

GROUP LEADER'S NOTES – STUDY 8

QUESTION 1

- a) Pharaoh had no choice but to call on Joseph. Note the urgency. Pharaoh is troubled.
- b) God brings people to the end of themselves so that they will humble themselves and listen to Him.
- c) It was necessary in Egyptian culture to make yourself respectable to meet the king. To the Hebrews, a beard was a mark of dignity, but for the Egyptian it was something offensive.
- d) By the time he is dressed and shaved, Joseph looks like an Egyptian and is ready to see the king.
- e) Nothing should detract from what is going to happen next.

QUESTION 2

- a) Pharaoh uses whatever language he can to flatter Joseph.
- b) He could have just commanded Joseph to give an interpretation. But he is desperate for an answer.
- c) Joseph could have sought a deal with Pharaoh for his release. Equally he could have just gone ahead; given the interpretation; and taken the credit.
- d) Instead he is not concerned about himself. He gives all the glory to God; regardless of what might happen to him.
- e) This is a reminder of what should be the focus in our lives.
- f) Joseph was not afraid to testify about God in a pagan environment. Or to a king who was looked on by the Egyptians as a god.

QUESTION 3

- a) When details are repeated in scripture, the importance of them is emphasised.
- b) We also see it as a confirmation that what is revealed will happen. It is established, or 'fixed', by God (**verse 32**).
- c) What we have here are important details in the history of God's purposes in saving mankind.
- d) Notice that we get a bit more detail as Pharaoh relays his dreams to Joseph. This shows his anxiety and his desperation for an interpretation.

QUESTION 4

- a) Joseph is God-centred in what he says.
- b) Again, he puts the focus on God being at work. Note in verses 25 and 28; it is not he that is revealing the meaning but God.
- c) In verse 32 there are two references to God. God has determined what will happen. And God will bring it about. Again, there is emphasis.

QUESTION 5

- a) The two dreams belong together and have the same message (**verse 25**).
- b) God has been gracious to Pharaoh in showing the king what He is about to do (**verse 28**).
- c) The doubling up of the message emphasises that it is certain; important; and imminent (**verse 32**).
- d) Seven years of plenty will be followed by seven years of famine. This famine will be so severe that the years of plenty will soon be forgotten (**verse 30**).
- e) What comes out of this is the helplessness of the most powerful man on earth; and the one true God who will have His way.
- f) This is a helpful reminder that those in the world who have most power, are still at the mercy of the one true God. History is in His hands.

QUESTION 6

- a) Joseph sees himself as a spokesman for God.
- b) He realises that God has a purpose in all that is going on.
- c) In turn, God was being gracious in giving Pharaoh warning of what will happen.
- d) *"God's sovereignty does not negate human responsibility, so the king needs to do something with this knowledge"* (Liam Goligher).
- e) Joseph reveals his wisdom; if nothing else, by not putting himself forward.
- f) God will provide a way through this famine, if they will do what He has revealed in the dreams.
- g) Notice how at each stage, everything and everyone is to be answerable to Pharaoh. Again, that shows a discerning and wise spirit.
- h) Preparation for what is to come next.