READ **REFLECT** **APPLY**

Genesis 41:33-57

OBEDIENT RESPONSE

Pharaoh listened intently to the revelation that Joseph gave him. He was not hostile to the message and did not question the intervention of God. He realised that he could not stop the famine happening any more than he could stop the years of plenty. He submitted to the authority of God.

Would you say that our country today is spiritually in years of plenty, or years of famine? What might characterise a spiritual famine, or a spiritually rich harvest?

PREPARATION v 33-40 – Joseph explained to Pharaoh that God had given him the dreams so that he could make preparations that would enable the nation to survive. This would involve appointing someone to oversee the land during times of plenty so as to stock up supplies for the famine that would follow. That manager must have officers working for him to collect one fifth of the harvests during the good years of plenty. The produce could then be stored so that when the famine came everyone would have enough to eat. Not only did Pharaoh believe all that Joseph had said, but his servants and close advisors did too. They also all realised that the person in charge must have the Spirit of God in them and therefore there could be no-one better than Joseph who was respectfully unveiling God's plans to them. Joseph had endured the restrictions of the prison in expectation that one day God would release him to fulfil the dreams he had been given as a child. However, this dramatic contrast could not have been imagined. He had served God faithfully and treated all those he met respectfully regardless of whether it was in the grandeur of Potipher's house or the squalor of the prison. He would be the same in Pharaoh's palace.

Pharaoh recognised that Joseph had the Spirit of God within him. How do Christians have the Spirit of the Lord in them today, and how can it be recognised? (Eph.1:13-23, Phil.2:14-16)

JOSEPH THE RULER v 41-49 – so when he was thirty years old, Joseph became second only to Pharaoh in authority. Pharaoh gave him his identifying cygnet ring, kingly clothes, and a great gold chain around his neck. He rode in a beautiful chariot, just like Pharaoh, and everyone bowed down to him. Pharaoh changed Joseph's Hebrew name to 'Zaphnath-Paaneah' which means 'revealer of secrets' and gave him Asenath, the daughter of a priest, to be his wife. Nonetheless, Joseph kept his focus upon carrying out the Lord's instructions. The storehouses were set up and just as he foretold, the plentiful years came, year after year, and the storehouses became full of food and grain in vast quantities throughout Egypt.

FOOD AND FRUITFULNESS v 50-52 – during those bountiful, fruitful years, Joseph knew personal blessing too. Asenath, his wife bore him two sons. He named the first 'Manasseh' meaning 'forgetting' because his joy at the birth of his firstborn son helped him forget his past sorrows. Then, as the harvests rolled in, their second son was born and Joseph called him 'Ephraim' meaning 'fruitful'.



The salvation of the Egyptian people depended upon them bowing the knee to Joseph and doing whatever he told them to do. Who do you submit to in your life? (Eph.4:20-32)

FAMINE AND HUNGER v 53-57 - however, exactly as God had foretold, the eighth year of Joseph's rule brought famine. It was felt throughout all the land of Egypt causing the nation to cry out to their king. Pharaoh simply directed them to Joseph who calmly opened up the storehouses and sold them grain bringing wealth to Pharaoh's government. The famine hit surrounding nations as well and so it was not long before word spread that there was food in Egypt. They therefore also were directed to Joseph to buy food. Lives throughout the surrounding nations were preserved through Joseph's faithfulness to God and Pharaoh's willing obedience to His word.

'In whom are hidden
all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.'
Colossians 2:3