

LESSON 4

Raised Up by God

I am not able to. It is God who will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.

— Genesis 41:16

Genesis 41 takes Joseph from the pit to the second chariot in a single morning, and the man who comes up says the same thing about God at the top that he said at the bottom.

Introduction

GENESIS 40 ENDED WITH A MAN NOBODY REMEMBERED. Genesis 41 opens two years later, and the one who moves the story isn't Joseph. It's Pharaoh, asleep. That's the first thing to see. Joseph does nothing to get out. No appeal, no bribe, no second message up the chain. He has been in that prison so long that Genesis stops counting days and starts counting years, and then a king across the city has a bad night, and by lunchtime Joseph is wearing linen.

Thirteen years down. One morning up.

The question the chapter puts to us isn't whether God can do that. You've known since childhood that He can. The question is what a man looks like after he's been down that long, and whether he comes up the same. Egypt is going to work on him hard in these fifty-seven verses: a razor, new clothes, a new name, a wife from the family of a priest of the sun, a gold chain. Every pressure that ever turned a man into somebody else is here.

Last week you were sent home with a count to make: how many times Joseph puts God's name in front of a king who thought he was one. Hold your number. We'll get there in verse 16, and the answer depends on which language you counted in.

This lesson also closes Part One, and Part One asked a question: where is God when everything comes apart? Four chapters ago a boy was thrown in a hole in the ground. Today he is the second man in Egypt. It would be easy to answer the question with the promotion, and Genesis won't let us, because the chapter that raises Joseph ends with the famine reaching the people he says he has forgotten.

Cows Coming Up Out of the River (41:1–8)

At the end of two years Pharaoh had a dream.

The Hebrew is heavier than that. It says two years *of days*, the phrase older versions give as *two full years*, and Genesis puts it there to make sure the wait is felt before the rescue arrives.⁵¹ Then the scene cuts from the prison to the palace, and the prisoner isn't in it.

Pharaoh is standing beside the Nile. Seven cows come up out of the river, sleek and well-fed. Seven more come up behind them, sickly and thin, and eat the first seven. He wakes up, falls back asleep, and it happens again with grain. *Then Pharaoh woke up, and it was only a dream.*

The picture is Egyptian to the last detail. Cattle along the Nile really do stand half-submerged to get away from the heat and the flies, and the word for *reeds* is an Egyptian loan-word. The east wind is the desert wind, the *khamsin*, that can strip a field in a day. Even the *magicians* of verse 8 carry an Egyptian title, the same men who will square off against Moses in Exodus 7.⁵²

Two things in the dream are wrong, and Pharaoh feels both. Cows don't eat cows. And the thin ones look no better afterward. The Hebrew narrator drives the horror with a word the CSB leaves out entirely: six times in seven verses he says *behold*, the way you'd say *look* to somebody who won't. Six times Pharaoh looks, and six times what he sees is worse.⁵³

This is the third pair of dreams in the story. Joseph's two in chapter 37. The cupbearer's and the baker's on one night in chapter 40. Now Pharaoh's two, on one night, telling one thing twice. What nobody has said out loud yet is what a doubled dream means. Joseph will say it in verse 32, and when he does it unlocks everything back to Dothan.

When morning came, he was troubled. He summons every magician and wise man in Egypt, and *no one could interpret them for him.* The men whose profession was dreams, with their manuals and their precedents, stood in front of the king and had nothing.

CHART 1 • GENESIS 41

Three Pairs of Dreams

Dreamer	The pair	One meaning, said twice	Comes true
Joseph 37:5–10	Sheaves bow. Sun, moon, eleven stars bow.	His family will bow to him.	42:6
Cupbearer and baker 40:5–19	Three branches. Three baskets.	Three days: one restored, one hanged.	40:20–22
Pharaoh 41:1–7	Seven cows eaten by seven. Seven heads of grain swallowed by seven.	Seven years of plenty, then seven of famine.	41:47, 54

"Since the dream was given twice to Pharaoh, it means that the matter has been determined by God" (41:32). Doubled means fixed. Joseph never dreams again after chapter 37.

Set that next to the country it happens in. The Nile was sacred. Pharaoh was a god. And a god has just been frightened by his own sleep and can't find a soul in his kingdom to tell him what it means.⁵⁴

The Cupbearer Remembers (41:9–14)

There's a man in that room who has heard this before.

Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, "Today I remember my faults." Genesis waits eight verses before it lets us see him. He's standing where he always stands, beside the throne, and the plural is interesting. Pharaoh hears *my faults* as the offense that landed him in prison. The reader knows about another one.⁵⁵

Then he tells the story, and read his version against the real one. *A young Hebrew, a slave of the captain of the guards, was with us there. We told him our dreams, he interpreted our dreams for us.* Every word is true, and the shape is false. He doesn't mention that the Hebrew said interpretations belong to God. He doesn't mention that the Hebrew asked to be remembered. He makes it sound as if he found the interpreter, rather than the interpreter finding him at breakfast with a question about his face. It is the account of a man protecting his job.⁵⁶

Genesis doesn't care. Pharaoh sends, and the verbs start running. *They quickly brought him from the dungeon. He shaved, changed his clothes, and went to Pharaoh.*

Three details in that sentence, and each closes a loop.

Dungeon is *bôr* again, the word for the dry pit at Dothan and the word Joseph used for this prison in 40:15. The CSB carries a footnote: *or pit, or cistern*. This is the last time Genesis puts Joseph in one. He goes into a pit in chapter 37 and comes up out of one here, and the narrator uses a single word for both so nobody can miss that the down and the up belong to the same road.⁵⁷

CHART 5 • GENESIS 41

One Word for the Pit

Verse	CSB	Hebrew	Who puts him there, who takes him out
37:24	"threw him into the pit"	<i>bôr</i>	His brothers throw him in.
40:15	"put me in the dungeon"	<i>bôr</i>	Joseph, about himself.
41:14	"brought him from the dungeon"	<i>bôr</i>	Pharaoh takes him out.

Three scenes, one Hebrew word, two English ones. This is the last time Genesis puts Joseph in one.

He shaved. A Hebrew wore a beard. An Egyptian didn't, and to a Semite a shaved head meant shame or grief (Amos 8:10; Job 1:20). Egypt's first act on Joseph is to make him look Egyptian, and it works so well that ten men who grew up with him will stand in front of him next chapter and see a stranger.⁵⁸

Changed his clothes. Watch the garments. A coat, taken. A cloak, left in a woman's hand. Now prison clothes, taken off and replaced, and before the chapter ends there will be linen. Every time Joseph's clothes change in this story his life changes with them, and this is the first change he has been glad of.

What if things had gone the other way? Suppose the cupbearer had remembered a week after his release, the way he promised. He walks in, mentions a Hebrew in the dungeon who is good with dreams, and Pharaoh, who is not having dreams, nods and forgets it. The favor Joseph asked for would have done him no good if it had been granted on time. God is not named anywhere in these fourteen verses, and He arranged every one of them, including the two years.⁵⁹

One Word (41:15–32)

Pharaoh opens with a compliment. *I have heard it said about you that you can hear a dream and interpret it.*

Think about where Joseph is standing. He was in a cell an hour ago. He's a foreign slave in borrowed clothes, in front of the most powerful man on earth, being told he has a gift. The polite answer is a modest bow and *I will do my best.*

Joseph's answer in Hebrew is one word. *Bil'āday*. Not I. The CSB needs five, *I am not able to*, and even the five sound softer than the one. Kidner says he disavows the whole business almost explosively and points past himself to God with a bluntness that makes Daniel's speech to Nebuchadnezzar sound polished by comparison. *It is God who will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.*⁶⁰

That last phrase is *shalom*. God will answer Pharaoh with peace. Joseph hasn't heard the dreams yet, and he's already promised what they'll leave behind.

Now your count. In the CSB, Joseph says *God* to Pharaoh four times between verse 16 and verse 32: *It is God who will give Pharaoh a favorable answer* (16); *God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do* (25); *God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do* (28); *the matter has been determined by God, and he will carry it out soon* (32). In the Hebrew it's five. Verse 32 names God twice, at both ends of the sentence, and the CSB smooths the second one to *he*. Either number will do.

