

POPULAR STORIES

CHAPTER 17

JOSEPH SET OVER ALL

Genesis 41: 15-45

Before God created the world, God chose his Son to be the Christ and set Christ over all to save his people from our sins.

We see this typified in this familiar passage in Genesis 41, where Pharaoh set Joseph over all the land of Egypt. Everything that took place in this passage, was done before the plenteous years and before the famine came. In it we see a picture of how God set Christ over all, to be the Savior of his people, before the foundation of the world.

We know sin entered according to God's pre-determinate counsel because before sin entered God determined who the Savior would be and God determined who he would save. God would not have chosen a Savior had God not determined that there would be a need for the Savior.

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In Genesis 41 verses 15 through 24, Pharaoh told Joseph about two dreams he had had. In the first dream, Pharaoh saw seven fat cows and seven skinny cows. The seven skinny cows ate the seven fat cows. Yet, the lean cows remained lean. In the second dream, Pharaoh saw seven full ears of corn and seven thin ears of corn. The seven thin ears devoured the seven good ears. Now, Joseph will give Pharaoh the interpretation which God revealed to Joseph.

GOD PRE-DETERMINED ALL THINGS

First, we see that God pre-determined all things that come to pass in time—**Genesis 41: 25: And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do. 26: The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. 27: And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine. 28: This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh. 29: Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: 30: And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; 31: And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. 32: And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, [prepared of God] and God will shortly bring it to pass.**

Before any of this came to pass, God pre-determined—God foreordained, God predestinated, God purposed—it all. God foreordained there would be seven years of plenty. God foreordained after them, there would come seven years of famine which would consume the land. God pre-determined that the years of famine would be so grievous that the people would forget the years of plenty and not know what it was like.

What a great picture of God's eternal purpose! Before God made the world, God determined the end from the beginning. God established beforehand, what God would bring to pass in time. God determined that he would make Adam, after the image of God, perfect and upright. It was a time of great plenty. God also foreordained that by that one man, sin would enter the world and death by sin and so death would pass upon

all men and for that all would sin. (Rom 5: 12) It would be a time of great famine. God foreordained our sin would consume us and be so grievous, that man would forget and no longer know what it was like to be without sin.

The famine illustrates our sin in a very good way. In a famine people are starved of life. There is nothing people can do to give themselves food for life during a famine. Sometimes people have been known to even eat their own flesh during a famine.

Our sin is a famine. Sin has caused all men to be starved of spiritual life. There is nothing man can do to give ourselves righteousness, holiness, redemption for life and acceptance with God. Men who attempt to work out their own righteousness are like those who eat their own flesh during a famine. To do so is to destroy the body in an attempt to give life to the body. Works salvation is just that. Self-righteous works destroy us further in sin as men attempt to give themselves life by their works.

But notice this key point in our text. God purposed both the plenteous years and the years of famine before as yet any of it came to pass. And then God would bring it all to pass. So it is concerning sin and righteousness. In eternity, God purposed it then in time God brought it to pass.

THAT WHICH MAKES GOD TO BE GOD

The very glory of God, that which makes God to be God, is the fact that God sovereignly purposed all things beforehand and then God rules over all to bring his eternal purpose to pass in things both good and bad. God used this as the test to prove man's idol gods to be nothing, their works to be nothing and those who trust in them to be an abomination. God said to the idol gods of man's making,

Isaiah 41:23: Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye *are* gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold *it* together. 24: Behold, ye *are* of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is *he that* chooseth you.

Yet, listen to the attribute of God which makes him to be God,

Isaiah 46: 9: Remember the former things of old: for *I am* God, and *there is* none else; *I am* God, and *there is* none like me, 10: Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: 11...yea, I have spoken *it*, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed *it*, I will also do it.

God says, "I have purposed it, I will also do it." We see these two things in Genesis 41 verse 32 of our text. The dream was doubled, twice. It is because number one "the thing is established by God. God's eternal counsel is prepared by God. And number two, it is because "God will shortly bring it to pass." God said, "I have purpose it, I will also do it. Does this double confirmation remind you of anything else?

Hebrews 6: 17: Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath: 18: That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

Brethren, the reason we rejoice that it was according to God's eternal purpose that God sovereignly ruled even our fall into sin is because it assures us that the same is true of the salvation of his people. Since we know God sovereignly purposed and brings to pass all things—good and evil—then we know God alone can be trusted to save all those he chose in Christ before the foundation of the world. That is the end purpose, for

which God sets prosperity and adversity against the other. It is so that we should find nothing in man to trust, but that we trust only in God.

