

Message Five

The Reigning Aspect of the Mature Life Seen in the Life of Joseph

Scripture Reading: Gen. 41:39-44, 51-52; 45:5-8; 47:14-23; 50:15-21

I. According to spiritual experience, Jacob and Joseph are one person; Joseph represents the reigning aspect of the mature Israel, the constitution of Christ in Jacob's mature nature; as a mature saint constituted with Christ, the perfect One, Jacob reigned through Joseph—Gen. 41:39-44; Heb. 6:1a; Gal. 6:8; 5:22-23:

- A. The reigning aspect typified by Joseph is Christ constituted into our being—4:19.
- B. Joseph, a “master of dreams” (Gen. 37:19), dreamed that, according to God's view, His people are sheaves of wheat full of life and heavenly bodies full of light (vv. 5-11); Joseph's two dreams (vv. 7, 9), both from God, unveiled to him God's divine view concerning the nature, position, function, and goal of God's people on earth:
 1. We have to use the “divine telescope” to see through time and behold the New Jerusalem, where there is nothing but sheaves full of life and stars full of light; thus, the reigning aspect of the mature life never speaks negatively concerning the saints or the church—cf. 38:27-30; Matt. 7:1-5; 1 Pet. 3:8-9.
 2. Joseph's dreams controlled his life and directed his behavior; he behaved so excellently and marvelously because he was directed by the vision that he saw in his dreams (cf. Acts 26:19); his brothers vented their anger (Gen. 37:18-31) and indulged in their lust (38:15-18), but Joseph subdued his anger and conquered his lust (39:7-23), behaving as a sheaf full of life and conducting himself like a heavenly star shining in the darkness.
- C. Joseph's life under the heavenly vision was the life of the kingdom of the heavens described in Matthew 5—7; by living such a life, he was fully prepared to reign as a king; according to the constitution of the heavenly kingdom revealed in these chapters in Matthew, our anger must be subdued, and our lust must be conquered (5:21-32).
- D. The reigning aspect of the mature life is a life that always enjoys the presence of the Lord (Acts 7:9); wherever His presence is, there is authority, the ruling power (Gen. 39:2-5, 21-23):
 1. In the presence of the Lord, Joseph was prospered by Him; while Joseph was undergoing ill-treatment, he enjoyed the Lord's prosperity that came to him under the Lord's sovereignty.
 2. In the presence of the Lord, Joseph was favored with the Lord's blessing wherever he was; when Joseph enjoyed prosperity, he and those who were involved with him were blessed—vv. 4-5, 22-23.
- E. Although his own dreams were not yet fulfilled, Joseph had the faith and the boldness to interpret the dreams of his two companions in prison (40:8); eventually, Joseph was released from prison indirectly through his speaking by faith in interpreting the cupbearer's dream (41:9-13), and he was ushered to the throne directly through his speaking boldly in interpreting Pharaoh's dreams (vv. 14-46); both release and authority came to him through his speaking:
 1. Andrew Murray once said a word like this: the good minister of the Word should always minister more than he has experienced; this means that we should speak more according to the vision than according to the fulfillment of the vision.
 2. Even if our vision has not been fulfilled, we should still speak of it to others; the time will come when our vision will be fulfilled; Joseph's dreams were eventually fulfilled through his interpretation of the dream of the cupbearer.

3. We should not speak according to our feelings but according to the heavenly vision; we are visionaries, seers, of God's eternal economy, so we should speak according to the absoluteness of the truth of His economy—Acts 26:16-19.
- F. If we are living out Christ, we will bring either life or death wherever we are (2 Cor. 2:14-16); to the cupbearer, Joseph brought restoration; to the baker, he brought execution (Gen. 41:12-13).
- G. If we seek the Lord, He will put us into a “dungeon”; without the dungeon we cannot ascend to the throne; we must not be a “dungeon dropout”; we must stay in the dungeon until we graduate and receive the crown—Eph. 3:1; 4:1; James 1:12.

II. Joseph as a fruitful bough (Gen. 49:22) typifies Christ as the branch (Isa. 11:1-2) for the branching out of God through His believers as His branches (John 15:1, 5); in Genesis 49:22 the fountain signifies God, the source of fruitfulness (Psa. 36:9; Jer. 2:13), and the branches' running over the wall signifies that Christ's believers as His branches spread Christ over every restriction, magnifying Him in all circumstances (Phil. 1:20; 4:22; Philem. 10):

