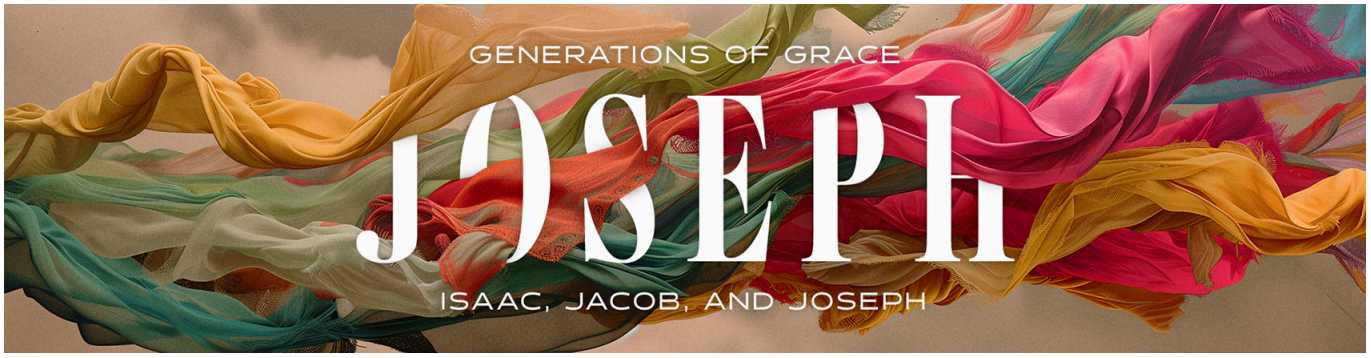


Genesis Part III
(Week 6/8) The Revealing God

Small Group Discussion Questions

Connect *Where might it be costly for you at the moment to follow God's ways?*

Warm-Up

1. What do you make of dreams?

Read Genesis 40:1-23

2. How does Joseph meet the cupbearer and the baker? What does he notice about them? What were they hoping for? Who does Joseph point them to?
3. What interpretation does Joseph give? How are Joseph's interpretations tested and what is the result?
4. What changed about Joseph's situation? How do we know what Joseph longed for?
5. Have you ever felt disappointed or grieved by the Lord's timing? What was or is the cause of it?
6. Why is God's different timing to ours, not a sign he is not at work? What helps reminds you that the outworking of God's good plans for us are not always visible to us?

Read Genesis 41:8-32

7. Who does Pharaoh seek to understand his dreams? How does he come across Joseph?
8. How does Joseph respond to Pharaoh's request to interpret his dreams? Identify the five instances that Joseph points to how God is the source of the revelation.
9. What specifically has God revealed to Pharaoh through Joseph? How would this revelation be significant not only for Pharaoh, but for the whole country of Egypt?
10. Why shouldn't we be focused on finding someone to interpret our dreams? What was the purpose of God's revelation to Pharaoh through dreams? In what other ways has God revealed to us his plans?
11. What do you do when you are uncertain about aspects of your life? What has God revealed to us that we can be certain about? How can that ground the parts of our life we don't know?

Read Genesis 41:33-57

12. What is Joseph's advice? How does Pharaoh respond? What does Pharaoh's response reveal?
13. How are God's plans for the world revealed through Joseph? Why was it *also* necessary for Joseph to respond to God's revelation?
14. What are God's ultimate plans for the world revealed in Christ? How does this also need a response?

Apply *Amongst whom do you need to have a sense of urgency for people to respond to God's revelation in Jesus?*

Pray *Lord of all, thank you for your revelation to us, given to us in your Word and by your Spirit. Please help us respond to all you have revealed to us in Christ, for our salvation and the salvation of the world. Amen.*



Genesis Part III
(Week 6/8) The Revealing God

Small Group Discussion Questions

On Your Frontline this Week

Is your frontline changing at the moment? Here is a helpful article to ponder:
https://licc.org.uk/resources/lessons-from-monty-don/

For Families

- *Download*: some of the family resources to use at home: stbartskids.org

Listen, Watch, and Read

- *Listen (sermon):* "The Revealing God" by Glenn Nesbitt:
  https://stebbes.org/sermons/the-revealing-god/#sermons
- *Listen (sermon):* "Nightmares of a Leader" by Paul Enns:
  https://www.allsouls.org/Groups/252325/L163_The_Boy_with_Big.aspx?show_media=141567&show_file=152651
- *Watch (sermon):* "When Dreams Come True" by Aneirin Glyn:
  https://www.st-helens.org.uk/resources/talk/54914/
- *Watch (workshop):* "Dreamers in Pharaoh's Prison" by the Bible Project:
  https://bibleproject.com/classroom/joseph/sessions/11/
- *Listen (podcast):* "Decoding Dreams" by John Dickson (UnDeceptions):
  https://undeceptions.com/podcast/decoding-dreams/

