

# Pharaoh's Dream

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Date: 03 December 2017

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[ 0 : 00 ] So we find at the beginning then of this chapter 41 that Joseph's fortunes, if you use that word, Joseph's providence, is about to change.

Joseph's own dreams have been the occasion of his troubles in the first place. And now Pharaoh's dreams were about to become the occasion of Joseph's release and promotion.

But there are two things I think you should notice in the meantime. First of all, the night in which Pharaoh dreamed those dreams, he sleeps, he dreams in the palace.

Perhaps not all that far away in the prison of the captain of the guards' house, Joseph slept that same night still in the dungeon, still in his captivity.

Two years after the butler had been released and after gradually day by day with hope thinking, perhaps today he'll remember me, perhaps today he'll mention me to Pharaoh.

[ 1 : 00 ] Perhaps today I'll be released. And then it didn't happen. And it didn't happen. And it didn't happen. And eventually he ceased to hope. And eventually, no doubt, hope in a sense died.

And no doubt he resigned himself that this was to be his condition for the rest of his life. He is still in his dungeon. There is no outward sign to Joseph that anything is about to change.

He is completely unaware that the Lord had already begun to work his deliverance. Just because we see only darkness does not mean that the sky is not already lightning and that the Lord is not already at work.

Think of it if you get up in the morning, especially in these winter days, and you look out of the window and it's just pitch black. And that's what you do, especially if you've got the light on inside. Out through the windows it looks pitch black.

And if you're allowed to step outside into the actual air itself, and you're not looking out through the window itself, not only does it not look quite so pitch black once you're outside, even though it's still sort of dark in the early morning, but once you're outside, there's not only a slightly lighter darkness, but you can perhaps see in whichever direction it is towards east, the sky beginning to lighten.

[ 2 : 20 ] It's not yet the dawn, but it's beginning to lighten in one direction. When I was young and I used to do my paper round, I probably mentioned this as an illustration in the past, so apologies for repeating it.

There's always a stage in the morning when I was delivering to particular houses, and as you look towards Aberdeen itself, and you could see out towards the sea in that direction, you could see the lightning of the sky, and it was just beginning to lighten in the east.

And then if you turned the other way and looked up the side, it was still pitch black in that direction, because it was just beginning to break. I used to love that stage in the morning where you can visibly see in one direction a change just beginning, and you look in the other direction, it's still pitch black.

Because the fact that you cannot see anything but darkness does not mean that God is not already beginning to work. The sky is not already beginning to lighten.

That is the first thing. Just because we don't see it doesn't mean God is not doing it. Secondly, Joseph's spectacular promotion, which is about to happen, happens beyond the stage that we read, of course, in the chapter today.

[ 3 : 33 ] Joseph's spectacular promotion is only possible in human terms. We know it's the Lord that does it. But in human terms, it is only possible because of each individual step of the Lord's providence along the way.

God uses even those things which in and of themselves may not be good things. One reason that Joseph is in trouble in the first place is because Jacob indulges him.

Jacob makes it very clear that he is his favorite. And he makes a favorite of him over and above all his brothers. He gives him special treatment, special privileges, his coat of many colors. He is indulged. He is pampered. He is the spoiled boy, the baby of the family. And Jacob appears oblivious to the fact that he is throwing up trouble for Joseph because he is making all his brothers envious.

That's the first thing. So Jacob's own indulgence is the first step. Then we go on to the brother's envy. Not a good thing in itself. But God uses that ultimately for his own purposes.

[ 4 : 39 ] Likewise, Joseph's own dreams. The fact that he dreams these dreams. The fact that he's not backward about telling his brothers. It might have been more discreet if when he dreamed of me, he just kept them to himself.

And no, he had to tell everybody about it along the way. And you've got his own willingness to serve. Even though he knew his brothers hated him. He was still willing to put himself in danger and go look for them in Dothan or whatever it was that they were to be found.

He puts himself in danger along the way. And sure enough, the danger comes and fights him.

You've got the brothers' violence against him. Throwing him in the pit and stripping off his coat of many colors and taking everything that he had.

