

SEEMINGLY FORGOTTEN | GENESIS 40 | PASTOR MARK BOFILL | 4/14/2024

I. Joseph's Developments (1-4) | II. Joseph's Discovery (5-8) | III. Joseph's Dream Analysis (9-19) | IV. Joseph's Definitude (20-23)

INTRO: In our last study we learned that Joseph was a man of integrity when confronted with temptation from Potiphar's wife. Because He did not want to sin against God, **HE FLED the scene and passed the test!** – But even though He did what was righteous in God's eyes (Gen 39:19-20), he was still **WRONGLY ACCUSED** and thrown into an Egyptian prison! – As we will learn, **Joseph would actually spend 13 years of his life under Potiphar's roof!** (*was dealt bad cards*)

Let's face it folks... LIFE CAN SEEMINGLY BE UNFAIR AT TIMES! – We too can sometimes feel alone, wondering if God knows what we're going through, doubting whether He cares about us or not! – A question we might ask is, **Q: WHY does God even allow His people to go through Difficulty and Hardship?** – A simple answer can be found in (Isa 55:9), **"God's ways are much higher than our ways"** – You see... **God desires to do a work IN US, for His greater purposes!** In order to do so, **He must first work ON US.** – This is exactly what takes place in Genesis Ch. 40! Joseph begins to excel in his prison ministry, but once again ends of **SEEMINGLY FORGOTTEN.**

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I. JOSEPH'S DEVELOPMENTS (1-4) – Even in prison (39:23), Joseph prospered! – He was granted **responsibility** and **authority** from the prison keeper. **Unbeknownst to him, these new circumstances** were **orchestrated by God, so as Test and Train Joseph.** *Behind it all we see God's...*

A. Divine Providence (1-4a) – The chapter opens with the mention **the king being offended by his chief butler and baker (1)**. It is not clear WHY he was angry with them (2), but it is possible that **one of them may have been involved with an attempt to poison Pharaoh.**

- **The Butler** was responsible for everything the king drank, and **the Baker** was responsible for Pharaoh's food.
- **The Prison** they were confined to happened to be the same prison that Joseph had become keeper of (3), of which we are told in (4a) that **Joseph was charge with caring for these two officers** until their time of sentencing. (*No mention of how long the wait*)
- **These Circumstances** were used by God to arrange for Joseph **to get to know these two high officials**. What better way than by serving them! *But notice first the...*

B. Disposition of Joseph (4b) – Remember... **Joseph was wrongly accused**, his hopes were dashed, and he was literally in a pit, **but there was no sign of complaint!** – **Joseph's shining character once again stands out here!** In fact, we are told that **Joseph served them!** – And he did so with the right heart and attitude: **(Ecc 9:10) "whatever you hand finds to do, do it with all you might!"** (cf. Col 3:23) – Jesus Christ Himself would later teach that **Greatness comes through Servanthood, and Leadership comes through becoming a Servant of All!** (Matt 23:11) – **Serving God by serving others is what God desires in all of us!** (*Be Selfless – Not Self-Absorbed!*)

- Not only was **God teaching Joseph the importance of servitude**, but these developments would lead to a greater awareness of what God was **trying to teach Joseph for future usefulness!** (*How's your disposition when you are seemingly in "the pits?" – Serving others helps change the circumstances, so that you are not focused on you! – So many times you are the problem!*)

Now we see...

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II. JOSEPH'S DISCOVERY (5-8) – While serving others faithfully, God determined that it was now time for Joseph to exercise his understanding of DREAMS. (*Not his own but interpreting others!*)

A. Dreams of the Officers (5) – Joseph soon discovered that **each of the officers had a distinct dream, *each man's dream with its own interpretation***. – Through this, he earned that God can also give dreams to those who don't know Him, to further His divine purposes!

B. Downcast Countenance (6-7) – *In the morning Joseph noticed that they both were sad.* – The word: **Sad: "za' aph"** means **sick looking, emaciated**, and it has the root **to be furious and angry**, as the result of frustration (**Dan 1:10; 1Kings 20:43; 21:4**). – **Joseph's awareness reveals that he was Discerning and Caring about others.** (*A much different Joseph than the 17-year-old!*)

- When we care enough to look at one's countenance, we too can learn to care for others!

C. Divine Interpretation (8) – When Joseph realized that these guys were "*obviously affected by their dreams,*" he addressed them in an attempt to comfort their troubled hearts.

- Joseph could have said... **don't talk to me about dreams!** But he genuinely wanted to help them. His statement also reveals that he also desired to give God the credit!
- Joseph had his own dreams as a youth (37:5-10), but now came to understand that **the correct interpretation of dreams, ONLY came from the Lord!** – (**Amos 3:7**) says, Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. – In (**Num 12:6**) God says, "Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream." – Joseph was being conditioned to become one of the "**pioneer interpreters**" of dreams. – Here, he learned to ask God for proper interpretation! – Likewise, the prophet Daniel would go on to claim that **ONLY God is the Interpreter Of Dreams (tt. Dan 2:27-30).** – (*Dreams are not for our own interpretation...If you have a significant dream, ASK GOD FOR its meaning! Not a soothsayer, medium, etc.*)
- Regarding this matter, **A. Maclaren** said "*Dreams are the usual method of divine communication in Genesis and belong to a certain stage in the process of revelation. The friend of God, who is in touch with Him, can interpret these. (Psalm 25:14a), 'The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him,' and it is still true that they who live close by God have insight into His purposes.*"