The point is where they fall: the first before he has heard a word, and the last two on the sentence that seals the interpretation. He starts with God, ends with God, and puts God in the middle. What he never says, in any language, is that the interpretation is his.⁶¹

Pharaoh tells the dreams again, and the retelling isn't padding. He adds what he couldn't get out of his head: after the thin cows had eaten, *you could not tell that they had devoured them; their appearance was as bad as it had been before.* Joseph picks that up in verse 31. The famine will erase the plenty.⁶²

The interpretation is plain. Seven years of abundance, seven of famine, the second so severe nobody will remember the first. Then verse 32, the hinge of every dream in the book: *Since the dream was given twice to Pharaoh, it means that the matter has been determined by God, and he will carry it out soon.*

Doubled means settled. Joseph has just explained Pharaoh's two dreams, and in doing it he has explained his own. The sheaves and the stars were one thing said twice. He was seventeen when he told them and thirty now, and this is the first time in the story he has said out loud what a pair of dreams means.

One thing Kidner presses that is easy to miss. This famine isn't a judgment. Nobody in Egypt is being punished. It is one of the ordinary catastrophes of a world where the rain sometimes fails, and God tells Pharaoh about it ahead of time for the reason you would tell a friend a storm was coming. Knowing what God has determined is a summons to act, and Joseph treats it as one before Pharaoh can ask.⁶³

The Ring, the Linen, and the Chariot (41:33–45)

So now, let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and set him over the land of Egypt.

He wasn't asked for a plan. He gives one anyway, and it's good: appoint overseers, take a fifth of the harvest through the seven good years, store it in the cities where it's grown, hold it against the seven bad ones. Twenty percent for seven years, kept near the people who will need it.⁶⁴

Was he angling for the job? Borthwick thinks it reads that way, and Hughes is sure it doesn't. Genesis lets you decide. What the text does show is that Pharaoh has just watched every *wise man* in his kingdom fail, and the qualification Joseph names for the new post is *wise*.⁶⁵

Pharaoh's answer is the strangest sentence in the chapter. *Can we find anyone like this, a man who has God's spirit in him?* The CSB footnotes it: *or the spirit of the gods*. Pharaoh doesn't know who God is. He reaches for the only vocabulary he has, gets it half wrong, and Genesis lets him say it anyway, the way John will let Caiaphas prophesy without knowing it. Joseph's one word in verse 16 has done its work.⁶⁶

Then it all happens at once. *You will be over my house. Only I, as king, will be greater than you.* The signet ring comes off Pharaoh's hand and onto Joseph's, the ring with the king's own name in its cartouche, so that whatever Joseph seals is sealed by Pharaoh. Fine linen, the court dress. A gold chain. The second chariot, with runners going ahead of it.⁶⁷

And what the runners shout is *'abrēk*, which the CSB gives as *Make way!* and footnotes as *Kneel!* Kidner takes the footnote: bow the knee. Read that with chapter 37 open. Thirteen years ago a boy told his brothers they would bow to him, and they hated him for it. This morning a whole city bows to him in the street, and not one of the eleven men in the dream is anywhere near Egypt. The bowing has started. It hasn't started with the people it was promised about.⁶⁸

Then the last verse of the section, and the pressure changes shape. Pharaoh gives Joseph a name, *Zaphenath-paneah*, which nobody has ever been sure how to translate, and a wife, *Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest at On*. On is Heliopolis, city of the sun, and her father presides over the worship of Re. Joseph's clothes are Egyptian now, his name is Egyptian, his father-in-law is the priest of the sun god, and Genesis doesn't say a word of judgment about any of it.⁶⁹

Hughes puts it well. Joseph's soul was in more danger at the top than it ever was in the pit. In the pit there was nowhere to look but up. At the top, looking up is a decision.⁷⁰

Genesis does something quiet with the Egyptian half of him. It never uses the new name again, and it doesn't mention Asenath except as the mother of two boys. The narrator lets Egypt dress Joseph and goes right on calling him Joseph.

Forget and Fruitful (41:46–57)

Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Genesis gave his age once before, in 37:2, and will give it again in 45:6. Seventeen. Thirty. Thirteen years from Dothan to the throne room, nearly half his life, and Kidner counts nine more before the brothers walk in. The same long shape as Abraham waiting for Isaac and Jacob serving Laban.⁷¹

He goes to work at once. *Joseph left Pharaoh's presence and traveled throughout the land of Egypt.* The plenty comes exactly as he said it would. He gathers, he stores city by city, and the total gets away from him: *he stored up grain in such abundance—like the sand of the sea—that he stopped measuring it because it was beyond measure.* Genesis has used that picture before, for what God promised Abraham's family would become (22:17; 32:12). Here it is grain in an Egyptian warehouse, piled up by Abraham's great-grandson.