It's not a good thing. It's not a nice thing. But God overrules it for his good. You've got the arrival on the scene of the Midianites. Supposing they hadn't come over the hill just then.

Might the brothers have walked away and left Joseph to die of starvation and dehydration in the pit? If they had gone and they'd say, oh look, if only we'd seen these guys before, we could have sold them. Now we can't find the pit where we left them.

[ 5 : 40 ] And he'd just have died there. But they came at just the right moment in God's providence. They sold them. So although he'd been sold into slavery, he was at least fed and watered and provided for and protected because he is a commodity now to be sold.

He had sold to Potiphar. He'd been sold to somebody else in some other part of Egypt. If somebody was going to Libya or down into Ethiopia, it would have been sold to them. It would have been totally different. But God even overrules the very slave market itself where Joseph is himself sold to Potiphar.

His faithfulness in Potiphar's house. His resistance of temptation which incurs the wrath of his mistress in the house. You've got all of these things.

You've got his imprisonment itself. You've got the baker and the butler's imprisonment. You've got their dreams. You've got the final years of his trial in prison where he had hoped against hope that something might change.

And now you've got Pharaoh's own dream. And then you've got the butler's initial forgetfulness which if he had spoken to Pharaoh as soon as he came out of prison, Joseph would have been released.

[ 6 : 47 ] He'd have perhaps. He would have gone home. Perhaps he would not have been in a position to help anyone. Egypt let alone his brethren. God overrules every single step of the way.

And if any of these things had been taken out of the picture, then the outcome in human terms would have been very different. You see how God uses every single stitch in the tapestry, every single brick in the wall, every single grain of sand upon the seashore has its purpose and its place. And nothing is wasted with God. This is the thing. You know, I keep coming back, Psalm 56, put thou my tears into thy bottle. Are they not in thy book? Every tear drop is bottle.

Every sigh God hears and records it. Every day of our lives is for a purpose. And every step of the way God overrules for his own providence.

There is nothing that is outwith the remit of God. For all the heartbreak that it may have along the way. For all the difficulties we may face.

[ 7 : 54 ] The Lord allows none of them to fall to the ground. They are all used in his providence. If any single one of these instances in Joseph's experience had not been in place.

Then in all likelihood, humanly speaking, the outcome would have been different. And the disaster for the covenant line of Israel, let alone for Egypt, would have been very, very different.

And a disaster itself. In Lamentations, we read in chapter 3. The Lord is good unto them that wait for him. To the soul that seeketh him.

You might think, well, there's Joseph waiting on the Lord in prison. But, you know, if you think about it, God didn't give him much option. He didn't have any other option but to wait for the Lord. He

could have turned his back on the Lord in prison.

And then what's he got? He's got nothing. He doesn't even have the Lord in prison. He's got nobody else to turn to. He might as well wait upon the Lord. He's got nothing to lose. So often in your life, if you are truly seeking the Lord's will, you will find that he will perhaps paint us into a corner.

[ 8 : 59 ] Or box us into a situation where there is no other way for us to go. Except in the channel that he intends. Those of you who perhaps do sheep.

Yeah, you might remember the days when you do the sheep dip or whatever. And it finds and so on. Part of the objective is to channel the sheep into smaller and smaller corridors so that they have to go a certain way.

Through, down through the sheep dip or whatever. Or through the particular channel or through the particular gates or whatever. So they've got no other option except to go through that little opening. And if we are meant to be the sheep of his pasture, sometimes he has to deal with us like silly sheep.

We have to be boxed in so that there's only one way for us to go. Because if we had the choice, we'd choose the wrong way. We turn to the right hand or the left. The Lord is good unto them that wait for him.

Lamentations 3, verse 25. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. He'd done this with Joseph. And Joseph didn't have a choice. It is good for a man that he bare the yoke in his youth.

[ 10 : 04 ] He set it alone and keepeth silence because he hath borne it upon him. He puteth his mouth in the dust. If so be, there may be hope. He giveth his sheep to him that smiteth him.

He is filled full with reproach. And all of this would be true for Joseph. But even more so, it is true for Jesus. When they smote upon the cheek and said, Who hates you?

