

Joseph – part 3

Joseph interprets the chief butler's and the chief baker's dreams
by Victor Torres

Last time we saw how the Lord made Joseph suffer in the hands of Potiphar after suffering in the hands of his brothers. But in all these sufferings, the Lord did not leave Joseph and even made him prosper in everything that he did. First, in the household of Potiphar. Joseph did so well that Potiphar made him in charge of everything.

Gen 39:4 (CEV) Potiphar liked Joseph and made him his personal assistant, putting him in charge of his house and all of his property.

Gen 39:5 Because of Joseph, the LORD began to bless Potiphar's family and fields.

Gen 39:6 Potiphar left everything up to Joseph, and with Joseph there, the only decision he had to make was what he wanted to eat...

After Joseph was thrown in jail because of Potiphar's wife's false accusation, the Lord made Joseph liked by the jailer so much that he put him in charge of the other prisoners and of everything that was done in the jail.

Gen 39:19 (CEV) Potiphar became very angry

Gen 39:20 and threw Joseph in the same prison where the king's prisoners were kept. While Joseph was in prison,

Gen 39:21 the LORD helped him and was good to him. He even made the jailer like Joseph so much that

Gen 39:22 he put him in charge of the other prisoners and of everything that was done in the jail.

Gen 39:23 The jailer did not worry about anything, because the LORD was with Joseph and made him successful in all that he did.

Today, we will take off from this point in the story.

Gen 40:1 (ESV) Some time after this, the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and his baker committed an offense against their lord the king of Egypt.

Gen 40:2 And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker,

Gen 40:3 and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph was confined.

Gen 40:4 (KJV) **And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them:** and they continued a season in ward.

So the king of Egypt has put two of his officers in prison because they had offended him. The jailer put Joseph in charge of these two also, as he has put him in charge of the other prisoners and of everything that was done in jail:

Gen 39:22 (CEV) he put him in charge of the other prisoners and of everything that was done in the jail.

Joseph's idea of being in charge is being of service and not bossing around the other prisoners. We see in Gen 40:4 that Joseph "served them". Joseph is once again being used as a symbol of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Mat 20:25 (CEV) But Jesus called the disciples together and said: You know that foreign rulers like to order their people around. And their great leaders have full power over everyone they rule.

Mat 20:26 **But don't act like them. If you want to be great, you must be the servant of all the others.**

Mat 20:27 And if you want to be first, you must be the slave of the rest.

Mat 20:28 **The Son of Man did not come to be a slave master, but a slave who will give his life to rescue many people.**

The Lord is training those He will put in charge of all the nations to be servants first, before He makes them kings and priests (teachers). This is not what we see in the false churches or even in the governments of this world. They have ranks and those who are outranked can never question their superiors, even if they are teaching the wrong thing.

Let's continue the story:

Gen 40:5 (ESV) And one night they both dreamed—the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison—each his own dream, and each dream with its own interpretation.

Gen 40:6 When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were troubled.

Gen 40:7 So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in custody in his master's house, "Why are your faces downcast today?"

Gen 40:8 They said to him, "We have had dreams, and there is no one to interpret them." And Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me."

The chief cupbearer and the chief baker were sad because no one could interpret their dreams. Notice that we are dealing with the chief cupbearer and the chief baker here, officers who obviously had men under their command before they were put in jail. Here Joseph continues to set a good example of how to be a good leader, by being a servant first and foremost. Joseph wants to continue to serve them by interpreting their dreams for them.

Gen 40:9 So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph and said to him, "In my dream there was a vine before me,

Gen 40:10 and on the vine there were three branches. As soon as it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and the clusters ripened into grapes.

Gen 40:11 (CEV) I held the king's cup and squeezed the grapes into it, then I gave the cup to the king."

Gen 40:12 Joseph said: This is the meaning of your dream. The three branches stand for three days,

Gen 40:13 and in three days the king will pardon you. He will make you his personal servant again, and you will serve him his wine, just as you used to do.

Gen 40:14 But when these good things happen, please don't forget to tell the king about me, so I can get out of this place.

Gen 40:15 (ESV) For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the pit."

So it's good news for the cupbearer or butler. His dream means after three days, the king will forgive him and he will be his chief butler again. Is there a spiritual lesson behind the butler's dream? Of course there is. The number three is a symbol of the process of judgment. The butler here is a symbol of our new man who is being judged first in this life. When we are judged, we are chastened or disciplined for the sins we have committed. But this discipline produces maturity in us, that's why we see the symbol of the cluster of ripened or mature grapes.

