

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

February 17, 2019

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### *Opportunity Knocks*

**Scripture Passage: Genesis 41:15-21,33-40**

**The Point: God gives His followers opportunities to make a difference within His divine plan.**

#### I. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

A. In this session, Joseph, receives an opportunity to interpret the king of Egypt's mysterious dreams.

1. He recognized the dreams as a message from God about a severe famine.
2. The famine would become an opportunity for Joseph to be reunited with and provide for his family.

B. Background

1. Joseph was in prison after Potiphar's wife falsely accused him.
2. He became the personal attendant for the chief cupbearer and chief baker, both were members of pharaoh's court and had been imprisoned because they offended the king (40:1-4).
3. Joseph interpreted their dreams, he asked the cupbearer to remember him (40:5-23).
4. When none of the king's magicians were able to interpret the dreams, the chief cupbearer remembered (two years later) Joseph and told the king of Joseph's ability to interpret dreams (vv.1-14).

#### II. A PROBLEM (Genesis 41:15-21)

A. This came as a surprise to Joseph.

B. Pharaoh wasted no time in presenting his problem to Joseph (v.15).

1. He had heard the stories of the Pharaoh while in jail, not an easy man to work for!

C. Joseph's immediate response to the king was both bold and humble (v.16).

1. "favorable" = well-being or peace.

D. The Nile River is what the Egyptian people believed was their source of life and well-being (v.17).

E. He describes a pleasant and encouraging scene (v.18).

F. Then seven sickly looking cows arrive (vv.19-20).

1. The Pharaoh had seen a lot but nothing as bad as these.
2. Surprisingly the sickly cows ate the healthy cows.

G. The appearance and condition of the sickly cows did not change (v.21).

### III. **A PLAN (Genesis 41:33-36)**

- A. Joseph explained to Pharaoh the meaning of his dreams, seven years of abundant harvests followed by seven years of devastating famine (vv.22-32).
- B. “discerning and wise” = choosing between the good and the best, someone who would make the wisest decisions for the benefit of all (v.33).
- C. These food reserves would be vital for meeting people’s needs during the seven years of famine (v.34).
- D. Store the reserve foods in the cities near the people and where they would be secure (v.35).
- E. If they didn’t do this then they would be wiped out (v.36).

### IV. **A PLACE (Genesis 41:37-40)**

- A. The Pharaoh as well as those that couldn’t interpret the dreams, agreed with the plan (v.37).
- B. The Pharaoh acknowledged that only God was going to be able to accomplish this task (v.38).
- C. Since God had given Joseph the message then he should be the one to lead the work (v.39).
- D. Joseph was made vice/associate pharaoh (v.40).

### V. **CONCLUSION & APPLICATION**

- A. Believers can point to God as the Source of wisdom when called on to address difficult situations.
- B. Believers can recognize times when God places them in a specific situation to represent His interests.
- C. Believers can be confident God will equip them to accomplish His purposes in their lives.
- D. Teaching Ideas
  - 1. Create Interest
    - a. Ask the group to discuss the most difficult life goal or accomplishment that they have ever achieved and then to discuss how they were able to stay focused on that goal.
  - 2. Closing Challenge
    - a. What is it that God has asked you to do and you are still waiting. Commit to remain faithful.
- E. Don’t Forget!!!
  - 1. Opportunity Knocks & Genesis 41:15-21,33-40
  - 2. God gives His followers opportunities to make a difference within His divine plan.

Dr. Smith serves as the lead state missionary with the Georgia Baptist Mission Board and leads the Sunday School, Small Groups, Discipleship and Faith Development ministries. Visit their website at [gabaptist.org/groups](http://gabaptist.org/groups) for more information and other resources to aid your class, group or ministry. You can also connect with Dr. Smith at [facebook.com/GABaptistGroups](https://facebook.com/GABaptistGroups). Dr. Smith is available for conferences or other speaking opportunities and can be contacted at [tsmith@gabaptist.org](mailto:tsmith@gabaptist.org).