Prophecy. Tell us. What is true for those who suffer is true for our Lord himself. He does not leave us and observe from a distance. He goes through it himself. For the Lord will not cast off forever. But though he cause grief. God is not denying the fact that sometimes just as a loving parent may have to chastise their child. Though he cause grief.

Yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he does not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth.

[ 11 : 03 ] To turn aside the right of a man before the face of the most high. To subvert a man in his cause. The Lord approveth not. Sometimes there is a need for suffering.

Sometimes there is a need for patience. But the Lord is in the midst of it all. Just as he is in the midst of Joseph's situation. And so we find that Pharaoh dreams his dream.

And as he dreams his dream. You notice in one little detail here. In verse 6. The seven friend ears and blasted with the east wind. Spaned with the east wind. And there is reference to the east wind. Pharaoh makes reference to it again.

Verse 23. When he describes the stalks of corn again. And likewise again. Joseph makes reference to it. When he is describing. When he is describing the poor years of corn.

Verse 27. Now the east wind is referred to various times in scripture. Particularly in the Old Testament. And it is always a wind. You know coming from the deserts of Arabia.

[ 12 : 06 ] Or beyond. Which is destructive. It is not a gentle and refreshing wind. It is a wind coming from the desert. It is a hot. Blasting wind. Which does not bring any good with it.

In Jonah remember. When he is sitting under his gourd. Or in his little booth. In chapter 4. Verse 6. It came to pass. When the sun did arise. That God prepare a vehement east wind.

And the sun beat upon the head of Jonah. That he fainted. And so on. If we turn back a couple of pages. We find it. Hosea chapter 13. Verse 15. Though he be fruitful among his brethren.

An east wind shall come. The wind of the Lord shall come up from the wilderness. And his spring shall become dry. His fountain shall be dried up. He shall spoil the treasure of all present vessels.

Again Ezekiel chapter 19. Verse 12. And so on. These references in the Old Testament. To the east wind. Which blasts. Which destroys. So it's consistent throughout. And here it is again.

[ 13 : 01 ] In Egypt. In this earliest reference to it. So we have. That after the dream. As they've described. Verse 9. Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh. Saying I do remember my faults this day.

Now the most charitable interpretation of that. Is he saying. Oh. I was meant to speak for Joseph. And I forgot. I remember my faults this day. Perhaps.

That is charitable. That is being kind. More likely. He is saying. Oh. I remember my faults this day. Because at one stage. I offended against you.

Oh Pharaoh. How did I possibly have offended you. But I did. I remember my faults this day. Pharaoh was wroth with his servants. And put me in war. And the captain of the guards has. Both me and his chief baker.

In other words. I remember how I offended you. I remember my faults this day. This is more likely. This is the language of the courtier. The language of one who is now seeking to ingratiate himself with Pharaoh.

[14:01] Because all the wise men and the magicians can't help him. But now. Here's the bright boy who's come up with a solution. I've got an answer. Please sir. I can remember. I can remember something that might be of help.

And he didn't mention it before. And the fact he never mentioned it before. Means that now. It is actually germane to the issue. Now it is actually relevant. If he had spoken for Joseph before. He might just have been chancing his own. Who does he think he is? He's just ten minutes out of prison. Now he's asking a favour for somebody else. Who has particularly offended against the captain of the guard. Against whom allegations of impropriation.

Have been made against his wife. No way are we going to let this other guy out. What do you even mean by asking for him a favour here? So if he had sort of shot his bolt earlier.

It wouldn't have had half the potency now. But it does. He wouldn't have dared to bring up his name again. And even if the best thing had happened. If we said if Joseph had been released.

[14:59] He'd have gone home. He wouldn't have been in place now. Just right there on the spot. Everything. Everything. All things work together for good. Under God's providence.

I remember my faults this day. Now he's able to be the one who comes up with an answer. To Pharaoh. Now he ingratiates himself. Pharaoh was lost in the service. Put me in war in the captain of the guard's house.

Me and the chief baker. We dreamed a dream of one night. It was with us a young man in Hebrew. Servant to the captain of the guard. And we told him. And he had interpreted to us our dreams.