Joseph was able to interpret the chief butler's dream because he acknowledges that it is the Lord who gives the right interpretation of these dreams. "Do not interpretations belong to God?" is the key phrase here. Joseph, as a symbol of the elect, is given the wisdom to see the spiritual meaning behind the physical

things created by God.

Rom 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

We have seen how this method is applied throughout the stories we have studied so far. We have seen how the physical relationship of Adam and Eve, of a husband and a wife is used as a symbol of the relationship between God the Father and His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. It shows us that Christ is under God and that they have one mind. We have seen how physical conditions like Esau's reddish color is used as symbol of being worldly or materialistic. Isaac's blindness was used as a symbol of the world's blindness to Gods truth. Animals such as sheep, goats and birds, and even numbers and names are used by God to hide spiritual lessons for us to find, only if He wants us to see them.

Psa 25:14 (KJV) The secret of the LORD *is* with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.

Psa 25:14 (ERV) The LORD tells his secrets to his followers. He teaches them about his agreement.

When the chief baker heard this good news for the chief butler, he was encouraged to tell Joseph his dream.

Gen 40:16 (KJV) When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also *was* in my dream, and, behold, *I had* three white baskets on my head:

Gen 40:17 And in the uppermost basket *there was* of all manner of bakemeats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head.

Gen 40:18 And Joseph answered and said, This *is* the interpretation thereof: The three baskets *are* three days:

Gen 40:19 Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.

It's not the same result for the chief baker. Joseph said that in three days he will suffer a death sentence. The baker of course is a symbol of our old man, our old self who is doomed. This means we must give up our old way of life. Since the chief baker is a symbol of our old man, that means the symbols in his dreams have a negative meaning. The bakemeats on the uppermost basket in his head is a symbol of our worldly thoughts and worldly desires. These worldly thoughts are given through evil spirits symbolized by the birds.

Gen 40:20 (KJV) And it came to pass the third day, *which was* Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants.

This is the first mention of a birthday celebration in the Bible. You'll notice that it is the pharaoh of Egypt, a person who doesn't believe in God who is celebrating his birthday. We have already studied so many people chosen by God: Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and now we are studying Joseph. Along the way, we have seen their ages mentioned in their stories but nowhere can we find that they celebrated their birthdays. This is because God never taught them to celebrate their birthdays. This is just one of the traditions of this world that our old man, our old self will have to give up.

Gen 40:21 (KJV) And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand:

Gen 40:22 But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them.

Gen 40:23 **Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgat him.**

There is a part of our life that we are like the chief butler. We are ungrateful and we forget to thank God for all the blessings we receive from Him. It will be two full years before the chief butler would remember Joseph. Let's read ahead and Lord willing, we will see more spiritual lessons behind this fascinating story of Joseph.

Gen 41:1 (KJV) Two years later the king of Egypt dreamed he was standing beside the Nile River.

Gen 41:2 Suddenly, seven fat, healthy cows came up from the river and started eating grass along the bank.

Gen 41:3 Then seven ugly, skinny cows came up out of the river and

Gen 41:4 ate the fat, healthy cows. When this happened, the king woke up.

Gen 41:5 The king went back to sleep and had another dream. This time seven full heads of grain were growing on a single stalk.

Gen 41:6 Later, seven other heads of grain appeared, but they were thin and scorched by the east wind.

Gen 41:7 The thin heads of grain swallowed the seven full heads. Again the king woke up, and it had only been a dream.

Gen 41:8 The next morning the king was upset. So he called in his magicians and wise men and told them what he had dreamed. None of them could tell him what the dreams meant.

Gen 41:9 The king's personal servant said: Now I remember what I was supposed to do.

Gen 41:10 When you were angry with me and your chief cook, you threw us both in jail in the house of the captain of the guard.

Gen 41:11 One night we both had dreams, and each dream had a different meaning.

Gen 41:12 A young Hebrew, who was a servant of the captain of the guard, was there with us at the time. When we told him our dreams, he explained what each of them meant,

Gen 41:13 and everything happened just as he said it would. I got my job back, and the cook was put to death.

Gen 41:14 The king sent for Joseph, who was quickly brought out of jail. He shaved,