Ecclesiastes 7: 14: In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.

CHRIST THE ETERNAL COUNSELOR

Secondly, we see a picture of Christ, who is the eternal Wisdom of God, the eternal Counselor—**Genesis 41: 33: Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt.**

Now get the picture! This is taking place before anything came to pass. Look at Pharaoh as a type of God the Father and look at Joseph as a type of the Son of God, Christ Jesus. In eternity, before God made the world, Christ is the Wisdom of God, the eternal Counselor, whose mind is one with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, whose counsel and purpose it was to chose a “man discreet and wise, and set him over the land” to save his people from the famine of our sin. Christ is indeed the Counsellor, the Wisdom of God.

Isaiah 9:6...the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

1 Corinthians 1:24:...unto them which are called,...Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

1 Corinthians 2:7:...we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

When we read of God’s eternal counsel, of God’s eternal purpose, remember it is a Person. Christ is the eternal Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Christ is the Power and Wisdom of God. Christ is the hidden Wisdom, ordained before the world unto the glory of God’s chosen people. In Proverbs 8, we hear Christ speak as Counsel and Wisdom. He says,

Proverbs 8: 14: Counsel *is* mine, and sound wisdom: I *am* understanding; I have strength. 15: By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. 16: By me princes rule, and nobles, *even* all the judges of the earth. 17: I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. 18: Riches and honour *are* with me; *yea*, durable riches and righteousness. 19: My fruit *is* better than gold, *yea*, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. 20: I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: 21: That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures. 22: The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. 23: I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. 24: When *there were* no depths, I was brought forth; when *there were* no fountains abounding with water. 25: Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: 26: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. 27: When he prepared the heavens, I *was* there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: 28: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: 29: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: 30: Then I was by him, *as* one brought up *with him*: and I was daily *his* delight, rejoicing always before him; 31 Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights *were* with the sons of men.

THE MEANS ETERNALLY PURPOSED

In eternity, God the Father and God the Son determined how our wise Savior would save his people from the famine of our sins—**Genesis 41: 34: Let Pharaoh do *this*, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years.**

It was foreordained that Pharaoh would appoint officers—overseerers—in all the land. What a picture! God’s preachers are called “bishops.” The word means “overseerers.” The apostle Peter charged God’s preachers to “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over *God’s* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.” God foreordained for his preachers to “feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof” because God foreordained that he would save his people through the foolishness of preaching. (1 Cor 1: 21) God even foreordained who each of his preachers would be. God told Jeremiah, “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, *and* I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.” (Jer 1: 5)

The responsibility of these officers was to “lay up corn”—**Genesis 41: 35: And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. 36: And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.**

“Corn” is “bread”, it is “life.” Christ the Bread from heaven by whose life we are saved from the famine of our sins.

John 6: 35: And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst....50: This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51: I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

What does Christ mean when he says “the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world?” Christ took flesh like unto his people. Christ gave his body to be broken on the cross. He gave his sinless flesh to be made sin for us, that we might be made alive, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. He shed his blood assuring that all the promises of God’s everlasting, new testament of grace would be sure to all those for whom he died. This is what we remember when we eat at the Lord’s Table.

Luke 22: 19: And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20: Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

Then notice this important point in our text. The corn was to be “under the hand of Pharaoh.”—**Genesis 41: 35: And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh...**

The corn would be under the power of Pharaoh’s hand to give to whom Pharaoh would. Likewise, Christ the Bread and the Life is under the hand of God the Father, that is, it is in the power of God to give Christ the Bread to whomsoever he will. Christ said, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day...No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.” (Jn 6: 44, 56)

The point is this, the same way that it is the glory of Christ to accomplish redemption for his people and to be the righteousness of his people, so it is the glory of God to give his people spiritual life, to draw us to Christ and to teach us of Christ. No sinner shall have any room to glory except in the Lord who saves us.

Then we see there was a specific place where the corn was to be placed which was “in the cities”—**Genesis 41: 35: And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities.**

Those who were hungry would not find corn laid up just anywhere. The corn was kept in store in the cities of Pharaoh’s choosing. Likewise, there is one place God has predestinated that his chosen children shall find Christ the Bread. Christ is found only in the cities. These cities typify God’s assemblies, God’s church, where the gospel is preached in spirit and in truth.

