

GENESIS 40

Yahweh with Joseph in Prison

30:19 Now when [Joseph's] master (אָדוֹן) [Potiphar] heard the words of his wife that she spoke to him saying:

This is what your slave (עֶבֶד) did to me!

his anger (אָר) burned.¹ 20 So Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the prisoners of the king (מַלְאָךְ)² were confined, and he was there in the prison. 21 But Yahweh (יהוה) was with Joseph, extended loyal love (חֶסֶד) to him, and gave him grace (חַן) in the sight of the chief of the prison (שַׂר־בַּיִת־הַסֵּוֹאֵר). 22 The chief of the prison committed to Joseph's charge all the prisoners (הַאֲסוּרִים) who were in the prison so that whatever was done there, he was responsible for it. 23 The chief of the prison did not look after anything under Joseph's charge because Yahweh (יהוה) was with him. And whatever he did, Yahweh (יהוה) made successful (צָלַח).

Meanings Belong to God

40:1 Then it came about after these things,³ the cupbearer (מִשְׁקָה) and the baker (אֹפֶן) for the king of Egypt wronged (הָטָא) their lord (אָדוֹן), the king of Egypt. 2 Pharaoh was furious with his two⁴ officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker. 3 So he put them in confinement in the house of the captain of the royal guard (שַׂר־הַטַּבָּחִים),⁵ in the prison, the place where Joseph was imprisoned. 4 The captain of the royal guard (שַׂר־הַטַּבָּחִים)⁶ put Joseph in charge of them, and he served (שָׂרַת)⁷ them. And they were under guard (מִשְׁמָר) for some time.

5 Then the cupbearer and the baker for the king of Egypt, who were confined in prison, both had a dream (חֲלֹמִים)⁸ the same night, each man with his dream, and each dream with its

¹ Potiphar was likely more angry with his wife than with Joseph, for Joseph was not sentenced to death.

² Joseph should have received the death penalty. Instead he is confined with the king's prisoners. **Is 53:9** [Messiah's] grave was assigned with wicked men, yet he was with a rich man in his death, because he had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in his mouth.

³ Joseph was twenty-eight years old (K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, vol. 1B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005), 746), and the total period of his slavery and imprisonment was about thirteen years (Ge 37:2; 41:46)(Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, vol. 2, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1998), 381).

⁴ **Lk 23:32** 32 Two others also, who were criminals, were being led away to be put to death with [Jesus].

⁵ **Ge 37:36** 36 The Midianites sold [Joseph] in Egypt to Potiphar, Pharaoh's officer, the captain of the royal guard (שַׂר־הַטַּבָּחִים).

⁶ "The prison governor (40:21–23) must have been subordinate to the captain of the guard, who had put Joseph in prison (40:20)." Wenham, *WBC*, 2:382.

⁷ **Lk 22:27** 27 I [Jesus] am among you as the one who serves.

⁸ **Ge 37:5** 5 Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. **Ge 41:1** 1 It happened at the end of two full years that Pharaoh had a dream....

meaning (פְּתָרוֹן). 6 When Joseph came to them in the morning and observed them, look, they were looking poor (זָעַף).⁹ 7 He asked Pharaoh's officials who were with him in custody in the house of his lord:

Why do your faces look poorly today?¹⁰

8 So they said to him:

We have had a dream, and there is no one to explain (פִּתְרָה) it.

Then Joseph said to them:

Do not meanings (פְּתָרוֹן) belong to God (אֱלֹהִים)?¹¹ Tell it to me, please.

