

Message Eight

**Joseph—
the Reigning Aspect of the Mature Life**

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 of 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. The reigning aspect of the mature life is a life that always enjoys the presence of the Lord; 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 (vv. 2-3, 23); 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.
 - C. 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.

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3. 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).
- D. 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—James 1:12; cf. Phil. 3:8.
- E. 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:
 1. The visions that Joseph saw not only controlled his life but also sustained his faith.
 2. Because Joseph was important and valuable, the time of his testing could not be shortened.
- F. 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

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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.

- G. 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 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 fruitful in the land of my affliction" (vv. 51-52).

II. 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—Gen. 42:9, 24; 43:30-31; 45:1-2, 24.
- B. Joseph denied himself and placed himself absolutely under God's sovereign leading, conducting himself wholly for the interest of God and His people.
- C. 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.
- D. 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.

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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.

- E. Joseph's sentiments, feelings, considerations, and preferences were absolutely under the rulership and control of the Spirit—Prov. 16:32.
- F. The life manifested in the story of Joseph is the resurrection life, the life of God; his sentiments were under the control of the resurrection life to meet the need of his brothers—John 11:25.
- G. Joseph is a living illustration of what is revealed in the New Testament; he was a self-denying person who had no self-interest, self-enjoyment, self-feeling, self-ambition, or self-goal; everything was for God and for God's people; Joseph's self-denial, his restriction under God's sovereign hand, was the key to the practice of the kingdom life.
- H. 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.
- I. Joseph's realization that it was God who sent him to Egypt (even though his brothers intended evil against him—Gen. 45:5, 7; 50:19-21; cf. 41:51-52) is the reality of Paul's word in Romans 8:28-29.
- J. Joseph did not need to forgive his brothers, because he did not blame them; he 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!

III. Because Joseph suffered and denied himself, he gained the riches of the life supply (*Hymns*, #635); in order to receive food from him, 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.

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- 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.