Series Resources

- *Read*: "Genesis" by Derek Kidner. 📚
- *Read*: "Genesis for Everyone: Part 2" by John Goldingay. 📚
- *Read*: "How to Read Genesis" by Tremper Longman III
- *Read*: "Genesis: Story of God Bible Commentary" by Tremper Longman III
- *Watch*: "Genesis 12-50" by the Bible Project:
  https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/genesis-12-50
- *Watch*: "How should we read the Old Testament?" by Dan Paterson:
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJtba-JyPVg

📚 Available to borrow from the St Bart's Library (Toowoomba): stbarts.com.au/library

GENESIS III: Generations of Grace

Week 6/8 "The Revealing God"
by Amy Norman (08/11/2026)

계시하시는 하나님 | Nhialiny cii rɔ̈t nyuɔ̈th | 启示的神 | வெளிப்படுத்துகிற கர்த்தர்

Bible Passage: Genesis 40:1 – 41:57

Lord of all, thank you for your revelation to us,
given to us in your Word and by your Spirit.
Please help us respond to all you have revealed to us in Christ,
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

- Joseph is in prison. It's been many years since he was at home, as the favourite son.
  We've been tracking through how Joseph was sold by his brothers into slavery,
  transported to Egypt,
  bought by Potiphar,
  ensnared by Potiphar's wife,
  and condemned to the King's prison.
- A terrible sequence of events, but also normal in that they are brought by people's actions.
  But from this point, the change in Joseph's life is caused by dreams that are given,
  and dreams that are interpreted.
- *It's pretty strange and unfamiliar territory.*
  But we aren't to get too focused on the content of the dreams
  and exactly how they were interpreted,
  but we are to focus on *who* gives the interpretation.
- Today as we cover all of chapters 40 and 41, we see the Lord's hand through the
  baker and cupbearer's dreams,
  Pharaoh's dreams, and Joseph's **new position**.

BAKER & CUPBEARER'S DREAMS | 40:1-23

떡 굽는 관원장과 술 맡은 관원장의 꿈 | Nyup ku nyuɔ̈th dë thiëp | 酒政与膳长的梦 | **பானபாத்திரக்காரனும் அப்பம்பண்ணுகிறவனும் கண்ட சொப்பனங்கள்**

First, we come to the **baker and the cupbearer's dreams.** *Chapter 40, from verse 1 …*

Some time later, the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their master, the king of Egypt. Pharaoh was angry with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, and put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the same prison where Joseph was confined. The captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph, and he attended them.

After they had been in custody for some time, each of the two men—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were being held in prison—had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own. When Joseph came to them the next morning, he saw that they were dejected. So he asked Pharaoh's officials who were in custody with him in his master's house, "Why do you look so sad today?"

"We both had dreams," they answered, "but there is no one to interpret them." Then Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams." *Genesis 40:1-8*

- Joseph is not idle in prison – for the Lord granted him favour in the eyes of the prison warden *and* he was put in charge of all those in the prison.
- After *some time,* he is entrusted with two disgraced officials: the chief cupbearer and the chief baker.

- And notice that even before anything out the ordinary happens, Joseph cares for these men. Not just for one night, but as it says in verse 4 for *some time.*
- Joseph is so attentive to those entrusted to him, that *he notices* one morning that they both look dejected.
- It is only after Joseph enquires why they look so sad, that their conundrum emerges *verse 8:*

"We both had dreams," they answered, "but there is no one to interpret them." *40:8a*

- They are not only distressed by the dreams, but the lack of anyone to interpret them!
- In ancient Egypt much was made of the meaning of dreams, here it is clear these men didn't think you could interpret your own dreams, but you needed a skilled dream interpreter.
- Joseph surprises them, *verse 8:*

"Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams." *40:8*

- The chief cupbearer goes first, describing his dream of a vine with three branches and grapes.

Joseph immediately interprets the dream: the three branches are three days.
Within three days Pharaoh will lift up his head and restore him to his position.

- The chief baker is encouraged so shares his dream too,
  he dreamt of three baskets of bread on his head, but birds ate out of the top basket.
- Again Joseph interprets the dream: three baskets are also three days.
  He foretells in verse 19:

"Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and impale your body on a pole." *40:19*

- The prisoners don't need to wait very long to see the accuracy of Joseph's interpretations!
  Three days later, it happens exactly as the Lord informed Joseph.
  The cupbearer is restored and the baker is killed.