Then two boys, and their names are the most personal words in the chapter.

Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh and said, "God has made me forget all my hardship and my whole family." The name puns on the Hebrew for *forget*, and the CSB's *my whole family* is literally *all my father's house*. Jacob's house. The tents at Hebron. He's saying God has helped him put it down.

And the second son he named Ephraim and said, "God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction." Fruitful, in a good year, in a country he still calls the land of his affliction while he's riding through it in the second chariot.⁷²

Both names are Hebrew. Everything else Egypt gave him was Egyptian, and when it came time to name his sons in front of the aristocracy of the Nile, he reached back for the language of the tents.⁷³ And listen to Manasseh again. Borthwick quotes Wenham on it: there was still something missing; he had not forgotten his father's house. A man who has to say he has forgotten hasn't. You don't name a child after a wound that has healed.

Then the good years end, *and Genesis says the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had said.* Egypt eats. The people cry to Pharaoh, and Pharaoh sends them to Joseph. *Go to Joseph and do whatever he tells you.* He opens the storehouses.

Then the last verse. *Every land came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, for the famine was severe in every land.*

Every land. Canaan is a land. Somewhere in that famine there is an old man in Hebron with eleven sons and not enough to feed them, and the only grain within reach is in a warehouse run by the boy he buried. Joseph has just named a son after forgetting them. The chapter closes with all of them starting to walk toward him.⁷⁴

Part One ends here: a man at the top of the world, with a son named Forget, and the people he's forgotten getting hungry.

Looking to Christ

Stephen draws the line for us, so we don't have to guess at this one. *God was with him and rescued him out of all his troubles. He gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who appointed him ruler over Egypt and over his whole household* (Acts 7:9–10). Last week we took the *wisdom*. This is the *ruler*. And Stephen tells that story to the Sanhedrin on purpose, just before they kill him, because it is the pattern of the Man he is about to die for: rejected by his brothers, raised up by God, and set over the very people who sold him.

The psalm we opened Part One with keeps going past where we stopped it. *Until the time his prediction came true, the word of the LORD tested him. Then: The king sent for him and released him; the ruler of peoples set him free. He made him master of his household, ruler over all his possessions* (Psalm 105:19–21). Chapter 41 is the second half of that psalm, and the psalmist reads the thirteen years the way we've been trying to: as a test with a date on it.

Hold the rest loosely. Paul says of Christ that *God highly exalted him* and that *every knee will bow* (Philippians 2:9–10), and it's hard to read the runners shouting *Kneel!* in front of the second chariot without hearing it. But no apostle cites verse 43, so let the echo be an echo. Kidner catches a quieter one. When the people cry for bread, Pharaoh says, *Go to Joseph and do whatever he tells you*. At Cana, Mary says to the servants, *Do whatever he tells you* (John 2:5). Kidner thinks John may have meant us to hear it.⁷⁵

Don't press the details. Joseph married a priest's daughter and took a pagan name, and the parallel breaks in a dozen places if you lean on it. But the shape holds: the one brought up out of the pit is the one everyone must come to, and the bowing started before the brothers knew whose feet they would be at.

Applying the Text

Say the same thing about God in the throne room that you said in the cell. *Don't interpretations belong to God?* was easy to say to two prisoners with nothing to give him. *Not I* was said to a king who was offering everything. Anybody looks up from the bottom of a pit. The test is the compliment, and Joseph answers it with one word that gives the whole thing away. Notice where your own confession goes quiet. It's rarely in trouble.

When God tells you what is fixed, get to work. Joseph hears that seven years of famine are settled by God and unchangeable, and his next sentence is a budget. Kidner is right that predictive prophecy in Scripture is almost never a reason to sit down. The people who take God's sovereignty most seriously in the Bible are usually the ones moving fastest. If you're using *God is in control* as a reason to do nothing about a thing you can see coming, Genesis 41 doesn't recognize that as faith.

