

QUESTION 6

- a) When Joseph had his dreams back in chapter 37, God had been speaking concerning what would happen in the future.
- b) Of course, that meant that fulfilment would not come immediately. As one writer put it *"his hope was hope deferred"*.
- c) Here we see the importance of waiting on God and trusting Him.
- d) The situation he finds himself in now is through no fault of his own. It is not God's punishment on him.
- e) The psalmist makes this observation in **Psalm 105:18-19** *"His feet were hurt with fetters; his neck was put in a collar of iron; until what he had said came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him"* (compare **James 1:2-4**).
- f) God doesn't always remove His people from suffering, but He is there with them.
- g) Quote: *"Sometimes God's purposes don't go in a straight line, but they always arrive at His intended destination"* (Liam Goligher).

GROUP LEADER'S NOTES – STUDY 6

As this is a long passage we are covering in this study; I suggest that verses 1-7 are read at the beginning and verses 8-23 before question 4.

QUESTION 1

- a) It is easy to read accounts in the Bible as if all the events happen almost simultaneously.
- b) It is now over ten years since Joseph was sold into slavery (compare **Genesis 37:2; 41:1, 46**)
- c) Here we are told that there is a period of time where nothing significant seems to happen.
- d) What is Joseph feeling? Is he still aware of God presence with him (see **Genesis 39:3, 23**)?
- e) This opening phrase acts as a reminder that God is still in control of the situation; however difficult it is.
- f) In God's plan, the story continues unbroken.

QUESTION 2

- a) These two officials from the royal court are placed within the reach of Joseph.
- b) Quote: *"we never lose sight of the over-arching reason: whatever external reason they were sent to prison, they were really there to meet Joseph"* (David Guzik).
- c) The king's decision here shows that God's hand is on all that is happening.
- d) These men will play an important part in ensuring Joseph ends up in the place where God can use him. Not only to save the nation of Egypt from famine, but to save his own family.

- e) Bear in mind that we know how the story pans out. Joseph doesn't!
- f) It's through his family that God's covenant purposes will be fulfilled. Ultimately it will come through the Messiah Jesus.
- g) In verse 4, it is not the prison warden who puts these two men with Joseph. It is the captain of the guard. And we know who that is from **Genesis 39:1** (Potiphar)! His view of Joseph has softened. Perhaps he now believes that Joseph did not do anything wrong. Joseph has certainly shown godliness and integrity.

- d) Here God uses Joseph to interpret and therefore reveal His purposes. The prisoners of course have no access to the magicians and wise men who would normally be expected to be able to help.
- e) Notice that Joseph is keen to give God the glory.
- f) Joseph could have taken advantage of the situation and made something for himself. But his thoughts were to honour and serve God; even in this dire situation.
- g) He also knows that God is giving him the responsibility to act as a conduit for that revelation.

QUESTION 3

- a) Despite his own predicament, Joseph is still concerned about others.
- b) He clearly takes his responsibilities seriously (refer back to **Genesis 39:22-23**).
- c) This again speaks of both his integrity, and his acknowledgement that God is in the situation he finds himself in.
- d) Would we have blamed Joseph for thinking that he is in the same situation that his fellow prisoners are in. Why would he be concerned about them?

QUESTION 4

- a) The Bible includes a number of dreams and visions which God uses to reveal His will.
- b) Hebrews 1:1-2 tells us that God spoke in all sorts of different ways to reveal his will. Now in the last days He speaks through His Son. The Holy Spirit reveals truth to us about Christ through God's word.
- c) At this time in Egypt, dreams were taken very seriously. It was thought that the gods communicated through them. People were paid handsomely to interpret these dreams.

QUESTION 5

- a) Here is one of the moments of hope. We have already seen God's providence at work in bringing the two court officials into Joseph's life.
- b) Yet it seems as if it is not going to work out.
- c) Verse 23 leaves us at another low point for Joseph. Languishing in prison; his one hope of release gone. Even though the whole episode is underlined by the truth that God is working His purposes out.
- d) Quote: *"You would have thought that taking a stand for righteousness and witnessing to the truth would bring him blessing, but instead it leads to his persecuting and imprisonment"* (Liam Goligher).
- e) We need to wait another two years before the forgetfulness of the cup-bearer is reversed and Joseph is released. The rest, as they say, is history!
- f) People do let us down. They break their promises. But God never does.