

Into the Dungeon

Genesis Chapter Forty



~ Our Spiritual Safari landed us in prison in our last report where we left Joseph languishing. He hasn't done anything wrong, and he hasn't broken any laws – but, here he is, in prison. Joseph has been framed by his master's wife's perjury which she committed out of jealousy. That accusation alone was enough for Joseph to be locked away forever – or worse. Unfortunately, we're not going anywhere fast in our safari now; and we're in for a huge disappointment by the end of this chapter. Now, we previously said that there were more similarities between the life of Joseph and that of the Lord Jesus than anyone else in Scripture. We made a few comparisons several reports ago - but let's look at a few more: Joseph and Jesus were both sent to their brethren. Remember, Jacob sent Joseph out to find his brothers who were out at Shechem tending sheep. Jesus said, "I have been sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Both Joseph and Jesus were hated by their brethren without cause. Both Joseph and Jesus were sold by their brethren, and both were sold for silver. The brethren plotted to kill both. Jesus came unto His own but His own received Him not. Joseph was put into a living death of Egyptian slavery and the Lord Jesus was crucified. They were both sent to seek their brethren and they were both sent to do the will of God. There are many others, too; but that should nail down our thinking – it does for me! The parallels are indeed striking; and a more thorough study of them should be made.

So, we ended our previous report with a question about Joseph's incarceration; and we weren't quite sure if it was necessary - or if it was Gods plan. We also saw how Potiphar believed his wife's false accusations; and we came to the conclusion that Potiphar had an awful wife. I wouldn't want to be married to her. Strangely, all of what is happening is working to Joseph's advantage. The will of God is being accomplished in Joseph's life in spite of the problems and in spite of being kept in prison. Well, along with

God's purpose comes this butler to the prison. Now, suppose the butler had done what he said he would do and had a talk with Pharaoh when he was released. Pharaoh would have let Joseph out, and by the time Pharaoh needed his dream interpreted, Joseph would have been more than halfway back to Canaan. If God hadn't chained Joseph to the wall then Joseph wouldn't have been around when God needed him - which would mean that Joseph would be out of the will of God. That's how God works to keep us in His will sometimes, friends: chained to a wall. Make a note....

1 And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt.

2 And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers.

3 And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound.

~ This reveals the arbitrary, petty and dictatorial, whimsical and cruel policy of dealing with his subjects that Pharaoh of Egypt employed. It's on a complete whim that Pharaoh throws these men in prison. The baker probably had a cake that fell and wasn't ready in time for the big party. The butler probably spilled some expensive wine on an even more expensive Persian rug in the palace. Who knows? Apparently, they both were punished for something a subordinate did that must have been rather minor; but, either way, here are the three of them together - and it's no accident. Joseph's abilities are definitely recognized now, and Scripture says a man's gift makes room for him. This is all true for Joseph. He is not some broken victim. Joseph knows God is definitely moving in his life for His glory. Most of us would give up on life if we were thrown into an ancient Egyptian prison dungeon and chained to the wall as the result of perjury; but Joseph doesn't give up. That's just not the way Joseph does things....

4 And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward.

5 And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison.

6 And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad.

7 And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to day?

8 And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you.

~ This is an example of giving God the glory from the beginning BEFORE we attempt to spiritually help another person. You can't just ask God to stand back and make sure everything happens the way you prophesy it to; and the only way to make sure we aren't found guilty of doing that is to acknowledge God from before the place we start serving Him. Give God the glory – FIRST! How do we do that? Well, studying your Bible to show yourself approved is a good starting place. I wish Christians today understood that anything we do must bring glory to God and not ourselves; and if you're not living and giving sound doctrine then you're not glorifying Christ. That may be the number two problem in the church today. It's certainly one of the reasons many of us are not blessed more than we are. When we do receive a blessing we take it for granted - as if God owed it to us anyways. Very few of us give God the proper glory in our lives - as in, putting the things of Christ first – but we ought to - Joseph did....

9 And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me;

10 And in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes:

11 And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.

12 And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days:

13 Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler.

~ We hear a lot about dreams today; but we will not find God speaking to our hearts or revealing Himself to us in dreams today because the canons of Scripture are closed, my beloved. We don't need dreams for revelation when we have a Bible. God did speak to these men in prison in Egypt in a dream; but He did it that way because they didn't have a Bible. Further, when God DID speak in dreams, He spoke in a language that a Godly man could easily understand. If the butler and the baker believed God they would have known the answers to their own questions! Friends, this is SO important! A butler would understand serving wine because that's what he did in the palace. This is where we see the human Joseph. He trusts God but he places at least some hope in this man to not forget him. It's only natural to do that and there's nothing wrong with it; but it's still an interesting observation. Remember that the next time someone is counting on you for something. It may not mean anything to you - but it may mean everything in the world to them....

14 But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house:

15 For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon.

16 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:

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.

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

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.

20 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.

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

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

23 Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgat him.

~ Joseph is in a bad place and that's where we are going to have to leave him in this leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God. He's in prison and forgotten about. I'm sure the butler never thought twice about Joseph after being released. Joseph's one glimmer of hope has completely faded now. Joseph had to be discouraged. He doesn't know the details of what's happening behind the scenes; but Joseph is right where God wants him! That would be difficult for anyone to accept; and many people today do not like the place that God has them in. They usually become angry with the Lord; but Joseph was faithful to Potiphar; faithful to the prison keeper and he will be faithful to Pharaoh when he gets out of prison – because he is living faithfully to the True and Living God of his fathers. Yet, he is in prison for a crime he did not commit - but that prison is where God wants him right now! The only one that doesn't know all of this was Joseph! If you are a true believer then you are going to be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ under any and all circumstances. You can just write that down.

The single most profound societal loss we are experiencing today in this electronic age of everyone being “connected” is that very few people have someone upon whom they can depend. Technological advancements have utterly isolated us as individuals. Partially as a result, very few people are faithful these days. Most view marriage as an agreement that is terminable and contingent upon any number of whims. We need to thank God for the people in our lives who are faithful, my beloved. Joseph gave God the glory because God was faithful; but we have to leave Joseph now in the dark dungeon, all alone and chained to a damp wall.

The sun is going down again fast, and Joseph is thinking about his family, home, his life back with Jacob his dad. I think he’s hungry, wondering why his brothers would have done this to him in the first place - and now it’s going to be another long night of tears and heartaches. God hasn’t forgotten Joseph tonight, though. God hasn’t forgotten you, either my friend. Wherever you are right now and whatever reason is making you wonder if God really cares – His Word is here to tell you – He cares! He is moving in your life. All things work together for good to those who are in the Lord Jesus Christ and kept for His purpose. Weeping endureth for a night but joy cometh in the morning. How wonderful God really is! ~