9 So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph and said to him:

In my dream, look, there was a vine in front of me, 10 and on the vine three branches. And as it was budding, its blossoms came out. Its clusters produced ripe grapes. 11 Now Pharaoh's cup was in my hand. So I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup, and put the cup into Pharaoh's hand.¹²

12 Then Joseph said to him:

This is the meaning (פְּתָרוֹן) of it. The three branches are three days.¹³ 13 Within three more days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position (פְּתָרוֹן). And

⁹ **Da 2:1-3** 1 Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams. And his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him. 2 Then the king gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. 3 The king said to them: I had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to understand the dream. **Da 4:5** 5 I saw a dream, and it made me fearful. And these fantasies as I lay on my bed and the visions in my mind kept alarming me. **Da 7:28** 28 At this point the revelation ended. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts were greatly alarming me, and my face grew pale, but I kept the matter to myself. **Da 8:27** 27 Then I, Daniel, was exhausted and sick for days. Then I got up again and carried on the king's business. But I was astounded at the vision, and there was none to explain it.

¹⁰ **Lk 24:17** 17 [Jesus] said to [the two]: What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking? And they stood still, looking sad.

¹¹ **Ge 41:15-16** 15 Pharaoh said to Joseph: I have had a dream, but no one can interpret it. And I have heard it said about you, that when you hear a dream you can interpret it. 16 Joseph then answered Pharaoh saying: It is not in me. God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer. **Da 2:28** 28 There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind while on your bed. **Da 2:47** 47 The king [Nebuchadnezzar] answered Daniel and said: Surely your God is a God of gods, a Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, because you have been able to reveal this mystery. **Am 3:7** 7 Surely my Lord Yahweh does nothing unless he reveals his secret counsel to his servants the prophets.

¹² **Jn 15:5** 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

¹³ **1 Co 15:3-4** 3 I [Paul] delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Messiah died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

you will put Pharaoh's cup into his hand according to your former custom, when you were his cupbearer. 14 Only keep me in mind when it goes well with you. Please do me an act of loyal love (חֶסֶד) by mentioning me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house (בַּיִת). 15 For I was in fact stolen away (גִּנַּב) from the land of the Hebrews (עִבְרָיִ),¹⁴ and even here I have done nothing¹⁵ that they should have put me into the pit (בּוֹר).¹⁶

16 When the chief baker saw that he had interpreted favorably, he said to Joseph:

I also saw in my dream, and look, three baskets (סֵל) of white flour (חֲרִי) on my head, 17 and in the top basket some of all sorts of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the birds (עוֹף) were eating them out of the basket on my head.

18 Then Joseph answered and said:

This is its meaning. The three baskets are three days. 19 Within three more days Pharaoh will lift up (נִשָּׂא) your head from you and hang (תִּלְהֶה) you on wood (עֵץ),¹⁷ and the birds will eat your flesh (בָּשָׂר) off you.¹⁸

20 Thus it came about on the third day,¹⁹ Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants. And he 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 put the cup into

¹⁴ **Ac 2:23-24** 23 This [Jesus], delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men [Gentiles] and put him to death. 24 But God raised him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.

¹⁵ **Lk 23:41** 41 We [criminals] indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong. **1 Pe 3:17** 17 It is better, if God should desire it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.

¹⁶ Cistern, pitfall, world of the dead, grave (*HALOT*, 116). Joseph, like Jesus, did nothing to deserve being thrown into the pit, the world of the dead.

¹⁷ **Dt 21:22** 22 He who is hanged is accursed of God. **Ga 3:13** 13 It is written: Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.

¹⁸ **Dt 28:26** 26 Your carcasses will be food to all birds of the sky and to the beasts of the earth, and there will be no one to frighten them away. **1 Ki 14:11** 11 Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city the dogs will eat, and he who dies in the field the birds of the heavens will eat, for Yahweh has spoken it. **1 Ki 21:24** 24 The one belonging to Ahab, who dies in the city, the dogs will eat, and the one who dies in the field the birds of heaven will eat. **Eze 39:4** 4 You [Gog] will fall on the mountains of Israel, you, all your troops, and the peoples who are with you. I will give you as food to every kind of predatory bird and beast of the field.