Watch what the promotion does to you. The pit taught Joseph to depend on God because it left him nothing else. The palace offered him a name, a wife, a ring, and a city on its knees, and every one of those is a reason to stop looking up. The danger in this chapter isn't Potiphar's wife. It's success, and the quiet way it convinces a man that he earned what he was given. Ask what your best year did to your prayers.

Give your children the old names. Everything Egypt handed Joseph was Egyptian, and he wore it. But his sons were Manasseh and Ephraim, Hebrew names with God in the explanation, spoken in front of the priest of the sun. Most of us can do our jobs in Egypt. The question is what language the house speaks.

Be careful what you decide you're finished with. *God has made me forget all my hardship and my whole family.* It sounds like peace. It might be. It might also be a man who has closed a door and put a child's name on it, while the famine reaches the people behind the door.

Some of us have a Manasseh: a relationship, a season, a wrong done to us that we have filed away as *God got me past that*. He may have. He may also not be finished with it, and you'll find out the day the people you've forgotten show up needing bread.

For Discussion

1. In 41:16–32, count how many times Joseph says *God* to Pharaoh. What does he say about his own ability, and where in the conversation does he say it?
2. Read the cupbearer's account in 41:9–13 against what actually happened in chapter 40. What does he leave out? Why does it matter that Pharaoh sent for Joseph anyway?
3. Was Joseph putting himself forward for the job in 41:33? Read 41:33–36 both ways. Does it change how you feel about him, and should it?
4. Joseph is shaved, renamed, dressed in linen, and married into the family of a pagan priest. He gives his sons Hebrew names. Where is the line between serving inside a culture and being absorbed by it? Where is that line in your own work?

5. *God has made me forget all my hardship and my whole family.* Is that faith, or a man closing a door? What have you decided you're finished with that God may not be finished with?

6. Part One asked where God is when everything comes apart. You've now read four chapters. Answer the question in one sentence, without using the word *eventually*.

Looking Ahead

Lesson 5: The Brothers Come to Egypt (Genesis 42)

Ten men walk into a room without knowing whose room it is, and they bow, faces to the ground, twenty-two years after they laughed at the dream. The man who named his son Forget looks at them and remembers. He speaks harshly, through an interpreter, and calls them spies, and then he overhears something in Hebrew that no one in Egypt was supposed to say to him. That's where the first tears come. Seven times Joseph weeps in this story, and not once in the four chapters behind us.

Before you come: read Genesis 42, and mark every verse where somebody bows, and the one verse where somebody weeps.

⁵¹ Borthwick, *Life of Joseph*. On 41:1 he notes that the Hebrew's *full* years underscores how thoroughly Joseph had been forgotten and reminds the reader of his endurance. Grigoni et al., *Joseph*. On 41:1 they observe that the two years pass unrecorded, that Joseph continued serving in the house of confinement with what freedom and responsibility the situation allowed, and that after two years he had likely given up any hope of the cupbearer's intervention.

⁵² Kidner, *Genesis*. On 41:1–2 he draws attention to the Egyptian coloring of the dream: cattle coming up out of the Nile, where, as Vergote points out, they stand almost submerged to escape heat and flies, to graze in the reed-beds; and the Hebrew *'āhū*, "reeds," is an Egyptian loan-word. On 41:6 he identifies the east wind as the desert wind, the *khamshin* in Egypt, which can be devastating to crops (cf. Ezekiel 17:10; Hosea 13:15). On 41:8 he notes that *magicians*, *ḥarṭummīm*, is another Egyptian-based word, part of a title for experts in the ritual books of priestcraft and magic, and that they appear again in Exodus 7:11.

⁵³ Hughes, *Genesis*. On 41:1–8 he notes that the narrator's Hebrew uses an astonished *behold* six times to mark Pharaoh's reaction, that both dreams featured cannibalism and were built on the number seven, and that their arrival as a pair signaled importance and certainty.

⁵⁴ Hughes, *Genesis*. On 41:1–8 he cites Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, for the observation that the account of Pharaoh's helplessness and fear emphasizes the mortality and finiteness of the dreamer, the pharaoh-god. Grigoni et al., *Joseph*. On 41:1–7 they document the ancient conviction that a dream repeated was especially significant, citing a Sumerian king's paired dreams, Gilgamesh's two dreams of Enkidu, and a text from Mari on consecutive-night dreams.

