**READ** **REFLECT** **APPLY**

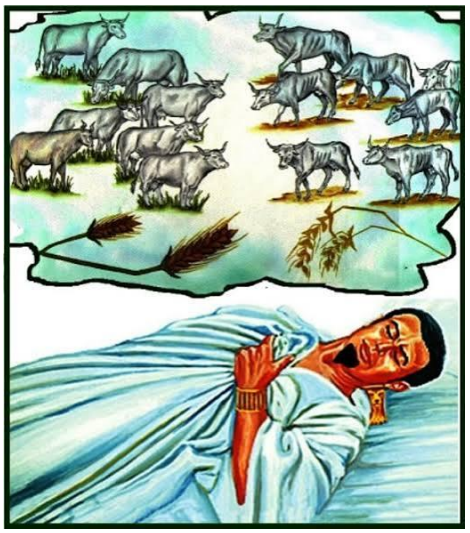
**Genesis 41:1-32**

## PHAROAH'S DREAMS

Dreams continued to be the theme of Joseph's life. His own dreams foretold the future of his family, the butler and baker's dreams foretold their own futures, the dreams of Pharaoh foretell the future of nations around them. All the dreams centred upon the preservation of God's people who would continue to be the nation through whom God would reveal His love, power and deliverance, not just for them, but also the whole world, through their Messiah, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.

*How conscious are you that the Lord has a plan for your life? How much do you aspire to fulfil it? (Jer.29:11, Prov.16:9)*

**THE DREAM v 1-8** - Pharaoh's sleep was interrupted one night by disturbing dreams. They were disturbing for several reasons. Firstly, they were about cows and cows carried great significance in Egyptian religion. Pharaoh's gods appeared to be being eaten up! Secondly, the number seven appeared repeatedly, thirdly, cows who were by nature carnivores, had become cannibals, and fourthly, vegetation, that could not eat at all was suddenly eating each other. Worse still, having eaten the fat cows, and fat ears of corn, there was no benefit to the one that had eaten (v 21). Pharaoh was deeply troubled and could not be pacified, as his magicians and wise men had no interpretations to offer. Their lives were in danger because they could not alleviate the king's distress.



*Joseph emphasised to Pharaoh that the Lord God was speaking to him and that only God could provide the answer. What guidance does scripture give about how a Christian should respond to questions about their faith? (1 Peter 3:15-17)*

**JOSEPH REMEMBERED v 9-13** – the events reminded the butler of his time in the prison, when he and the baker were both troubled by dreams. Repentantly, he told Pharaoh about the Hebrew servant, Joseph, and his ability to interpret their dreams and the way in which events happened exactly as Joseph said. The fact that he disclosed that the butler would live and the baker would die, emphasised that the interpreter was not a people pleaser, but instead gave genuine interpretation. However, the butler didn't tell Pharaoh that this was because the servant believed in the Living God.

**GOD'S POWER CLAIMED v 14-24** – so that morning, the prison door swung open and Pharaoh's servants urgently told Joseph to wash, shave and put on clean clothes. He was commanded to speak to Pharaoh, the highest authority of the land. Hastily, Joseph obeyed and before long, was standing in palace splendour, speaking to the king. Bravely he claimed the presence of the Almighty God, from whom he gained wisdom and peace, and explained that it was God alone who could interpret Pharaoh's dreams. Pharaoh did not challenge his faith in an unknown God, but simply recounted his disturbing dreams, complaining that his magicians, astrologers and advisors could not help him.

*The butler only told Pharaoh about Joseph's gift of interpretation when Pharaoh was troubled by dreams. Do you think Pharaoh would have listened before?*

**THE DREAM EXPLAINED v 25-32** – Joseph revealed to Pharaoh that God was speaking to him with an urgent message. The fat cows and the big ears of corn meant seven years of rich harvest, whilst the seven thin cows and seven parched ears of corn that swallowed them up, were seven years of terrible famine that would follow them. The famine would be so dreadful that all the good years would be forgotten and the whole land would be overwhelmed with the terror of hunger and death. God was warning Pharaoh so that he could store up food in the good years to sustain them through the long famine. The two dreams given to him emphasised that Gods plans were definite and going to happen very soon.

***'Surely the Lord God does nothing,***
***Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.'***
*Amos 3:7*