¹⁹ **Mt 12:40** 40 Just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. **1 Co 15:4** 4 [Messiah] was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

Pharaoh's hand. 22 But he hanged (תלה) the chief baker, just as Joseph had explained (פתר) to them.²⁰ 23 Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember (זכר)²¹ Joseph but forgot (שכח) him.²²

41:1 Now it happened at the end of two full years that Pharaoh had a dream....

²⁰ **Pr 19:12** 12 The king's wrath is like the roaring of a lion, but his favor is like dew on the grass.

²¹ **Ec 9:15** 15 There was found in [the small city] a poor wise man, and he delivered the city by his wisdom. Yet no one remembered that poor man.

²² It is God who exalts, not man. **Ac 5:30** 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging him on a cross.

Biblical Theology

1. Theology Proper.

- a. God extends his loyal love to believers who suffer unjustly. They experience grace in the sight of people and surprising prosperity as a result.
 - (1) **Ge 39:21** 21 Yahweh was with Joseph, extended loyal love (דָּוָה) to him, and gave him grace (חַן) in the sight of the chief jailer. ...23 The chief jailer did not supervise anything under Joseph's charge because Yahweh was with him. And whatever he did Yahweh made to prosper.
 - (2) "[D]espite all appearances, God was on Joseph's side in his deepest humiliations."²³
- b. God's loyal love is reliable, even when man's is not. When the world forgets about believers who suffer unjustly, God does not.
 - (1) **Ge 39:21** 21 Yahweh was with Joseph, extended loyal love (דָּוָה) to him, and gave him grace (חַן) in the sight of the chief jailer. ...23 The chief jailer did not supervise anything under Joseph's charge because Yahweh was with him. And whatever he did Yahweh made to prosper.
 - (2) **Ge 40:14** 14 Only keep me [Joseph] in mind when it goes well with you [the cupbearer], please do me loyal love (דָּוָה) by mentioning me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house.
 - (3) **Ge 40:23** 23 Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph but forgot him.
 - (4) "Man crucified Him; but God raised Him from the dead. Man placed him on a cross between two thieves; God set Him at His own right hand in the heavens. Man gave Him the very lowest place on earth; God gave Him the very highest place in heaven, in brightest majesty."²⁴
- c. It is God who exalts, and he does so according to his perfect plan and sense of timing. He demands that all onlookers know and understand that he alone is responsible for Joseph's exaltation. Joseph did not exalt himself. Pharaoh did not exalt him. God did.
 - (1) **Ge 41:1** 1 Now it happened at the end of two full years that Pharaoh had a dream....
 - (2) **Ps 105:16-22** 16 [Yahweh] called for a famine upon the land [of Canaan]. He broke the whole staff of bread. 17 He sent a man before them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave. 18 They afflicted his feet with fetters. He himself was laid in irons, 19 until the time that his word (דְּבַר) came to pass. The word (אִמְרָה) of Yahweh refined (צַרַּף) him. 20 The king sent and released him, the ruler (מֶלֶךְ) of peoples (עַמִּים), and set him free.
 - (3) **Ac 7:9-15** 9 The patriarchs [Israel] became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. Yet God was with him, 10 rescued him from all his afflictions, granted him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he made him governor over Egypt and all his household. 11 Now a famine came over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction with it, and our fathers could find no food. 12 But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers there the first time. 13 On the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and

²³ Wenham, *WBC*, 2:381.

²⁴ Mackintosh, *Genesis*, 317.

Joseph's family was disclosed to Pharaoh. 14 Then Joseph sent word and invited Jacob his father and all his relatives to come to him, seventy-five persons in all. 15 And Jacob went down to Egypt and there he and our fathers died.

