

GENESIS 40 The Butler and the Baker

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.

The Pharaoh (king) was furious against two of his officers. Here again we have officers, people who answer to the Pharaoh and no other. They are both considered chiefs in their positions. One is the chief of the butlers. This is a position responsible for the safety of the Pharaoh, in every he drinks. The butler, commonly known as the cup bearer, is responsible for being sure the Pharaoh does not drink anything that will harm him. If the Pharaoh gets ill or is poisoned from something the Pharaoh drinks, it is the chief butler's responsibility. Likewise, if the Pharaoh consumes anything that causes him to be ill or poisoned, the chief cook over the kitchen that supplies the food is responsible.

The Pharaoh is in a position where there are many who would like to see him dead or at least cause him to be replaced. Something happened, involving food or drink, that made the Pharaoh furious. One of these two persons, the butler or the cook, was responsible. If they knew which one, they would have been put to death. Since they didn't know who had committed the offense, both were thrown into prison. While in prison, there was an investigation.

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

God has placed Joseph in just the right position. Joseph wasn't a man who took authority to his head and became cruel. Joseph did the best job he could for his master. Those under the control of Joseph found him to be very fair. The bible says Joseph served them. Joseph didn't have problems with the inmates, because they considered him fair. If they had to be in prison, there was no other man they desired to be their overseer, than the humble man Joseph.

This was the Bastoy prison of their day.

Bastøy Prison (Norwegian: Bastøy fengsel) is a minimum-security prison on Bastøy Island, Norway. The (1 sq mi) island and hosts 115 inmates and leads a staff of 69 prison employees. Of this staff, only five employees remain on the island overnight. Reoffending rates have been reported at 16%, compared to a European average of around 70%. Inmates are housed in wooden cottages and work the prison farm. During their free time, inmates have access to horseback riding, fishing, tennis, and cross-country skiing. Wikipedia

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.

It was not uncommon for people of the time to associate dreams with future events, soon to occur. In Egypt, as in many nations, there were many persons who interpreted dreams. Many studied the art of dream interpretation. The Butler and the Cook each had a dream they felt was important, but did not have access to someone who was employed to interpret dreams.

And Joseph said unto them, [Do] not interpretations [belong] to God? tell me [them], I pray you.

Joseph had some experience interpreting dreams. He had told his family about some dreams. He interpreted his dreams to indicate they would one day bow to him. He believed God had given him the interpretation of his dream and he believed it to be true. Joseph reasoned with them that the interpretation of dreams belonged to God. He requested he be given the chance to interpret their dreams.

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.

To me, there could be many interpretations of each symbol found in the dream. Most interpretations would be wrong. God knew the interpretation of the dreams. He was the one that gave them the dream. This was just one more cog, in the overall plan of Joseph's life, even though Joseph couldn't see it.

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.

Joseph interprets the dream.

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.

Joseph interpreted the Butlers dream to show he was in prison for something he didn't do and this was to be corrected. Joseph then ask the Butler to put in a good word for him, because he also had done nothing wrong, to be in prison.

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.

The baker wasn't inclined to give the detail of his dream. One of the two men had done something wrong to the Pharaoh. It appears it wasn't the butler. The baker may have had some genuine concerns about being in the prison. He saw the interpretation was so good for the butler, maybe things would go well for him. He tells Joseph his dream.

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.

What ever had happened to the Pharaoh, was caused by the food, the baker had given him. The baker was to be hanged. At this point, neither man knew if Joseph was correct in his interpretation of the dreams. The butler hoped he was and the baker hoped Joseph was wrong. If Joseph was correct, they would know in a few days.

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:

Pharaoh had a birthday coming soon. There was a plan to have a feast and have all his servants attend. This would include all his officers, he held to be loyal and their servants they depended on. The lesson Pharaoh wished to show was if you were loyal to him, you would be rewarded, just like the chief butler.

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

If you were not loyal there was another alternative. The Pharaoh didn't need to explain anything. He lifted up the head of the baker and drew attention to him. The executioner and guards grabbed the chief cook and hanged him. Everyone who served the Pharaoh, knew what the lesson meant. Pharaoh rewards loyalty, but disloyalty would be dealt with severely and quickly. One reason God put this story in the bible is to show us that Joseph interpreted the dreams one hundred percent accurate. That accuracy can only come from God.

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

The butler was so excited and focused on his good fortune, he forgot about Joseph.