

• *Pharaoh's revelation*

Joseph's period of suffering and training ended as abruptly as it had begun

Pharaoh had received a revelation from God yet he did not understand the revelation he had received.

Joseph's period of suffering and training ended as abruptly as it had begun. Just as the chastening of God may start very abruptly, so the end comes very abruptly. Many years before Joseph had been abruptly plunged into suffering when he left his father's house one day not realising that he would never return to it until after his father's death. Similarly the end comes suddenly. Joseph is in the dungeon. He has not had any hope of escape for over two years. For a long time there has been nothing he can do except pray. He is longing to escape but it seems that release is never going to come.

*Suddenly 'Pharaoh sent for Joseph and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon'*¹. There came a knock at the door. 'Joseph! Get shaved Here are some new clothes. Hurry! Pharaoh wants to see you!'

1 41:14

• *How God speaks...*

1. God uses Joseph in revealing His will when he has learned humility

Pharaoh is given a word from God through Joseph. We can learn much from these events about how God speaks to us.

1. God uses Joseph in revealing His will when he has learned humility. Joseph has lost the arrogance of his younger years. Pharaoh says to him '*I hear you are able to interpret dreams*'¹. Joseph's answer is '*It is not in me. God will give Pharaoh a favourable answer*'². One cannot imagine Joseph answering this way when he was a teenager. As a seventeen-year-old teenager he had been proud of his gift and ready to boast about what he knew. But now all of that has gone. Joseph has been forced over many years to acknowledge that everything about him is subject to the kingship of God. His life, his gifts, what is going to happen to him – everything is in the hands of God. He now speaks with simple but honest humility. 'It is not me; it is God'. He is ready to be used as a channel of revelation to Pharaoh.

1 41:15

2 41:16

• *Joseph is ready*

2. God may speak in stages

2. God may speak in stages. It was that way with Pharaoh. He first received a dream, but he needed more. God wanted him to hunt out the significance of what God was saying to him. Pharaoh tells the dream. He was by the Nile and saw first seven fat cows and then seven starved cows¹. Then in a second dream he saw seven full 'ears' of corn followed by seven poor 'ears' where the corn had been blighted by the hot east wind blowing in from the desert². Pharaoh had told the dream to his pagan magicians but they could not explain the dream³.

1 41:17-21

2 41:22-24a

3 41:24b

• *Pharaoh's two dreams – neither understood*

• *Pharaoh sends for Joseph*

3. The revelation from God finally comes with clarity and conviction

After the dream he still feels the need of explanation. God is speaking to him in stages and he does not yet see what God is saying. It is this that leads to his sending for Joseph.

3. The revelation from God finally comes with clarity and conviction. Joseph is quite confident and speaks with authority and clarity. When someone has a gift or has received a true revelation from God, there is always assurance concerning the gift. It is known with confidence by the person who has the gift and it is recognized by the person for whom the gift is intended.

• *The meaning seven years of abundance then seven years of famine*

4. God's revelations are given with practical purpose

• *A gifted administrator should be appointed*

• *The modern Christian needs to hear from God with the same kind of immediacy and consciousness of Him as Joseph*

• *Our 'interpreter' is the Holy Spirit*

Joseph knows the two dreams make the same point^{☞1}. It is God who orders the affairs of nature, and He is about to act^{☞2}. There will be seven years of abundance followed by seven years of famine^{☞3}. The fact that the revelation is given twice over means that the events are about to happen speedily^{☞4}.

4. **God's revelations are given with practical purpose.** Joseph does more than interpret the dream. He gives detailed instructions as to what should be done. A gifted administrator should be appointed^{☞1}. He must be gifted and wise since it will take some skill in management and administration. He must be able to arrange a whole nation's agricultural affairs during a time of plenty and then during a time of need. It will take a gifted man to cope with the change that takes place after the first seven years. And it will take a gifted man to handle the threat of suffering that will come during the second seven years. The administrator must be accountable to Pharaoh himself and must be someone Pharaoh can trust^{☞2}. The administrator must not be corrupt. He must take a twenty per cent tax of the corn which is grown during the prosperous years^{☞3}. The grain must be stored and it will give ample supplies for the years of leanness that follow^{☞4}.

God's word is like this; it is highly practical. The modern Christian needs to hear from God. The revelation Joseph received and which Joseph passed on was not a piece of writing. It might be asked, 'Now that we have the Bible do we need living revelations like this?' To which it must be said: the Bible must not be read as a **cold** revelation. It must be received as living oracles of God. We must hear God in His word with the same kind of immediacy and consciousness of Him as Joseph had when God was illuminating his mind to understand Pharaoh's dream. When Pharaoh had his dream before him he still needed further clarification. Reading God's word is similar. When we have the written word in our hands we need a 'Joseph'; we need an interpreter. The interpreter might be another person as on the occasion when the Ethiopian eunuch^{☞1} wanted someone to guide him. But finally the 'Joseph', the 'interpreter' has to be the Holy Spirit.

☞1 41:25
☞2 41:26
☞3 41:27-31
☞4 41:32

☞1 41:33

☞2 41:34

☞3 41:35

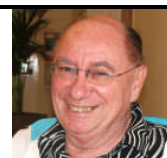
☞4 41:36

☞1 Acts 8:31



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