

The repetition in these chapters points to one of their purposes. Pharaoh's dream was given in two forms, because God had firmly decided what He would do. The same is true for Joseph. God had firmly decided the course which Joseph's life would take in order to preserve Israel. God's direction in the life of Joseph did not excuse Joseph from living properly and we see his character revealed throughout both chapters as well.

We do not have the knowledge concerning our own lives as is given here, but we can have the same assurance that God is with His children and we can make godly choices in living.

I. *Evidences of God's sovereign control leading to Joseph's rise to power*

1. *God placed someone from the inner court of Pharaoh into the confidence of Joseph.*

The cupbearer, who had immediate contact with Pharaoh, was placed in the same prison as Joseph, who was assigned to serve him. God gave the cupbearer and the baker dreams and the willingness to share them with Joseph.

2. *God gave Joseph the interpretation of these dreams.*

See especially 40:8 & 41:15-16.

3. *God programmed the timely "remembering" by the cupbearer.*

The interpretation of dreams proved true, but the cupbearer "forgot" Joseph until the right moment two years later at a time planned by God to raise Joseph to power.

4. *God gave Pharaoh two dreams or one dream in two forms and hindered anyone else from interpreting.*

God had revealed His plans to Pharaoh (v 25). He should not think this was of his own doing and the reader needed to see God's hand in what was going to happen. None of those who normally interpreted dreams even appeared to try. It was the perfect setup to introduce Joseph to Pharaoh as one with the wisdom of having interpreted dreams.

5. *God moved Pharaoh to select Joseph to administer the task he had advised.*

It should have appeared a wise and natural choice to select Joseph. But skepticism regarding the accuracy of the interpretation and prejudice against a foreigner and slave could have hindered it. But God clearly overruled and Joseph was appointed.

We are challenged to see God's hand in circumstances and the events around us. We may not even see God's reasons for what happens in this life. But He is in control.

II. *Evidence of Joseph's responsibility accompanying his rise to power*

1. *Joseph demonstrated an attitude of service to others.*

Apparently he willingly served the two officials in prison, showing sensitivity to their needs. Faithful in that "small" matter, he proved faithful in serving the country as prime minister.

2. *Joseph maintained his faith in God.*

Though 11 years had passed since his own dreams, Joseph did not seem to doubt God's communication through them as his lack of cynicism towards dreams show. He trusted God for the interpretation both in prison and before Pharaoh, and spoke with confidence about the future in both cases.

3. *Joseph was patient.*

We know that Joseph did not like his situation (40:14-15), but that is when patience is most shown. He did not grumble but lived godly as he waited.

4. *Joseph consistently honored God by attributing to Him the interpretation of dreams and the dreams themselves.*

He did this both with the cupbearer and baker (40:8) and with Pharaoh (41:16, 25, 28). He took no credit for interpreting the dreams but gave it to God.

5. *Joseph gave counsel without putting himself forward.*

Joseph recommended that a wise and discerning administrator be put in charge of food collection and distribution, but did not do so in a way to suggest himself.

The way in which Joseph rose to power brought glory to God, in the manner by which God brought Joseph to power and in the testimony of Joseph to God's working. Coincidence and luck cannot explain the big picture. It was God's hand. Joseph, who could not have seen the bigger picture, trusted God, as should we.