

Joseph's Slavery Continues in Jail

Genesis 39:20 - 40:23

Bible Memory Verse

Genesis 39:20-21 NIV

But while Joseph was there in prison, the Lord was with him.

Bible Story

Joseph just cannot catch a break! His brothers threw him in a well and sold him as a slave, was elevated to “head” slave only to be demoted to bottom-of-the-totem-pole-prisoner after a completely false accusation was leveled against him. Could Joseph’s life get any worse?!

“But while Joseph was there in the prison, the Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph’s care, because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did” (Genesis 39:20-23).

This seems to be a theme in Joseph’s life. He gets cut down to the lowest of the lows, then he gets raised up to the highest of the highs. And the Lord is with him. Powerful words. So Joseph is in charge of the jail. He’s the “head” slave again!

Some time later, the king of Egypt, Pharaoh, gets mad at his chief baker and cupbearer. For some reason they upset him enough that he has them thrown in prison, the very prison that Joseph is in charge of. After a while these two men “had a dream the same night, and

each dream had a meaning of its own" (Genesis 40:5). The next morning the former cupbearer and chief baker looked dejected. Joseph asked them what was wrong.

"We both had dreams,' they answered, 'but there is no one to interpret them.' Then Joseph said to them, 'Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams'" (Genesis 40:8).

So the cupbearer told Joseph his dream about a vine that had three branches and when it budded, it blossomed, and its clusters ripened into grapes, and I squeezed some of the ripened grapes into Pharaoh's cup and handed it to him. Joseph then told the former cupbearer that the branches were three days, which would be the amount of time it would take for Pharaoh to restore the man to his former position of honor.

Seeing the favorable interpretation the cupbearer received, the chief baker told Joseph his dream. "On my head were three baskets of bread. In the top basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head" (Genesis 40:16-17). So Joseph told the chief baker the interpretation of his dream: "The three baskets are three days. Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat away your flesh" (Genesis 40:18-19).

And so, three days later, Pharaoh lifted the heads of the two men, the cupbearer's head to his former position, squeezing grapes into Pharaoh's cup, and the chief baker's head was hung, just like what Joseph said would happen. Joseph had asked the cupbearer to remember him and ask Pharaoh to release him from prison because he had done nothing wrong. The cupbearer, however, forgot about Joseph.

Until...

Life Application

What kind of dreams do you have? Are they pleasant dreams? Scary dreams? Weird dreams?

All of us have dreams of some kind or another. And some of our dreams might mean something, while others may not. I think a good rule is: if there is someone who can interpret the dream, then it probably has meaning. If not, well, keep the good ones, dismiss the bad ones, and smile at the weird ones.

Review Questions

1. Where was Joseph at the beginning and end of this story? In prison.
2. How did God take care of Joseph while in prison? The Lord God was with him (presence) and gave him success in everything he did.
3. What did the prison warden do with Joseph? He put Joseph in charge of the whole prison because he was extremely trustworthy and responsible.
4. What two chiefs got thrown into prison by Pharaoh? Chief Baker and Chief Cupbearer
5. What did each of the chiefs have one night? Dreams.
6. Who interpreted the dreams for the chiefs? Joseph.
7. Which chief had a good interpretation? The Chief Cupbearer.
8. Which chief had a bad interpretation? The Chief Baker.
9. Did Joseph's interpretation of the two dreams come true? Yes.
10. Did the Chief Cupbearer remember Joseph? Nope. He forgot.

Coloring Sheet

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Joseph's Slavery @ Jail