To each man according to his dream. He did interpret. It came to pass as he interpreted to us. So it was. Me he restored unto my office. And him he hinders. So in other words.

When all the Egyptian resources have been exhausted. Here's the last resort. Here's somebody I can remember. And Pharaoh was willing to try anything. And so. Joseph is taken out of the prison.

[15:56] They brought him up hastily. Nobody could have foreseen that. He woke up this morning. He didn't know that his life was about to change. Nobody expected him. He sent scurrying to the prison. To bring out a prisoner.

To stand before Pharaoh. What state is he going to be in? After literally years. In the dungeon. Well he's going to be filthy. He's going to be overgrown. Hair and gushy.

And long beard. And so on. This is one reason why they say. He's going to be shaved himself. Now. One of the strangest perhaps. Stories. Is Reverend George McCaskill of Stornoway.

I don't know if he mentioned this at home. When he's here. But one of the most unusual. Cases that he encountered. Was of somebody. Who wasn't quite an Egyptologist. But he was certainly very much.

Into the literature. And the study of ancient Egypt. He was sceptical. About the things of the Lord.

He didn't really believe. The Bible thought it was all nonsense. And then he came across this verse.

[16:49] And because he came across this verse. He said. Thrown in. Almost as an aside. He said. That's actually true. That's what they did. The Egyptians. Uniquely amongst the ancient peoples of the world.

Shaved. They made sure their heads were bald. They made sure their chins were clean shaven. They. This is how they operate. They made sure that they were. They were clean shaven. This is the way that they operate.

Their priests. Their pharaohs. Their slaves. Slaves would be bald. Shaved bald. And would be clean shaven as well. This was just their culture. This is what they did. The Assyrians didn't do it. The Edites didn't do it.

The Canaanites didn't do it. Everybody else. Let their beards grow. But the Egyptians shaved. And this reference here. To the fact that Joseph was shaved. Before he came into the presence of Pharaoh.

This caused this man. To think. Maybe. It is. It's actually true. You know. If that is true. Maybe other bits are true. And whilst it would be wrong to say. That this was the means of his conversion.

[17:48] It was certainly the first step. That began to cause him to investigate the scriptures. And to assess them more justly. If still critically. And in the fruits of time.

He was converted. And that was the verse that triggered it. And began. I've mentioned that in the past. I know. But still. It's worth remembering. But even these little throw away verses.

Can be used by the Lord. Nothing is lost with the Lord. The only thing one might question here. Is. You'll notice that the word. In the authorised version. Himself. Is in italics.

That means it's not part of the originals. But added by the translators. It's highly unlikely. One would have to say. That somebody in Joseph's position. Might still be in a position to shave himself. Shaving oneself. Is a comparatively late development. In society. In civilisation. Usually you'd always have to get a barber. Or somebody skilled to do it.

[18:44] People didn't have skill with razors. They didn't have litters. A lot of them and so on. To be able to shave themselves properly. It's quite. It's quite a tricky thing to do it. With an old fashioned. Like a cut throat razor.

Not like the safety razors that we have now. So. It's unlike he's shaved himself. Especially if they were in a hurry. You know. You can imagine the guards. Come on. Hurry up. We've been looking at our watches obviously.

But you know. Once you're now. Why are you taking so long for? Well that's the first time of shave. In like 20 years. So. You know. Don't worry about it. But still. They would want him done quickly.

They'd almost certainly get somebody else to shave him.

Shave his head. Shave his face. Get him washed clean. Clean set of clothes. And in before Pharaoh. Quick as possible. It would be something that a professional would do. Rather than. He'd do it himself.

He doesn't have a bathroom pack. Take out his own razor. And just do it himself. So. This is something that somebody would probably do for him. So when it says he shaved himself. He himself was shaved.

[19:39] By somebody else. They changed his raiment. He came in. Unto Pharaoh. It was all a matter of haste. They brought him out hastily. Out of the dungeon. And presented him then.

To Pharaoh. Straight to it. Pharaoh doesn't say. Are you the young Hebrew? Well I understand. You've got a gift with this. And he goes straight into it. I have dreamed of great. This is a matter of urgency. It is bothering Pharaoh.