- (4) **Ro 8:28** 28 We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.
- (5) "Joseph's deliverance from his dungeon will only be accomplished by the gracious involvement of God."²⁵
- (6) "[God's] finger was guiding all the springs of the vast machine of circumstances; and when the due time was come, He brought forth the man of His purpose, and set the feet in a large room."²⁶

2. Messianology.

- a. About nineteen centuries before Jesus' birth, Joseph closely typified Jesus' first and second coming, his humiliation and exaltation, his crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and session, and his blessing of Israel and the nations. Along with Moses and David, Joseph is privileged to be a foremost type of Messiah. Joseph, Moses, and David foreshadow the sufferings of Jesus and link together.²⁷ When we think about Joseph, the first thing that should come to our minds is "type of Messiah."
 - (1) "Joseph was born in 1916, entered Egypt in 1899, rose to power in 1886, and died in 1806 at the age of 110 (Gen. 50:22). His whole life span was contemporaneous with the magnificent Twelfth Dynasty of Middle Kingdom Egypt, a dynasty that commenced in 1991 and ended in 1786."²⁸
 - (2) "Joseph was taken from the pit and the dungeon into which he had been brought by the envy of his brethren, and the false judgment of the Gentile, to be ruler over the whole land of Egypt; and not only so, but to be the channel of blessing and the sustainer of Life to Israel and the whole earth. This is all typical of Christ...."²⁹
 - (3) "[Joseph] is loved by his father, clothed by him, and sent forth on an errand to his brethren. By them he is hated and envied; they refuse allegiance, conspire against him, strip him, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. The sorrows, suffering, and shame, through which he passed are depicted in a series of pictures; and the pit, the price of purchase, Potiphar's house, and the prison, show how Joseph was led, step by step down the path of humiliation. ...Falsely accused, he is thrust into prison, and numbered with the transgressors. He is brought lower and lower; but here the type fails, for though the shame of the cross is foreshadowed, Joseph did not have to lay down his life."³⁰

²⁵ K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, vol. 1B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005), 744.

²⁶ Mackintosh, *Genesis*, 321.

²⁷ Habershon, *Study of the Types*, 124.

²⁸ Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 66.

²⁹ Mackintosh, *Genesis*, 323.

³⁰ Habershon, *Study of the Types*, 125.

- b. Both Israel and the nations are responsible for Joseph's unjust "death," just as in Jesus' case.
- (1) **Ge 37:23–24** 23 So it came about, when Joseph reached his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the varicolored tunic that was on him; 24 and they took him and threw him into the pit. Now the pit was empty, without any water in it.
 - (2) **Ge 37:28** 28 Then some Midianite traders passed by, so they pulled *him* up and lifted Joseph out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty *shekels* of silver. Thus they brought Joseph into Egypt.
 - (3) **Ge 39:1** 1 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard, bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him down there.
 - (4) **Ge 39:20** 20 So Joseph's master took him and put him into the jail, the place where the king's prisoners were confined; and he was there in the jail.
 - (5) **Ge 40:15** 15 I was in fact kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing that they should have put me into the pit (בֹּרַחַ) [cistern, world of the dead, grave].
 - (6) **Ps 105:16–19** 16 [Yahweh] called for a famine upon the land [of Canaan]. He broke the whole staff of bread. 17 He sent a man before them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave. 18 They afflicted his feet with fetters. He himself was laid in irons, 19 until the time that his word (דְּבַר) came to pass. The word (אִמְרָה) of Yahweh refined (צַרַּף) him.
- c. Jesus was buried with two rich, innocent Josephs in his death: Joseph, the son of Jacob, and Joseph of Arimathea.
- (1) **Lk 23:50–53** 50 A man named Joseph who was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man 51 (he had not consented to their plan and action), from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God, 52 this man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 53 And he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain.
 - (2) **Is 53:9** 9 [Messiah's] grave was assigned with wicked men, yet he was with a rich man in his death because he had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in his mouth.
- d. Joseph's life is a prediction that through the death, resurrection, and exaltation of a single individual who descends from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God will bless all the nations of the earth.
- (1) **Ge 12:3** 3 I [Yahweh] will bless those who bless you [Abraham], the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.
 - (2) **Ge 26:4** 4 I [Yahweh] will multiply your [Isaac's] seed (זַרְע) as the stars of heaven and will give your seed all these lands [Canaan]. And by your seed (זַרְע) all the nations of the earth will be blessed.
 - (3) **Ge 28:14** 14 Your seed (זַרְע) will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west, to the east, to the north, to the south. And in you and in your seed (זַרְע) will all the families of the earth be blessed.
 - (4) **Ga 3:6–9** 6 Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. 7 Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of

