

June 20, 2021

3. Don't Give Up — **Genesis 41:1-16, 25-32**

I dream every night. Most of my dreams are forgotten by the time I shave and shower. There is a frequent theme in my dreams, though: time pressure. I've misplaced my sermon manuscript on a Sunday morning, and I'm wandering around looking for it while the service begins. I've arrived late somewhere, while everyone else has been prompt. My computer won't cooperate, and I'm pressed to finish a sermon manuscript.

Freud believed that the mind's desires are buried in the unconscious and are made apparent in dreams. Freud posited that dreams are informed by repressed sexual desires. He later published a short manual explaining his theory of dream analysis.

Freud's analysis has been decried as too narrow. Rebecca Turner believes we dream because of random impulses, to reboot the brain, to assist in problem solving, and to cope with trauma.¹ What other reasons can you think of for dreams?

In Pharaoh's dream, he beheld sleek and fat cows being eaten by ugly and thin cows; plump and good ears of grain eaten by thin, blighted ears of grain. (With dreams like that, who needs nightmares?) Pharaoh was troubled and consulted Joseph, who was imprisoned at the time. Joseph, seemingly an expert, interpreted Pharaoh's dreams in a way that made sense to Pharaoh. (In 13 years, Joseph rose to second in command in Egypt, at least in part due to his ability to interpret dreams.)

Dreams are a major part of the narrative between chapters 37 and 41. What do these writings reveal about dreams and the human response to them in the Old Testament? How does that compare to the way dreams are viewed today?

Random questions:

- In Pharaoh's dream, what do you make of the impending famine? Is that judgment from God? A natural disaster?
- How do you account for the significance of the dreams between chapters 37 and 41?
- What evidence do you see that God exerts control through the use of dreams/interpretation of them?
- Do we consider our dreams today with the same magnitude as in this text?

—Ruben Chupp
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¹. Rebecca Turner, "Why Do We Dream? Modern Theories of Dreaming," World of Lucid Dreaming, n.d., <http://www.world-of-lucid-dreaming.com/why-do-we-dream.html>

Ruben Chupp of Nappanee, Indiana, is a spiritual director, chaplain, and retired pastor. His personal goals: “love God and the person in front of me at any given time; read some, write some, think some, pray some, and take a nap every day; love my wife, Idella, my children, and their children with all the grace I possess; and finally, get home before dark.”

Resources for this session

URLS in the Leader guide

- “‘What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July’: Descendants Read Frederick Douglass’ Speech,” National Public Radio, July 3, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBe5qbnkqoM>
- “Paul Theroux’s Mexican Journey,” NYTimes.com, September 29, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/23/travel/paul-theroux-mexico-road-trip.html>

***Salt & Light* Videos**

- Matthew Yoder is the presenter for unit 1, Grace. These teaching videos are great for leader preparation or introducing each session. They are available on [MennoMedia’s YouTube channel](#). Matthew is the pastor of Grace Mennonite Church, Pandora, Ohio.

Additional commentary for this session is available at:

<https://www.mennomedia.org/salt-light-supplements/>