It is troubling him. He's been waiting and waiting. At least. Come on. Come on. Come on. Why haven't they brought this young Hebrew. Out of the dungeon yet. And as soon as he appears. I have dreamed a dream. There is none that can interpret it.

I have heard say of thee. That thou canst understand the dream to interpret it. And I imagine at this point. The butler himself is probably trembling a little bit as well. Because if Joseph said no. I said no.

I can't do a thing. Then Pharaoh will look at the butler. And the butler will be back in prison. Faster than you can say the word. So here we have Joseph. I have heard say of thee.

[20:33] I have heard of thee. I have heard of thee. To interpret it. Joseph and Pharaoh say. It is not in me. He doesn't say. Oh yes actually. You know what. I could have done it years ago. If you'd only brought me out of the dungeon. Here I have been languishing away all this time.

I could have been amongst your magicians. I could have been amongst your astrologers. And since you. But you kept me in the dungeon all these years. No. He says. Stop me. I can't do it. It is not in me. God.

Shook of Pharaoh. An answer of peace. Now you might think. Well isn't that a little presumptuous. An answer of peace. Why does he know what the answer is going to be? He doesn't know the dream yet. He can't interpret it yet.

What does he mean by this? An answer of peace. I would suggest to you two things. First of all. One is. That the very fact of the dream. Being unknown and uninterpreted.

He doesn't know what all the symbols mean within it. This is troubling him. This is causing disturbance in Pharaoh's mind. The answer of peace. Is that which will unlock these symbols.

[21:30] And these meanings. And will thereby give a sense of tranquility. In the sense it is understood. Now it isn't just sort of uncertainty. Now it isn't just question marks.

Now it's knowledge. There will be peace when it is understood. So this is one reason why I would suggest an answer of peace. When he has unlocked all these mysteries.

You won't have this turmoil. This disturbance in your mind. This anxiety. This tension. There will be peace. Because you will know what it is. That God is revealing to you.

But what God is revealing to you might not be something nice. It might be something troubling. In fact the very fact of it is troubling Pharaoh. It is very unusual. Egypt is the breadbasket of the ancient world.

Why are these lean and ugly cows who are just you know absolutely skeletal. They gobble up the fat ones. Which is unusual in themselves. Cannibalism amongst the oxen.

[ 22 : 27 ] And here they are doing it. And there are still not many fatter. And the thin ears of corn blasted with the east wind. And you see. He saw in his dream. Him soaking up all the nutrients out of the ground. That caused the first big fat ones to just wither away and die.

And yet they weren't strengthened at all by them. Why is there still this image of badness. Of lean cattle starving to death.

Of bad crops coming through Egypt. This isn't a good thing. How can this be an answer of peace? And again I would suggest you by the second explanation here.

The answer of peace can only be that whatever God has revealed. He wants you to know it. And if he wants you to know it. It can only be because he has something for you to do about it.

That is the answer of peace. That God revealing this to you. Reveals it for a reason. So that it can be acted upon. So that there will be resources.

[ 23 : 26 ] God is not going to say. By the way. You're all for it. Look. I'm telling you. I'm letting you know. Just what I'm not in time you're in for. I can't wait till it all unfolds.

Look. I'm letting you know. And you're just going to have to spoon it. You're all just going to have to suffer. Aha. This is not what God is like. God reveals his glory by making it possible for men to be redeemed.

To be saved out of the jaws of death. He is glorified. In doing that which would be otherwise impossible. God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

Now here of course we have also this pointing again to the Lord Jesus Christ. As all the scripture does. And he is described in the prophet Isaiah. As the one who is wonderful. Counselor.

The everlasting father. The mighty God. The prince of peace. Now how is Jesus the prince of peace? When he says. I'm not prompt to bring peace. But the sower. He's acting will divide families.

[ 24 : 22 ] Divide nations. Divide individuals. Those who are his. And those who are not. Because. As the prince of peace. As the one who has come to bring peace between God and man.