- Abraham. 8 The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham: All the nations will be blessed in you. 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.
- (5) **2 Co 8:9** 9 You [Corinthians] know the grace of our Lord Jesus Messiah, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.
- (6) “The overriding issue in Joseph’s life of humiliation was the purposes of God for the salvation of Israel’s forefathers and the nations (e.g., 12:3).”³¹
- (7) “The salvation of the world depends on one descendant of the patriarchs.”³²

3. Bibliology.

- a. It is through special revelation believers are able to correctly interpret events around them. The biblical story is ultimate reality, and believers understand ultimate reality only in so far as they understand God’s special revelation by the Spirit.
- (1) **Ge 40:7-8** 7 [Joseph] asked Pharaoh’s officials who were with him in confinement in his master’s house: Why are your faces so sad today? 8 Then they said to him: We have had a dream and there is no one to interpret it. Then Joseph said to them: Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell it to me, please.
- (2) **Ge 40:21-22** 21 [Pharaoh] restored the chief cupbearer to his office, and he put the cup into Pharaoh’s hand. 22 But he hanged the chief baker, just as Joseph had interpreted to them.
- (3) **1 Pe 1:10-12** 10 As to [your] salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, 11 seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Messiah within them was indicating as he predicted the sufferings of Messiah and the glories to follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things that now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look.
- (4) “The Joseph narrative shows the human interpretations of events, events that are often left ambiguous as to their meaning for the participant (and reader) to ascertain.”³³
- (5) “Joseph later expressed understanding of the ultimate purpose for his suffering (45:5-8; 50:20).”³⁴
- (6) **1 Co 1:18-2:14** 18 The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
- (7) **1 Co 2:11-14** 11 Who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man that is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those

³¹ Mathews, *NAC*, 1B:739–740.

³² Waltke, *Genesis*, 536.

³³ Mathews, *NAC*, 1B:743.

³⁴ Mathews, *NAC*, 1B: 740.

taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. 14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

- b. God has used dreams to reveal special information at special times to special people, particularly to prophets, apostles, and kings. Today, however, God rarely communicates to human beings through dreams. This is because: (1) the canon of Scripture is closed; (2) Scripture is sufficient for all matters of life and godliness; and (3) the Great Commission involves human responsibility. Even in the Bible itself, dreams as special revelation is very rare.
 - (1) **Nu 12:6** 6 Hear now my words: If there is a prophet among you, I, Yahweh, will make myself known to him in a vision. I will speak with him in a dream.
 - (2) “The sets of two dreams, first Joseph's (chap. 37), then the cupbearer's and the baker's (chap. 40), and then Pharaoh's (chap. 41), link the passages together. Joseph's dreams predicted his destiny; the dreams of the cupbearer and the baker formed a test for Joseph's perseverance; and the dreams of Pharaoh provided the opportunity for Joseph's ascendancy.”³⁵
- c. Nowhere in Scripture are believers encouraged to involve themselves in dream psychology. God guides believers through Scripture by the Spirit, not through the interpretation of dreams. Joseph's interpretation of dreams in Genesis is descriptive, not prescriptive. It describes what happened then for purposes of the biblical story, not what happens in the regular course of events. In the New Testament, there is no command or instruction for believers to pay attention to their dreams.
 - (1) **Dt 18:10–22** 20 The prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, ...that prophet shall die.
 - (2) **Joe 2:28-29** 28 “I will pour out my Spirit on all mankind, and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions. 29 Even on the male and female servants I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”