P/A – The more that Joseph yielded to God in every circumstance, the more he **DISCOVERED God's ways!** – He began as **a servant in a prison**, who would one day become **the Prime Minister of all Egypt**. – God is always looking for such people, For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. (2 Chron 16:9) (*Knowing God's word generally the revelation you need!*)

III. JOSEPH'S DREAM ANALYSIS (9-19) – Because Joseph offered...the butler shared first...

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A. The Butler's Dream (9-13) – Notice that the butler's dream was consistent with his duty a cupbearer to the king (9-10). Also notice **the process of squeezing grapes**, which eliminated secret tampering. He shared the dream details without any hesitancy! (*sig. a clear conscience*)

- **In (v.11-12) Joseph immediately interprets!** – ...*showing great confidence as he explains the meaning of the butler's dream.* – He didn't guess or use generalizations because *Joseph received the true interpretation directly from the Lord!* – He specifically **"zeroed in"** on the **"three branches,"** which were days in which all this would come to pass! – **Putting a time frame on the fulfilment!** (*Pretty bold*) – **His dreams served as a sign from God** assuring that he would be completely restored to his office. (*i.e., His head lifted up - A favorable interpretation*)

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B. Joseph's Demand (14-15) – Because the butler would soon be restored to his office, Joseph knew that he had access to the king's ear, so *he asks the butler to return the favor by mentioning him to Pharaoh.* His demand... **"Get me out of this house."** Not a complaint, just a plea for freedom because he was wrongfully sold and unjustly committed to prison. (*Hope in man!*)

Next, we learn of the...

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C. The Baker's Dream (16-19) – Insight as to **WHY the baker shared his dream** is based on the favorable interpretation of the butler's dream (16a). Since **his dream contained certain similarities** to the butler's dream, *he hoped for a favorable interpretation also...* so he told his dream (16b-17). *Notice also that his dream was also closely associated with his official work!*

- **In (v.18-19) Joseph immediately interprets!** – He reveals that the **"three baskets,"** of the baker's dream were **also three days,** of which all this would come to pass! – **He goes on to reveal a different meaning when 'mentioning his head.'** Whereas the butler's head was to be **"lifted up" (13),** the baker's head was to be **"lifted off!" (18).** – **Note: Egyptians practiced beheading and impalement.** *Both of which align with the fate of the baker, of whom the birds would eat his flesh, as he hung on a tree outside the palace, for all to be warned!*

P/A – Joseph's delivery of this shocking interpretation was **NOT** minimized in any way. **He simply delivered God's mail!** **A true mark of a godly messenger!** – Boice says, **"How many there are who are willing to preach the cupbearer's sermon but are unwilling to preach the baker's sermon!"** – Boice (*Are you able to communicate God's Truth in any situation?*) target

And finally, we learn of...

IV. JOSEPH'S DEFINITUDE (20-23) – Now the definite timestamp and precision that Joseph placed on each man's dream **was to be known!** – On a side note, it's good to know that **God** also provides warnings about dreams within scripture (**Deut. 13:1-5; Jer. 23:16-17**).

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A. Fulfilled by Pharaoh (20-22) – **The Outcomes were exactly as Joseph had predicted!** **Pharaoh's B-day** happened to be **on the third day,** of which he made a feast for all his servants. This is when Pharaoh chose to *lift up the head of the chief butler* AND *the chief baker (20).* – **The chief butler** was restored to his butlership again, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand (21), But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them (22).

After all that, Joseph finds himself... READ

B. Forgotten Again! (23) – **For Joseph, the Outcome was not exactly as he preferred!** – He thought that showing the butler kindness might mean his release from prison, **but it was not to be!** – **The chief butler actually FORGOT JOSEPH,** and two years would pass until he even remembered Joseph (41:9).

- The lesson Joseph learned here was **never to look to man for deliverance!** – **(Psalm 118:8), *It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man!***
- Even though Joseph was forgotten by his family, by Potiphar, and NOW by the Butler, **there is NO RECORD of him feeling as if God had Seemingly Forgotten him**, which is consistent with what the Bible mentions of God’s involvement with His people:
 - **(I Sam 12:22), *“For the Lord will not forsake His people, for His great name’s sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you, His people.”***
 - **(Deut 31:8), *“And the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you; He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed.”***
 - **(Heb 13:5) *“Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”***
- **God knew that Joseph’s hour had not yet come!** He had a more important purpose than the urgent need to release Joseph. – In order to become the **Future Prime Minister of Egypt**, **Joseph still had to learn Patience**, which would only be learned by Affliction and Disappointment!

Conclusion: *When it seems like you’re forgotten, you’re not! God is working all things together for your good and his glory (Rom 8:28).* – **All in God’s timing...** Abraham had to wait for a son, Moses waited 80 years to deliver God’s people, David had to wait until the death of Saul, and Daniel till the executive command to kill all the wise men came.

- ***“Peace, I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John 14:27)***