

Genesis 41

Read Genesis 41:1-16: Joseph has spent 13 years in jail now. Before that, he spent about 11 years as Potiphar's enslaved administrator. He has gone from being sold out by family treachery, to becoming a slave in a foreign land, to becoming a falsely accused prisoner. In return, he has provided excellence and loyalty. In total, he has spent 24 years in circumstances that he did not create or cause. He could have been bitter or depressed. Instead, he used his God-given skills to bless whoever crossed his path. Apparently, my grandfather had a saying that all we have in life is an attitude. We can find reasons to be hopeful and try to flourish, or we can place blame.

Pharaoh had some vivid dreams which were realistic enough to make an impression on him after he awoke. They were warnings from God about what was coming. The royal butler was reminded of his prison friend, Joseph, two years ago. He told the Pharaoh that there is a guy who has a gift to accurately interpret dreams. Joseph was right about the future of both royal servants.

Joseph was mustered from jail and cleaned up. He was questioned by Pharaoh about interpreting his dreams. Wisely, Joseph said that he cannot, but God can.

This dream involves more than the mere prophecy of a coming drought and famine. It is curiously centered on the Nile River. The dream suggested that the Nile gave/fed the people and livestock. The word here for river refers specifically to the Nile. The Egyptians considered the Nile to be one of their ultimate gods. The Egyptians worshipped the Nile, the sun, and various insects and animals. Later on, God would bring 10 Plagues on to Egypt; each specifically addressing an idol. God essentially killed the Nile by having Moses turn it into blood as his first plague. The paired dreams told twice emphasize that the timeline is at hand now.

Pharaoh was upset about the famine; but the context here is that their god (the Nile) could not keep feeding them. This would break down Pharaoh's confidence in the future. God is planting seeds that he can do things that the Egyptian idols cannot. This dream interpretation and following events would have meant more to the locals. It would be an agricultural dream for us. To them, it was about their idols:

PLAGUE	DESCRIPTION	EGYPTIAN GOD REPRESENTED
1. Water Turned to Blood	The Nile River turned to blood, killing fish and causing a foul smell.	Hapi (God of the Nile)
2. Frogs	A massive number of frogs swarmed the land and entered homes.	Heket (Goddess of fertility and childbirth, often depicted with a frog head)
3. Gnats (or lice)	Dust turned into gnats, infesting people and animals.	Geb (God of the earth)
4. Flies	Swarms of flies filled houses and troubled the Egyptians.	Khepri (God of creation and movement of the sun, often depicted as a beetle)
5. Livestock Pestilence	A severe disease killed Egypt's livestock.	Hathor (Goddess of motherhood and love, often associated with cattle)
6. Boils	Painful boils afflicted the Egyptians and their animals.	Sekhmet (Goddess of plague and healing)
7. Hail	A devastating hailstorm destroyed crops and livestock.	Nut (Goddess of the sky)
8. Locusts	Locusts consumed all remaining crops and vegetation.	Serapia (God of fertility and protection)
9. Darkness	A thick darkness covered Egypt for three days.	Ra (Sun God) or Amun (God of the air and hidden things)
10. Death of the Firstborn	The death of every firstborn son in Egypt.	Osiris (God of the afterlife)

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The Nile River in Egyptian Mythology

The Nile River held a very high rank among Egyptian gods and was often personified as a deity known as **Hapi**. Hapi was regarded as the god of fertility, abundance, and the annual flooding of the Nile, which was crucial for agriculture in ancient Egypt.

Attributes of Hapi and the Nile

1. **Life-Giving Waters:** The Nile provided essential water for farming, making it central to Egypt's sustenance and prosperity.
2. **Fertility:** The annual inundation deposited nutrient-rich silt along the riverbanks, ensuring bountiful harvests.
3. **Symbol of Renewal:** The flooding of the Nile was seen as a sign of renewal and rebirth, linking it to the cycle of life and death.
4. **Cultural Significance:** The river was integral to Egyptian cosmology, with many myths and rituals centered around its cycles, further emphasizing its divine status.
5. **Connection to Other Deities:** The Nile was often linked to other gods, such as Osiris, who was associated with the afterlife and rebirth, enhancing its significance in religious practices.

In summary, the Nile's ranking among Egyptian gods was exceedingly high due to its critical role in agriculture and sustenance, as well as its spiritual connections in Egyptian mythology.

Read Genesis 41:17-36: Pharaoh shared his dreams with Joseph. It is interesting that this Pharaoh was surrounded by magicians just like the Pharaohs of Moses' generation. These were men who created associations between world events and what could be seen in the stars. They tried to make correlations to things to make guesses about the future. Pharaoh may have been fed up with their conjecture. Joseph goes beyond mere dream interpretation; and he adds an action plan with an organizational chart and means and methods and calculations. That is what decision makers want.

Read Genesis 41:37-57: Pharaoh must have had some additional intel on Joseph to hand him the Kingdom keys and all of that authority. I wonder if Potiphar was able to confirm a few things about Joseph's reputation. Regardless, Joseph got all authority to solve the problem, and he went after it successfully. It involved the division of labor, crop reports and harvest monitors, collection enforcers, construction of grain storage facilities, etc...

Joseph's dreams, prophecies and interpretations all played out as stated. The good harvests, the famines, Joseph's family kneeling down to him and his harvest being greater than theirs. The entire earth experienced this famine; not just Egypt.