

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (September 10, 2023)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

As we continue in our study of the first book of the Bible, the book of Genesis, we encounter the uncomfortable, raw, troubled lives, of God's people. Most assumed then that being chosen by God would bring them a life of comfort, success, and uninterrupted happiness. Many believe that today. Instead (and my own personal experience confirms this) trouble, family conflict, and injustice, are always in the mix. There is good news with the bad news. The stories in the Bible, the lives of God's people, our lives today ... declare there is something, Someone, more significant, more powerful, more dependable, with us, even in the worst of times. That Someone finds us in the darkness and bring us through to the other side. Tomorrow, 9/11 is one of those defining dark times. He finds us there too.

Dark Times (Genesis 39:20 – 40:23)

²⁰ And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison. ²¹ But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. ²² And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. ²³ The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the Lord was with him. And whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed.

^{40:1} Some time after this, the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and his baker committed an offense against their lord the king of Egypt. ² And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, ³ and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison where Joseph was confined. ⁴ The captain of the guard appointed Joseph to be with them, and he attended them. They continued for some time in custody.

⁵ 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. ⁶ When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were troubled. ⁷ So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in custody in his master's house, 'Why are your faces downcast today?' 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.'

⁹ So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph and said to him, 'In my dream there was a vine before me, ¹⁰ and on the vine there were three branches. As soon as it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and the clusters ripened into grapes. ¹¹ Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand.' ¹² Then Joseph said to him, 'This is its interpretation: the three branches are three days. ¹³ In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office, and you shall place Pharaoh's cup in his hand as formerly, when you were his cupbearer. ¹⁴ Only remember me, when it is well

with you, and please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house. ¹⁵ 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.'

¹⁶ When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was favorable, he said to Joseph, 'I also had a dream: there were three cake baskets on my head, ¹⁷ and in the uppermost basket there were all sorts of baked food for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating it out of the basket on my head.' ¹⁸ And Joseph answered and said, 'This is its interpretation: the three baskets are three days. ¹⁹ In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head — from you! — and hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat the flesh from you.'

²⁰ On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast for all his servants and lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants. ²¹ He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. ²² But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. ²³ Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.'"

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. What does this passage tell us about Joseph's life and faith?
2. How did Joseph do his job while in Potiphar's house? In jail?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

3. If Joseph tried to do what was right and still suffered what does it mean, "the Lord was with Joseph"?
4. What does "Do not interpretations belong to God" mean? v.8

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

5. Has God spoken to you? If yes, how does God speak to you? Dreams? Prayers? Bible? The voice of others? Explain.
6. What do you think would have happened if Joseph had given in to the request of Potiphar's wife?
7. Share a time when you faced a genuine temptation and you resisted and did what you knew to be right. Was it worth it?
8. What does your experience tell you about the consequences of compromising, giving in to temptation? Is giving in worth it?
9. How has God worked in your life during difficult, unjust, times?
10. What's one temptation you are facing and you need to resist? What would be the consequences of resisting? Of giving in?

As you spend time praying remember that prayer is meant to be the most natural part of your day. Prayer is a conversation: talking to God and listening to God. Ask God to help you resist temptation and do what is right. Ask God to help you trust Him, no matter the circumstance you are in. God loves you, and He will not leave you.