gloomy report: "Another bad Nile."*

*Four thousand miles away to the south, in the secret springs where the Nile had its source, the torrential rains that fed the lakes and tributaries ceased.*

*Egypt and all the lands round about faced famine." End of quote.*

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V 53-55 "And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended.

54: And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

55: And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do."

God had set the stage to display the glory and greatness of Joseph, the one **"that was seperate from his brethren."**

Pharaoh had assured him that **"--- I have set thee over all the land of Egypt,"** and he was as good as his word.

When the Egyptians tried to bypass him,  
Pharaoh simply said, **"Go unto Joseph;  
what he saith to you, do."**

In like manner, God has been moving this  
world towards the time when all its  
inhabitants, both living and dead, will  
honour His Son.

Philippians 2:9-11 tells us, **"Wherefore God  
also hath highly exalted him, and given  
him a name which is above every name:  
10: That at the name of Jesus every  
knee should bow, of things in heaven,  
and things in earth, and things under  
the earth;  
11: And that every tongue should  
confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to  
the glory of God the Father."**

And, even in this Age of Grace, God's only answer for man's extremity is, **"Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do."**

Only Joseph, by his hard work and organization, had provided a way for Egypt's salvation, and only Christ, **"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree,"** has provided for our salvation.

No, there's no other way!

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V 56-57 **"And the famine was over all the face of the earth: and Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt.**

**57: And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands."**

Some might question the seemingly harsh response that Joseph showed towards the Egyptians' plight.

Why did he sell the corn to them rather than providing free welfare?

The fact of the matter was, many of them were quite able to pay.

Those that had land and could plant it, had become very rich in the last seven years.

They had filled their pockets with gold, but now their money was relatively useless.

And not only that, but the revenue collected from the sale of corn would be needed to support the government and throne for many years.

And a wise man like Joseph would realize that not only would the famine dry up

the ground, it would dry up any possibility of collecting taxes.

No income for the people meant no income for the government.

And not only must he husband his supply of corn to meet the needs of the Egyptians, he must also consider the other nations who would be depending upon Egypt's supply.

Yes, Joseph had a tremendous responsibility on his shoulders.

If he gave everything away without charge, there would certainly be waste, and the supply of corn would be insufficient to carry them over the seven bad years.

Yes, he must be a wise steward of his master's resources or the results would be disastrous.

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In next week's lesson, the famine grinds on,  
and Joseph applies some most unusual  
measures, measures that would rebuild  
an entire nation.