He is the opportunity. He is the means by which men and women. Boys and girls. Can be saved. Joseph is not going to say to Pharaoh.

It's okay. There's a disaster coming. But nobody is going to die. It's all going to be fine. You know. No problem anyway. Don't worry about it. It's not that everything is going to be okay. It's rather that there is disaster coming.

But. God has given us warning. And God has given us means. To be able to prevent this disaster. God tells us.

In his word. And through his prophets. And in his scriptures. There is a day coming. Of judgment. There is a day coming. When the Lord will bring all this world to an end.

[ 25 : 22 ] When every single soul. That has ever lived. Will stand. Before the judgment seat of Christ. If we are still alive. We shall be changed. If we have already died.

Then the fact of the matter is. It's appointed unto men once to die. And then the judgment. There is such a day coming. Which is inescapable. For every single one of us.

But. God has not left us. To stew in that knowledge. He has revealed that to us. So that there is a means of escape. A means of deliverance.

A means whereby our souls. Can be fed. Knowledge. Blessed. And spared. God shall give Pharaoh. An answer of peace.

There will be tranquility of soul. In the knowledge. Of what is being revealed. And there will be peace. In the option that is given. The opportunity of redemption.

[ 26 : 18 ] Because before God brings this disaster. He will first have given you enough. To be able to live through it. Before God brings the judgment.

On your soul. At the last day. He will first have given you. The opportunity. Of a saviour. That is an opportunity. You may or may not take up.

Just as the Egyptians. May or may not gather all the abundance. In the seven years of plenty. They may choose to squander it. And they may starve to death. You and I are given.

A lifetime. In which to acquire. Knowledge. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. A lifetime. In which to close in. With his gracious offer of salvation.

A lifetime. In which to come to know him. And trust him. And believe in him. And however many. Or however few days. The Lord may end up giving you and me. The number he will have given us.

[ 27 : 16 ] Will be enough. So that you could be saved. If you act. On what he gives. God shall give Pharaoh. An answer.

Of peace. And Pharaoh said to Joseph. In my dream. Behold. I stood upon a bank of the river. Straight into it. No messing about. He explains what happened.

He explains what he has seen. And Joseph begins. To interpret it to him. And he explains it to him. He says. Well as much. As the dream. Was doubled.

Unto Pharaoh. It is because. The thing is established. By God. It is certain. The thing is established. By God. And God will shortly. Bring it to pass.

God is going to. Make it known. To the land of Egypt. He is. He is declaring it. The thing is. Certain. And God will bring it to pass.

[ 28 : 10 ] So he has doubled it. He has made it. Doubly clear. Just as God often acts. Of doubles. You know. If you think about. In Hebrews 6. Where it says. You know. When God making his promise.

To Abraham. A promise of God. Couldn't be broken. But because he wanted to make it. Even more certain. Verse 17 of Hebrews 6. Where in God. Willing more abundantly. Dishonored and heirs of promise.

The immutability. That is. Unchangeableness. Of his counsel. Confirmed it. By an oath. Now God makes a promise. You think. The promise of God. That stands on its own. Yes it does.

But he then makes an oath. He swears. What can you swear higher by. Than the name of God. Even if you're God yourself. You can't swear by anything higher. Than your own name.

He swears by himself. And confirmed it. By an oath. That by two immutable things. That is the promise. And the oath. In which it was impossible. For God to lie.

[ 29 : 06 ] We might have a strong consolation. We have fled for refuge. To lay hold. Upon the hope. That is set before us. It is doubled. The promise of the oath. So likewise.

It is doubled. The things that God reveals. Two sacraments. In the Old Testament. The Passover. And the circumcision. Two sacraments. In the New Testament. Baptism. And the Lord's Supper. All of which. The Lord himself participates. In two natures. In Christ. The human. And the divine. The things are doubled. They are reiterated.

In order to make clear. That although there are. The two kinds of dreams. The dream is one. It is one God. It is one covenant of grace. There is an Old Testament.

And there is a New Testament. It is doubled in a sense. But it is one covenant of grace. It is one message of salvation. There is one message. There are two dreams.