⁵⁵ Hughes, *Genesis*. On 41:9–14 he suggests that the plural my faults may include the cupbearer's failure to remember Joseph.

⁵⁶ Hughes, *Genesis*. On 41:9–14 he lists the cupbearer's selective editing: no mention that the Hebrew disclaimed any power of his own and credited God, a false impression that the cupbearer took the initiative, and silence about the broken promise.

⁵⁷ Grigoni et al., *Joseph*. On 41:14 they identify bôr, "pit," as a deliberate link to 37:24 and to Joseph's own words in 40:15, so that the story pivots on this reversal: dreams sent him into the pit, and dreams now pull him out of it. Kidner, *Genesis*. On 41:14 he reads out of the dungeon as another sign of the narrative's unity.

⁵⁸ Grigoni et al., *Joseph*. On 41:14 they explain that Egyptians shaved head and beard while Semites were bearded and associated shaving with shame and grief (Amos 8:10; Job 1:20), and that the transformation left Joseph unrecognizable to his brothers (42:8). Kidner, *Genesis*. On 41:14 he takes the shaving as a further detail of Egyptian rather than Semitic etiquette (cf. Jeremiah 41:5).

⁵⁹ Hughes, *Genesis*. On 41:9–14 he adds that God, though unnamed, was the convener of the scene, arranging its timing through the cupbearer's forgetfulness and then his self-serving recollection; had the memory functioned earlier, it would likely have been lost on Pharaoh.

⁶⁰ Kidner, *Genesis*. On 41:15–16 he observes that while Pharaoh thought in terms of expertise in the science of dreams, Joseph almost explosively disavowed the whole approach, the exclamation It is not in me being a single Hebrew word; with hasty brevity he points from himself to God as sole revealer, his abruptness contrasting with Daniel's polished speech to the same effect (Daniel 2:27–30). Borthwick, *Life of Joseph*. On 41:16 he notes that Joseph repeats his statement of 40:8 and promises Pharaoh God's peace, shalom.

⁶¹ Hughes, *Genesis*. On 41:25–32 he notes that Joseph's interpretation invokes God at its beginning, middle, and end, and that the final sentence names God twice, so that the interpretation announced to Pharaoh and all Egypt that the one true God controlled their existence; he reads the article on hā'ēlōhîm, "the God," as an assertion to Pharaoh's face of the true God's sovereignty over the gods of Egypt. The CSB renders the second occurrence in 41:32 as he, so the English count is four and the Hebrew five. He cites Brueggemann, *Genesis*, for the point that the future in Egypt does not depend on Pharaoh, who can neither cause it nor resist it.

⁶² Kidner, *Genesis*. On 41:19 he notes that the extra description in Pharaoh's retelling makes it more than repetition, and that only now do we learn of the startling lack of change in the thin cattle (41:21), which Joseph will interpret in 41:31.

⁶³ Kidner, *Genesis*. On 41:25 and 41:33 he argues that the reiteration of what God is about to do and the emphasis on certainty and imminence in 41:32 are calls to action, not resignation, exactly as in the prophets (cf. Jeremiah 18:7–10); and that the famine, unlike many disasters foretold in the Old Testament, is not a judgment but one of life's irregularities, against which a wise manager insures. God looks for an active response: to a threat of judgment, repentance; to a friendly warning, realistic precautions.

⁶⁴ Hughes, *Genesis*. On 41:33–36 he lays out the plan's merits: decentralized storage in the cities allowed convenient distribution and protection as the famine deepened, and every part of it called for action grounded in knowledge of what God was about to do.

⁶⁵ Hughes, *Genesis*. On 41:37–41 he insists that Joseph never dreamed he was commending himself. Borthwick, *Life of Joseph*. On 41:33 he allows that the verse comes across as Joseph's initiative in promoting himself, and reads it as a man of leadership who, having lobbied the cupbearer without result, now speaks for himself. Grigoni et al., *Joseph*. On 41:33 they judge the advice neutral and free of self-recommendation, but note the implication that Pharaoh's wise men, who had failed, were not wise enough for the post.