- Now you would think that the one who gave you hope in despair,
  who cared for you in your darkest hours,
  and whose interpretations of your dream *exactly* came true,
  that they would be front of mind!
- Joseph had even told the cupbearer in verse 14:

"… when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison." *40:14*

- And yet, *verse 23:*

"The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him." *40:23*

- Joseph is left in prison.
  His opportunity for freedom *seems* to be thwarted by one man's *forgetfulness.*
- It seems outrageous! All the cupbearer needed to do was remember Joseph,
  and tell his boss.
  And yet how often do we do the same, forget others when everything is going well for us.
  It is a disappointing and sadly all too common human tendency.
- And yet in this well of disappointment,
  God is still unmistakably at work.
- Two dreams given to two different prisoners,
  about the judgement of Pharaoh (that they offended some time ago),
  about events yet to unfold. This is not the work of Joseph.
- Joseph wanted out of that prison.
  But even if it was incomprehensible to Joseph at that time,

the Lord had a reason for Joseph to stay – and he had a reason for him to be forgotten.

- The Lord is at work – but it doesn't mean he is working according to Joseph's timeline.
- And so when we might be disappointed or grieved by the Lord's timing,
  it is not a sign he is not at work,
  only that the outworking of his plans are not visible to us.

PHARAOH'S DREAMS | 41:1-32

바로의 꿈 | Nyuɔth de Pääro | 法老的梦 | **பார்வோனின் சொப்பனங்கள்**

Second, we come to **Pharaoh's dreams**. *Picking up from chapter 41, verse 1 …*

When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream: He was standing by the Nile, when out of the river there came up seven cows, sleek and fat, and they grazed among the reeds. After them, seven other cows, ugly and gaunt, came up out of the Nile and stood beside those on the riverbank. And the cows that were ugly and gaunt ate up the seven sleek, fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up.
He fell asleep again and had a second dream: Seven heads of grain, healthy and good, were growing on a single stalk. After them, seven other heads of grain sprouted—thin and scorched by the east wind. The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy, full heads. Then Pharaoh woke up; it had been a dream. In the morning his mind was troubled, so he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for him. *Genesis 41:1-8*

- Two full years pass, and now it is *Pharaoh* who has two dreams.
- And the content of the dreams trouble him.
  This is not just curiosity,
  but like the cupbearer and baker, Pharaoh recognises he needs an interpreter.
  And so all Egypt's finest magicians and wise men are sent for
  – but no one can interpret the dreams.
- It is only then, that just as the King of Egypt *needs an* interpreter,

his cupbearer remembers. His official *knows* where a dream interpreter can be found.
So Joseph is brought to Pharaoh. *Verse 15:*

Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it."
"I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires." *Gen 41:15-16*

- After many years of waiting, Joseph is finally before Pharaoh.
  But instead of using this moment to plead his innocence,
  he responds to Pharaoh's dilemma.
- You would think by now Joseph would be pretty apprehensive about interpreting dreams.
  When he shared his dreams with his family — *it just fuelled hatred.*
  When he interpreted the dream of the cupbearer — *he was forgotten*.
  But clearly this is not about Joseph. For when he speaks to Pharaoh he makes it abundantly clear – dream interpretation is not *his skill,* but a revelation *from God.*
- Just notice how many ways Joseph points Pharaoh to the true source of the dreams:
  verse 16: **God** *will give* Pharaoh the answer he desires
  verse 25: **God** has *revealed* to Pharaoh what he will do
  verse 28: **God** has *shown* Pharaoh what he is about to do
  verse 32: The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been *firmly decided by* **God**, and **God** *will do it soon*. >

- Joseph is super clear: these dreams are from God – about what God will do.
- And through the interpretation Joseph spells out what God has revealed to Pharaoh:
  there will be seven years of abundance, followed by seven years of famine.

- If you had a weird dream last night,
  don't now go out at morning tea and find someone to interpret it for you!
- The point of the passage is not that we would rush out to become dream interpreters,
  but that we would see how in Joseph's life,
  it is *the Lord* who is working to reveal and shape events.
- You might have noticed, that in every occurrence of dreams,
  when Joseph dreamed of his family bowing down to him,
  with the cupbearer and baker, and with Pharaoh – the dreams come in pairs.
- And here, Joseph explains to Pharaoh that
  the double dreams he received underscore the certainty of what will happen,
  of what has been decided by the Lord. / >

- Dreams are one way God has revealed what he will do.
- And what should get our attention is not that God would use dreams
  (God can use any means he likes!),
  but that he cares for people so much that *he purposefully reveals* what will happen. >
- The Lord is the God who reveals.
  And what he has revealed to us – is who God is in Jesus Christ.
  Not only has God revealed himself to us,
  but he has also revealed through Jesus what will certainly come about –
  a future judgement for all people and the renewal of the whole world.
- These are certain events, revealed to us by God, through the Son, in his Word, by his Spirit.
  So if you want to know God's revelation *to you* –
  all you have to do is read the Bible!
- Now of course the Lord can still today communicate in any way he chooses.
  And there are accounts today of the Lord appearing to people in dreams,
  often in countries like Iran where it can be deadly to share the gospel with someone.
- But even in these cases - receiving a dream is never the goal or the end.
  Rather, the point of God's revelation is that we would be directed to Christ.