[ 30 : 00 ] And the thing has been doubled. Like a promise of God. And the oath of God. To underline the certainty of it. But when the years of famine come in.

There shall arise. Verse 30. After them. Seven years of famine. And all the plenty shall be forgotten. In the land of Egypt. And the famine shall consume the land. And the plenty shall not be known. In the land. By a reason of that famine following. For it shall be very grievous. Think of how. When the fat cat laid up. The lean cat laid up the fat ones.

They weren't made any fatter. They weren't strengthened by it. They were still. As thin and bad as ever before. The comforts of this world. Are subject to such changes.

We may be rich one day. And lose it all. The next day you think. Well. Nobody gets that. Okay. Think back to like 2007. Think back to when you got the worldwide financial collapse. What happened there?

[ 31 : 00 ] People who had shares in companies. People who were millionaires. In terms of the stocks and shares that they held. Suddenly became impoverished overnight. All their assets became worthless.

Because all the property markets collapsed. The stocks and shares all collapsed. Thousands. Millions were wiped off. The values of everything around the world. And it just went down like dominos. And those who may have been millionaires one month. The next month. They had nothing to be able to get along with even. And we think. Oh. It doesn't happen nowadays. Yes. It does. And it can very easily. The comforts. The riches of this world. Are subject to such changes. After great plenty may come great scarcity. It is only a fool. It says. You know. As Isaiah points out. Isaiah 56. Verse 11 and 12. Yea. They are greedy dogs. Which can never have enough. They are shepherds that cannot understand. [ 32 : 00 ] They all look to their own way. Everyone for his gain. From his quarter. Come ye. Say they. I will fetch wine. And we will fill ourselves with strong drink. And tomorrow shall be as this day. And much more abundant. The assumption that all of this will continue. James chapter 4. We read. Go to now ye that say. Today or tomorrow we shall go into such a city. And continue there a year. And buy and sell and get gain. Whereas ye know not what shall be on the model. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time. And then vanisheth away. For what ye ought to say. If the Lord will. We shall live and do this or that. But now ye rejoice in your boasts. All such rejoicing is evil. That which does not give the Lord the glory. And acknowledge it is only of the Lord's mercies. That we are not consumed. All such boasts. The Lord may well require us. [ 33 : 00 ] Like Paul. As he says in the Philippines. To learn how to be in want. As well as how to abound. But the Lord in his mercy. Sends the seven years of plenty. Before the seven years of famine. So that there is a means of deliverance. If we would use aright. What he has given us. He always will give us sufficient. Even for our famine days. I don't just mean in terms of physical hunger. I'm sure we've all been through famine days. In spiritual terms. And we feel the Lord is far away from us. And we feel that we are on our own. And we feel that we're not getting through to heaven at all. We feel as if we have been abandoned. In his famine days. But the Lord does not abandon us. The Lord always provides sufficient for. For one day at a time. So as to leave us without excuse. But see verse 31. The passing and temporary nature. [ 33 : 57 ] Even of all the riches of this world. Of earth. The abundance. The great surplus of the boom years. Which seemed enough and too much. Was little comfort. Within such a short time. What comfort is it in times of misery. To be able to say. Ah yeah. But it used to be good. You're starving now. Ah remember the good years. Remember how good it was. I think it was a lot of comfort. To the rich man in Luke 16. In the Bible of the rich man and Lazarus. When Abraham says to him. In verse 25. Son remember that thou in thy lifetime. Receivest thy good things. And likewise Lazarus evil things. But now he is comforted. And thou art tormented. At the time they seemed the most important things in the world. At the time when we're in this world. It seems so important. To be able to do what I want. Self asserting. And self fulfilment. And self expression. And self self self. And whatever riches I can get. [ 34 : 53 ] And doing what I want to do. And this seems the most important thing in the world. And how quickly. All that could be turned on its head. And then all that we lived for in self. Just seems like a bad memory. And how a torment to our souls. The bread of this world. Passes away. And satisfies only for a day. Two of the most. If you pig out today. You might survive on the strength of that tomorrow. But within a couple of days. You'll be getting wobbled. And faint. And short of strength. And energy. Because the food of a day. Only does it for that day. Even if you eat a good party. Breakfast in the morning. By the end of the day. You're feeling hungry. We have to keep on feeding these bodies. And the abundance of last week. Is no comfort to us. If we're hungry now. How quickly the bread of this world. [ 35 : 48 ] Passes away. Before we hunger again. But the Lord would have us learn. Of bread which endures. To everlasting life. Riches which do not fade away. Jesus said to the crowds. In John 6. Verily. Verily. I say unto you. Ye seek me. Not because ye saw the miracles. But because ye did eat of the loaves. And were filled. Labor not for the meat. Which perisheth. But for that meat. Which endureth. Unto everlasting life. Which the Son of Man. Shall give unto you. For him hath God the Father sealed.

