

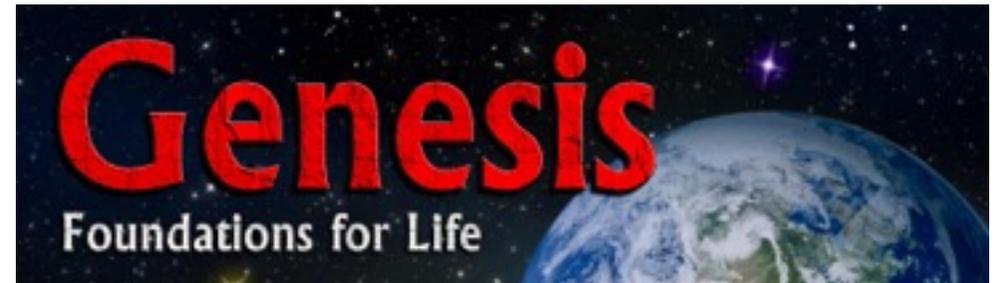
## For GC Discussion

- What are the truths that will sustain us through the suffering that inevitably comes to those who follow Jesus?
- Try and put yourself in Joseph's place in the events we saw this week. What kinds of emotions and struggles do you think he went through?
- Are we aware of the gifts God has given us for the building up of the church? Are we using what we've been given to serve those around us?

**Next Week:** we see Joseph being re-united with his brothers and his challenge of how to respond to them.

### *Notes and Questions*

**For Worship:** Listen to **'Good Good Father'** by Chris Tomlin. You can find it on YouTube, or on the Hill City Church blog on the website.



## Week 20: Joseph Part 3 - Exalted

### Chapter 40-41

#### **This Weeks Summary**

This week we saw Joseph's continued trials as he is forgotten by the Wine Taster who's dream he interpreted. However, later on we begin to see the unfolding of God's great plan as Joseph is brought to Pharaoh and exalted to his right hand.

### **For Study:**

This week we saw the continued use of trials in Joseph's life as God continues to change him, and we also saw his God-given gift to interpret dreams come to the fore in the accomplishment of God's great purpose.

Trials and Suffering

- **1 Peter 1:3-9, 3:13-22, 4:12-19**

- **Romans 8:12-39**

- **2 Corinthians 4:1-18**

- **Philippians 1:12-30, 3:7-11**

Gifted by God

- **Romans 12:1-8**

- **1 Peter 4:7-11**

- **1 Corinthians 12:1-31**

- **Ephesians 4:1-16**

- **Luke 11:5-13**

This week we began to see the unfolding of God's 'big-picture' plan that He was working out in all that happened to Joseph. It's important to remember though that each one of the events that we've seen in Joseph's life so far would have seemed like a pretty random set of circumstances to Joseph himself. Yet in the midst of it all, God was weaving together His perfect plan, and positioning His man exactly where He wanted him to be. You could say it something like this:

- If Joseph's brothers hadn't hated him he wouldn't have ended up in Egypt.
- If Joseph hadn't been in Egypt he'd never have ended up in prison there.
- If he hadn't been in prison he'd probably never have met the King's Wine Taster.
- If he hadn't met the wine taster he'd never have attracted Pharaoh's attention.
- If he'd never attracted Pharaoh's attention he'd never have risen to second in command in the land of Egypt, ready to fulfil his part in God's big-picture plan for His people.

While all these events on their own amount to very little at all in the grand scheme of things, they all served to fulfil something huge in God's plans and purposes for His chosen people. This is an important lesson for us to learn - sometimes we can miss it a bit because we already know the end of the story, and can see the big picture of what God was doing in and through Joseph. However, when he was in the midst of it all, there is no way Joseph could have had any clue what was going on. He'd seen a glimpse of what was in store for him in his earlier dreams, but surely even in his wildest dreams he couldn't have imagined things exactly as they panned out. We too, when in the midst of difficult and painful situations will often ask the question 'why' - why is this happening, why is God allowing it, what is the purpose in it all - and the honest truth is there may not be any intelligible answers to those questions. Our job is not to figure out the purpose for everything, but is simply to trust in the God who we can see on the pages of Scripture is weaving every event together for His glory and for our good, no matter how mindless it may seem.

### **Gifted in the Providence of God**

Another huge potential 'coincidence' in the life of Joseph is the gift that he is given by God to interpret dreams. God could have given Him any one of numerous supernatural gifts, and yet God knew exactly what would happen to Joseph, and so He was able to give him the perfect gift for fulfilling the purposes He had for him. Again, the same can be said of us. The Bible tells us that the church is like a body (1 Corinthians 12) - God is building together a group of people to function together in the way in which He wants to bring Him glory. Not every part of the body needs to carry out every single function - in fact for a body to function well there must be diversity in the gifts and talents each part of the body has. We may often be tempted to look at others around us and compare our gifting and talents with them, but all this will lead to is jealousy, envy, pride and ultimately division. What we should realise is that, just like Joseph was, we are all gifted by God in exactly the way He wanted us to be, to carry out exactly the function that He wants from us to cause His body to grow as it ought to. There is no need for comparison because every part of the body is just as valuable as any other, no matter how spectacular a gift may seem. We've all been gifted perfectly for exactly the circumstances that God knows we will face in our lives.

### **Exalted in the Providence of God**

The end of our text this week sees Joseph exalted to the right hand of Pharaoh as the second most powerful man in Egypt. It's a remarkable position for a Hebrew slave/criminal to find himself in - surely only God could have made it happen. It also has a familiar ring to it: Philippians 2 speaks of Jesus humbling Himself, coming in the form of a servant, and suffering even to the point of giving up His life. The passage then moves on to speak of Jesus being exalted to the right hand of the Father, and being given the Name that is above every other name. Though there are differences (Joseph didn't choose to humble himself for one), Joseph's experience exactly mirrors this as he goes through a time of painful and humbling experiences, only to be lifted up at the end of it all. Can we too expect the same kind of experience? Yes we can, but it probably won't work out exactly like it did for Joseph. The Bible is clear that in this world we will suffer, but it is also clear that the pain we experience in this life is nothing compared to the glory that we one day will experience when we are exalted to the right hand of the Father, not because we are deserving, but because we are 'in Christ' and will share in His perfection for the rest of eternity. What more motivation could we need to cling on to the end as we experience the pain of this life.