NEW POSITION | 41:33-57

새로운 지위에 오르다 | Luɔin Jöt | 新的职位 | புதிய பொறுப்பு

Finally, in response to God's revelation, Joseph finds himself in a **new position.**

- After interpreting the dream, that there will be seven years of abundance and seven years of famine coming, Joseph continues: *Chapter 41, from verse 33 …*

"And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and put him in charge of the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh appoint commissioners over the land to take a fifth of the harvest of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in the cities for food. This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine."

The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. So Pharaoh asked them, "Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?"

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you." *41:33-40*

- In response to God's revelation of what will happen over the next 14 years,
  the obvious next question is: *what do we do about it*?

- Even though Pharaoh only asked for his dream to be interpreted,
  Joseph *also* suggests a way forward. His advice:
  find a discerning and wise man to administer the collection and distribution of grain.
- There is no hint that Joseph is secretly positioning himself for the role he just suggested.
  And he doesn't need to either.
- Pharaoh recognises that he needs a man with the very spirit of God,
  and that this man in whom is the spirit of God (or the gods),
  who is discerning and wise - is before him. The man he needs is Joseph!

- In one conversation, Pharaoh *approves* Joseph's dream interpretations from God,
  he *recognises the wisdom* in Joseph's action plan,
  and **because** he identifies *that God* has made this known to Joseph,
  Joseph is given a new role.
  Joseph had to be fetched from the dungeon just moments ago, but now
  he is put in charge of all of Egypt!
- What's remarkable is not only Joseph's rapid promotion,
  but who the Lord chose to work through for his plans.
- We don't have a lot of backstory for this King of Egypt,
  other than throwing his officials in prison.

We know generally Egyptians had plenty of gods and deities they worshipped.

- And so it is remarkable how receptive Pharaoh is to *what* the Lord has revealed to him.
  And that the Lord doesn't just restrict his revelation to his chosen people,
  but can work through mighty kings of different nations for his purposes.
- And we get a hint of just what God's purposes are in verse 57.
  After Joseph's plan had been implemented, it says that:

> And all the world came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe everywhere. *41:57*

- If God never revealed to Pharaoh what was going to happen,
  Joseph would probably still be in prison,
  the Egyptians would not be prepared for the coming famine,
  and it would leave the whole world starving.
- But because of God's revelation and his work through Joseph, the Egyptians have food,
  and the whole world can be fed.
  God's work gives life, even to Joseph's captors!
- And God's work through Joseph, his placement in Egypt at the right time,
  with the right experience, ready to govern Egypt's resources,
  gives a glimpse to what the Lord has promised his forefather Abraham,
  that all peoples on earth will be blessed through him.

- It was not God's revelation *alone* that rescued the Egyptians and the rest of the world.
  It also required Joseph's response.
- In the same manner he'd faced Potiphar's house and prison,
  he responded to this new position over all of Egypt with diligence.
  Being promoted was not the finish line of how God was using him!
  Many years ahead still remained.
- Joseph didn't respond to the position God placed him in *because* it was easy.
  In naming his second son, in verse 52, Joseph doesn't hide the fact that God
  had made him fruitful *in the land* of his suffering.
- Both suffering and fruitfulness together.
- The Lord revealed to Joseph what would happen in the next 14 years.
  But to us, the Lord has revealed so much more.
  In his Word, the Lord has revealed to us what will happen when Jesus returns.
  And so how should we respond?!
- A countdown to famine would create a shared sense of urgency,
  how much more urgency should we have for people to hear and respond to Jesus,
  to be ready for his return.
  An urgency stoked by the desire for people to be saved.

CONCLUSION

- Up until this point, it has been hard to make sense of Joseph's suffering.
  Sold because of jealousy and imprisoned for revenge.
  And yet before Pharaoh – God's plans for Joseph begin to be revealed.
  And not just for him – but for the saving of the world. /
- When we look to the cross, it can be hard to make sense of Jesus' suffering.
  Sold by his disciple, handed over to be condemned and crucified.
- And yet at the cross – God's ultimate plan for the salvation of the world is revealed.
  And at Jesus' resurrection – God's certain revelation of victory over sin and death
  and the resurrected life that awaits all who trust in Jesus *has been made known*.
- And the Lord who reveals all this to us in advance,
  invites us to respond now –
  that we and the whole world would trust in God's ultimate revelation to us,
  that we'd trust in Jesus Christ who died for us and rose again.