- A. In his receiving glory and gifts in his enthronement, Joseph typifies Christ, who received glory (Heb. 2:9) and gifts (Psa. 68:18; Acts 2:33) in His ascension (Gen. 41:42):
 1. The ring, the garments, and the gold chain portray the gifts that Christ received in His ascension to the heavens, which gifts He has passed on to the church—v. 42:
 - a. The signet ring signifies the Holy Spirit as a seal within and upon Christ's believers—Acts 2:33; Eph. 1:13; 4:30; cf. Luke 15:22.
 - b. The garments signify Christ as our objective righteousness for our justification before God (1 Cor. 1:30; cf. Psa. 45:9, 13; Luke 15:22) and as our subjective righteousness lived out of us that we may be qualified to participate in the marriage of the Lamb (Phil. 3:9; Psa. 45:14; Rev. 19:7-9).
 - c. The gold chain signifies the beauty of the Holy Spirit given for obedience expressed in submission (cf. Acts 5:32); a chained neck signifies a will that has been conquered and subdued to obey God's commandment (Gen. 41:42; cf. S. S. 1:10; Prov. 1:8-9).
 2. According to the sequence of spiritual experience, we first receive the sealing of the Spirit for salvation; then we receive the garment of righteousness and begin to live Christ (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:20-21a); in order for us to live Christ, our neck must be chained, our will must be conquered and subdued, by the Holy Spirit.
- B. After being resurrected from the prison of death and ushered into the position of ascension, Joseph married Asenath, who portrays the church taken out of the Gentile world during Christ's rejection by the children of Israel (Gen. 41:45); Joseph called the name of his firstborn Manasseh (meaning “making to forget”) and the name of his second Ephraim (meaning “twice fruitful”); Joseph declared, “God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's house,” and “God has made me [twice] fruitful in the land of my affliction” (vv. 51-52).

III. The record of Joseph's life is a revelation of the rulership of the Spirit, for the rulership of the Spirit is the reigning aspect of a mature saint; the rulership of the Spirit (a life of reigning in life, being under the restriction and limitation of the divine life in the reality of God's kingdom) is higher than any other aspect of the Spirit—Rom. 5:17, 21; 14:17-18; cf. 2 Cor. 3:17-18; 2 Tim. 4:22; Rev. 4:1-3:

- A. Although Joseph was full of human feelings and sentiments toward his brothers, he kept himself with all his feelings under the rulership of the Spirit; he dealt with his brothers soberly, wisely, and with discernment, disciplining them according to their

need in order to perfect them and build them up that they might be a collective people living together as God's testimony on earth; the life manifested in the story of Joseph is the resurrection life, the life of God—Gen. 42:9, 24; 43:30-31; 45:1-2, 24.

- B. Joseph's living under God's restriction, a portrait of the human living of Christ, manifested the maturity and perfection of the divine life and brought in God's kingdom—John 5:19, 30b; 7:16, 18; 14:10; Matt. 8:9-10.
- C. In Joseph's dealings with his brothers, we see that he lived a calm life, a sober life, and a discerning life with love for the brothers—a self-denying life as the practice of the kingdom life—Gen. 45:24; Matt. 16:24; 2 Chron. 1:10; Isa. 30:15a; Phil. 1:9; 1 Tim. 5:1-2; 1 Thes. 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thes. 1:3; Rom. 12:10; 1 John 4:9; Heb. 13:1.
- D. The most powerful person is the one who has the strength not to do what he is able to do—this is the real denial of the self and the genuine bearing of the cross—Matt. 16:24; cf. 26:53; 2 Cor. 2:12-16.
- E. Joseph's realization was that it was God who sent him to Egypt; in Genesis 50:20 he said to his brothers, "Even though you intended evil against me, God intended it for good" (45:5, 7; 50:19-21; cf. 41:51-52); this is the reality of Paul's word in Romans 8:28-29; Joseph received as from God all that his brothers had done to him, and he comforted those who had offended him (Gen. 45:5-8; 50:15-21); what grace, and what an excellent spirit, he had!

IV. Because Joseph suffered and denied himself, he gained the riches of the life supply (*Hymns*, #635); in order to receive food from him as a type of Christ, the people had to pay four kinds of prices: their money, their livestock, their land, and themselves—47:14-23; cf. Rev. 3:18:

- A. Money represents convenience, livestock signifies the means of living, and land represents resources; if we would receive the life supply from the Lord as the Dispenser, we must give Him our convenience, our means of livelihood, and our resources; the more we give Him, the more life supply we will receive from Him.
- B. Ultimately, in order to receive the best portion from the Lord, including food for satisfaction and seed to produce something for others (Gen. 47:23), we must hand ourselves, every part of our being, over to Him (Lev. 1:4).
- C. When we pay the highest price by handing over every part of our being to Him, we enjoy the best portion of the enjoyment of Christ.

V. The universal blessing on Joseph consummates in the New Jerusalem in the new heaven and new earth, in which everything will be new as a blessing to Christ and His believers—Gen. 49:25-26; Deut. 33:13-16; Rev. 21:5:

- A. Transformation is to be metabolically changed with the newness of the divine life, maturity is to be filled with the newness of the divine life that changes us, and blessing is the overflow of life; the ending of Jacob's life with Joseph was a life of blessing as the zenith of his shining—Prov. 4:18; Heb. 11:21; Gen. 47:7; 48:15-16.
- B. Only God is new; anything that is kept away from God is old, but anything that comes back to God is new (2 Cor. 5:17); to be renewed means to come back to God and have something of God put into us so that we are mingled with God and one with God for the Body life (4:16; Rom. 12:1-2).
- C. The secret of receiving God as our blessing of newness is to bring everything to God and let Him get into everything; the universal blessing on Joseph means that blessing is everywhere; our praises turn everything of the curse of the fall into a blessing—Eph. 5:20; 1 Thes. 5:16-18.