⁶⁶ Kidner, *Genesis*. On 41:38–39 he observes that the Spirit of God would be a phrase colored by polytheism for Pharaoh, who was not the last man in Scripture to speak more wisely than he knew (cf. John 11:49–52), and that Pharaoh's words show Joseph's opening protest in 41:16 had made its mark.

⁶⁷ Kidner, *Genesis*. On 41:42 he takes Joseph's office as that of vizier; the signet ring carried the king's authority, though this was delegated to more than one officer; the fine linen, an Egyptian word, was court dress; and a gold chain or collar was a customary royal reward, shown as a detail of a vizier's investiture under Sethos I, though that painting is some four hundred years later and its value for Joseph's story is disputable. Borthwick, *Life of Joseph*. On 41:42 he quotes Walton and Matthews, *IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 76, on the signet ring bearing the king's name in its cartouche, so that anyone using it acted in the king's name. Grigoni et al., *Joseph*. On 41:42–43 they connect the seal to the Egyptian office of Royal Seal Bearer, often held by the vizier.

⁶⁸ Kidner, *Genesis*. On 41:43 he holds that the second chariot proclaims Joseph next after Pharaoh, and that bow the knee is the most likely meaning of 'abrëk, an adapted Semitic root borrowed into Egyptian, reflecting an etiquette depicted in Egyptian drawings.

⁶⁹ Kidner, *Genesis*. On 41:45 he notes that giving foreigners Egyptian names is well attested but that no agreement exists on Zaphenath-paneah, for which Steindorff, Vergote, and Kitchen offer three different readings; Asenath means "she belongs to Neith" and Potiphara "he whom Re has given," Re being the sun god worshiped at On, later Heliopolis. Grigoni et al., *Joseph*. On 41:45 they observe that the narrative passes no judgment on the marriage, never mentions Asenath again except as mother of Joseph's sons, and never again refers to Joseph by his Egyptian name.

⁷⁰ Hughes, *Genesis*. On 41:45 he argues that Pharaoh intended to Egyptianize Joseph through the name and the marriage, and that Joseph's soul was in greater peril at the pinnacle than in the pit, since the pit instilled dependence and the pinnacle inclines toward pride and independence.

⁷¹ Kidner, *Genesis*. On 41:46 he notes that the age punctuates a story that began at seventeen (37:2) and will reach its climax nine years later (45:6), more than twenty years after the breach with his brothers, comparable to Abraham's wait between promise and fulfillment and Jacob's years with Laban; each delay fruitful, no two alike. He adds that went throughout all the land emphasizes the personal energy of Joseph's administration and wonders whether it was enhanced by the joy of release. Borthwick, *Life of Joseph*. On 41:46 he counts two years since the cupbearer's dream and thirteen since Joseph's own.

⁷² Kidner, *Genesis*. On 41:51–52 he notes that the names are Hebrew, not Egyptian, and match the two sides of Joseph's experience: Manasseh with the mixed feelings that go with closing a chapter, Ephraim with a more buoyant sense of fulfillment. Smith, *Pentateuch*. On 41:46–52 he glosses the names as "forget" and "double fruitful."

⁷³ Hughes, *Genesis*. On 41:50–52 he stresses that a man renamed in Egyptian and married to a woman named for the goddess Neith gave his sons blatantly Hebrew names, reasserting his origin when every other foreigner sought assimilation. Borthwick, *Life of Joseph*. On 41:51–52 he quotes G. J. Wenham in *New Bible Commentary*, rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 87: there was still something missing; he had not forgotten his father's household.

⁷⁴ Kidner, *Genesis*. On 41:56–57 he notes that Egyptian records twice describe famine severe enough to drive its people to cannibalism, and that because Palestine was watered by rain and Egypt by the Nile the two rarely failed together (cf. 12:10; 26:1–2), so that this famine was exceptional and only one man's exertions averted a multiple disaster. Hughes, *Genesis*. On 41:53–57 he cites Sarna, *Genesis*, on Lower Egypt's dependence on the Nile flood, where a shortfall of a few inches could bring famine, and observes that Genesis repeats famine five times in these verses, twice calling it severe.

⁷⁵ Kidner, *Genesis*. On 41:55 he suggests an intended echo of the great provider in John's record of Mary's words at Cana (John 2:5): what Joseph was to the men of his day, this and more Jesus would be to the world.