In verse 49. Your fathers did eat manna. In the wilderness. And are dead. This is the bread. Which cometh down from heaven. Which a man may eat thereof. And not die. Jesus said.

I am that bread of life. There is that which will endure. There is that which will last. There is that which will abide. And it is not merely the bread of this world.

[ 36 : 45 ] It is that which will abide unto everlasting life. God has revealed it to Pharaoh. So that his people might be saved. God has revealed the source of the bread of life to us.

That we might be saved. Come the day of testing. And when Joseph interprets this dream for Pharaoh. He doesn't just say. Well that's the interpretation. You do with it what you like.

He follows it up with advice. You can almost imagine Pharaoh in the court being struck dumb. How could there be seven years of famine in Egypt? This is Egypt. We don't have famines.

But the abundance of Egypt. Was dependent on one simple thing. On the flooding of the Nile. And the Nile flooded seasonally every year.

And if it flooded in abundance. Then all the water and the silt spread over a large wide area. And its deep depth of water had renewed. And gave silt and fresh earth and soil to such an abundance of areas.

[ 37 : 45 ] And if there wasn't rain. Which apparently there wasn't in the land of Egypt. It was you know. A few cubits could make the difference. If it was 12 to 15.

15 or 16 cubits worth of water. Then there would be abundance. If it was only 12 or 13. There would be scarcity. And you see that the difference there. It's not that the river is going to run dry.

Because it isn't. And it's not that it won't flood every year. Because it will. But if it doesn't flood enough. Then there will be scarcity. And if it floods even less.

There will be famine. Action is needed. If lives are going to be saved. Joseph is right. Somebody needs to be appointed.

Somebody needs to handle the business. Somebody needs to act in it. Somebody needs to lay up the store while it is time. Go to the ant thou sluggard. As it says in Proverbs.

[ 38 : 40 ] Consider her ways and be wise. Which having no guide, overseer or ruler. Provided her meat in the summer. And gathered her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep?

O sluggard. When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Get a little sleep. A little slumber. The folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travels. And thy want as an honored man. We look this morning at the disciples who were asleep. While Jesus was praying. They were asleep because they were still in the state of their flesh. They were unconverted.

We could say it wasn't just night around. It was also night in their souls. Now if it is night in our souls. We are in a sense still sleeping the sleep of death. We are dead in trespasses and sins.

There is a need for us to awake. There is a need for us to watch and be sober. Thessalonians says chapter 5 verse 6. Therefore let us not sleep as do others. But let us watch and be sober.

[ 39 : 38 ] For they that sleep, sleep in the night. A dark night of their souls. A night of unbelief.

When they don't know the Lord as their saviour. They that are drunken are drunken in the night. But then us who are of the day be sober.

Putting on the breastplate of faith and love. And for an end of the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath. But to obtain salvation. By our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the case. When the judgment comes. When the famine comes. When the days of darkness comes. The Lord has appointed. A means of escape.

A means of deliverance. He has given us enough. Whilst yet there is time. And now it is high time. To awaken out of sleep.

It is high time. To awaken out of darkness. And to lay hold upon the opportunity. That the Lord has put before us.

[ 40 : 36 ] It may be abundance now. But the days of famine will come. And then we will be spared or saved. Not according to how much bread we may have eaten.

In the things of this world. But whether or not we have the bread of life. Which will endure to everlasting life. So many good Sabbath in the jungle.