

GOD'S POWER TO USE HIS SERVANT: JOSEPH WAS EXALTED TO BE GOVERNOR GENESIS 41:37–44

Introduction – Sovereignty

This chapter is an excellent study of God's power. God definitely has the power to move events, to work things out for the sake of His servant and His people. Note the following three verses that show this so clearly. The verses explain exactly what was happening.

“God [has shown] Pharaoh what he [God] is about to do” (Gen 41:25).

“What God is about to do he [has shown to] Pharaoh” (Gen 41:28).

“...the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass” (Gen 41:32).

God was now ready to raise Joseph to power in Egypt so that He could save His people, Israel. God was now ready to use His servant Joseph to fulfil His promises to the chosen family. God's power is seen moving both small events (e.g., the butler's memory, vv. 9-13) and worldwide events (e.g., exalting Joseph to be the nation's leader).

Note that Joseph was unmistakably God's servant. All that he had learned through the trials of his life was now used by God in a great purpose for both Israel and the world. Israel would now be saved and the world.

This is the great truth of this passage: God will do whatever is needed to fulfil His will upon earth. He will move the smallest detail or the greatest event in order to fulfil His promises and purposes. God will work all things out for the sake of His dear servant and follower. God will work all things out for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Rom 8:28). This is the great subject of this most important passage: *Joseph rose to power in Egypt: The power of God to work things out for His servant, the believer.*

Genesis 41:37–44 Power of God; Call and Commission

God has the power to use His servant. God took Joseph and exalted him as the chief servant of Egypt.

1. God used Joseph by making his advice wise (v. 37). Pharaoh and his government officials were no doubt shocked and stunned. The very thought that the nation could suffer economic collapse due to famine was frightening. But the dreams had happened, and Joseph's interpretation fitted and matched the dreams perfectly. The dreams and interpretation made sense. Such an event could really happen. If not, then Pharaoh and his officials would soon be able to tell. They would be able to tell if *better than usual years and productivity* began to sweep the land.
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Moreover, the advice by Joseph was sound. In fact, even if the famine never came, the government could not lose. They would own all the grain in storage, and they could export it to other nations.

All of these thoughts were probably running through the minds of Pharaoh and his officials. The advice of Joseph was just sound, wise advice, and they recognized it.

2. Now note: God used Joseph to cause men to acknowledge His Spirit, to acknowledge that He works in His servants and in the world (v. 38). Pharaoh and the other government officials had no more understanding about the Spirit of God and His workings than any other unbeliever does. But they did believe one thing: it took some supernatural power to enable Joseph to interpret the dream. In addition, his advice was very wise and sound. Moreover, when he spoke, there seemed to be a God-given authority and wisdom in his message. Consequently, they could do no less than acknowledge that the Spirit of God dwelt in Joseph. His God had the power to control nature and to live in His servants. Joseph really knew the God of heaven.
3. God used Joseph to stir men to set His servant up as the leader of the world (vv. 39-43). What happened then was astounding! A rags to riches story then took place, one of the most thrilling in all literature. Few stories can match the drama of Joseph, of the utter humiliating devastation he had known and what he was now about to experience.

Pharaoh told Joseph just what he thought of him: there was no one as discerning and wise as he (v. 39). But note why: because God was with him. God had revealed all this to Joseph. Joseph was discerning and wise, not within himself, but because of God. And then it happened:

- a. Joseph was exalted over all the people of Egypt (v. 40). He was put in charge of all the palace. Everyone except Pharaoh was subject to him. He was second in command — the prime minister or secretary of state — over all of Egypt, over the entire land (vv. 40-41).
- b. Joseph was exalted as the leader with the symbols of full authority (v. 42).
 - => He was given the ring of Pharaoh himself: this gave him the full authority to sign legal documents in the name of Pharaoh.
 - => He was clothed in royal linen: this was the clothing of the king's official court.
 - => He was given a gold chain to wear around his neck: this was a symbol of authority to show that he belonged to the king's court and acted with the king's authority.
 - => He was given the second chariot behind Pharaoh (v. 43). Note that a state procession was arranged to introduce Joseph to the people of Egypt. He rode in the chariot behind Pharaoh to let the people know that he was now second in command. Note also that as they rode along, men shouted out to the people to bow the knee.

- c. Joseph was given the very protection of Pharaoh himself (v. 44). Pharaoh made it plain that he was the first ruler in Egypt, but Joseph was the second. No person would be able to lift a hand or foot in Egypt without the approval of Joseph.

Thought 1. God has the power to use His servants as He wills. In Joseph's case, it was to serve God and men by saving Egypt and Israel from utter devastation. In our case, it may be to simply help a person here and there as we minister to them. But no matter our call in life, we are to allow God to use us. What if Joseph had not followed God? What if he had not allowed God to use him? What if he had turned from God during the terrible trials he had to suffer?

God has the power to use us in marvellous ways. But we must make ourselves available to God. He will not force us to serve Him. We must believe Him, obey Him and follow Him with all our hearts. Then we will be available for God to use us. And He will: God will pour His power into our lives, using us to help and minister to a lost and dying world. God will call us and use us if we will only give our lives to Him, just as Joseph did.

John 15:16 *“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.”*

Rom 12:1 *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship.*

1 Cor 1:27-29 *But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things — and the things that are not — to nullify the things — that are, so that no one may boast before him.*

1 Cor 4:2 *Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.*

1 Tim 1:12-15 *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the worst. ■*