Not every so-called church is preaching in spirit and in truth. It is the church God has assembled, through the preachers Christ has sent, through the gospel the Spirit of God has put on the tongues of his messengers. The only message God’s cities preach Christ and him crucified, Christ the Bread, Christ the Life!

Then we see the end purpose for which this means was pre-determined by God was that the land—the people—perish not through the famine—**Genesis 41: 36: And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.**

During the seven years of plenty, not a single person sought corn in those cities. Why would they? They had plenty. But when God sent the famine, that is when the people were drawn to the cities, begging mercy from Pharaoh, that he might give them corn.

It is only when God sends a famine into our soul, making us see that we have no righteousness, that we truly hunger for Christ our Righteousness. When God makes us see our need and when God makes us behold Christ is the one we must have to be saved from the famine of our sins, then and only then will we seek Christ. And Christ shall be found—that his people perish not through the famine!

Now remember our main point. All this means was pre-determined in this counsel between Pharaoh and Joseph, before as yet anything came to pass. Likewise, God the Father and God the Son foreordained every aspect of the means by which God would draw his people to Christ through the preaching of the gospel and save us from the famine of our sins.

CHRIST EXALTED

Lastly, we see a picture of God exalting Christ and giving Christ the glory from eternity as God entered covenant, trusting this work into Christ’s hand—**Genesis 41: 37 And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. 38: And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find *such a one* as this *is*, a man in whom the Spirit of God *is*? 39: And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, *there is none* so discreet and wise as thou *art*: 40: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.**

In John 17, Christ spoke of the glory he had with the Father before the world was made. This is picture of that glory. In eternity, God the Father entered covenant with his Son, Christ Jesus, declaring—“There is none so discreet and wise as thou!” God the Father chose his Son and entrusted the work of salvation into his hand because Christ is Discretion and Wisdom.

Christ entered covenant with God. He became our Surety knowing he would have to die that shameful death to save his people. There is but one, Christ Jesus the Son of God, by whom “many shall be made righteous.” (Rom 5: 19)

From eternity, God gave Christ the rule over all his house and promised Christ the rule over all as both, God and Man, when the work was finished—“Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled.”

John 3: 35: The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

Hebrews 3: 5: And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant,...6: But Christ as a son over his own house;

From eternity, Christ agreed to be made a servant—“Only in the throne will I be greater than thou.” Christ is equal with the Father. But he made himself of no reputation. He took upon him the form of a servant. He became obedient even unto the death of the cross, as the GodMan, serving before his God and his Father upon his throne.

And God exalted Christ over all. This was true of Christ in eternity past and it is true of Christ now that he is risen and victorious. God determined the end from the beginning—**Genesis 41: 41: 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.**

Like as Pharaoh swore by his own name, God swore by himself because he swear by no greater. And so God exalted Christ over all. He came into this world “born King!” (Mt 2:2) And now that Christ finished the work, Christ is exalted and glorified as both God and Man and every knee shall bow and every tongue confess his is Lord of lords!

Philippians 2: 9: 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.

Ephesians 1: 20:...he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, 21: Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

TWO THINGS GIVEN

Pharaoh gave Joseph two things—a new name and a bride—**Genesis 41: 45: And Pharaoh called Joseph’s name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On.**

Pharaoh gave Joseph a name. Some say this name means the revealer of secrets and some say this name means savior. It is certain that Christ is the Revealer—the gospel “is now made manifest by the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” (2 Tim 1: 10) And it is certain Christ’s name is Savior--“thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” (Mt 1: 21)

Pharaoh gave Joseph a bride. Before the world was made God the Father gave Christ his elect, his bride, who Christ saved and is saving. In the end, Christ shall present his bride to himself without spot or wrinkle, holy and righteous in him.

What a God we serve! All this was determined before God made one grain of sand. God determined the end from the beginning. Then Christ came and satisfied justice for his people. Now Christ is reigning over all with all power in heaven and earth to give eternal life to as many as the Father gave to him. In the end, God shall gather together all his people in one, in Christ Jesus. It is all because God purposed it and God works all things that he purposed. It is all because God first trusted in Christ.

Ephesians 1: 11: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

Amen!