4. Israelology.

- a. “Joseph's slave-to-ruler story forecasts the national reversal of Israel, which emerges from captivity “with great possessions” (15:14). Joseph's “rags to riches” story fits the pattern that God has promised for Abraham's descendants. ...What the Lord accomplishes in the days of Israel's forefather Joseph, he can do again on the grand scale of a nation.”³⁶

5. Soteriology.

- a. There are a lot of sad faces out there. People are asking, “What is the meaning of it all? Where is my life heading?” They need help in understanding the meaning and significance of their lives. That's where we come in. That's what the Great Commission is all about.

³⁵ Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis*, Kindle ed.

³⁶ Mathews, *NAC*, 1B:739.

- (1) **Ge 40:6-8** 6 When Joseph came to [the chief cupbearer and the chief baker] in the morning and observed them, look, they were dejected. 7 He asked Pharaoh's officials who were with him in confinement in his master's house: Why are your faces so sad today? 8 Then they said to him: We have had a dream, and there is no one to interpret it.
- b. The cupbearer and the baker symbolize the two classes of humanity, believers and unbelievers. Ultimately, not everyone will get a favorable interpretation, as the destiny of the baker shows. God has left it up to each individual to decide whether he or she will believe the gospel. Each person gets to decide whether he or she will be the cupbearer or the baker, whether he or she will receive ultimate blessing or ultimate cursing. Blessing results from believing the gospel. Cursing results from rejecting the gospel.
- (1) **Ge 40:21-22** 21 [Pharaoh] restored the chief cupbearer to his office, and he put the cup into Pharaoh's hand. 22 But he hanged the chief baker, just as Joseph had interpreted to them.
- (2) **Lk 23:32-33** 32 Two others also, who were criminals, were being led away to be put to death with [Jesus]. 33 When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left.
- (3) **Lk 23:39-43** 39 One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at [Jesus] saying: Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us! 40 But the other answered and rebuking him said: Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? 41 And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong. 42 And he was saying: Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom! 43 And he said to him: Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.

6. Sanctification.

- a. Unjust suffering is a fact of life in our fallen world. It must not surprise us.
- (1) **Ge 40:15** 15 I [Joseph] was in fact kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing that they should have put me into the pit (בּוֹר) [world of the dead].
- (2) **Is 53:7-8** 7 [Yahweh's Servant] was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth. Like a lamb that is led to slaughter and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so he did not open his mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away.
- (3) **Lk 23:41** 41 We [two criminals] indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds, but this man [Jesus] has done nothing wrong.
- (4) **Ac 14:22** 22 Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.
- (5) "Strikingly, Joseph's greatest setback arose out of his greatest moral victory, when he resisted the advances of Potiphar's wife...."³⁷
- b. When experiencing unjust suffering, we have two things to keep our hopes up:
- (1) God's promises.

³⁷ Mathews, *NAC*, 1B:739.

- (a) **Ge 37:7** 7 Look, we [Joseph and his eleven brothers] were binding sheaves in the field, and look, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect. And look, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf.
 - (b) **Ge 37:9** 9 [Joseph] had still another dream, related it to his brothers, and said: Look, I have had still another dream. And look, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.
 - (c) “That Joseph did not lose faith in God’s promise is proved by his willingness to interpret dreams. He was still convinced that God’s revelation in his two previous dreams (37:5–7, 9) would be fulfilled.”³⁸
 - (d) “...[T]he significant fact for Joseph was that he was correctly interpreting dreams. He did not misunderstand God’s revelations to him by dreams. He might not have understood his imprisonment, but he was encouraged in his faith. The **cupbearer...forgot him**, but God did not. In this hope Joseph had a persistent faith. His faith was not destroyed by his circumstances.”³⁹
- (2) God’s presence.
- (a) **Ge 39:21-23** 21 But Yahweh was with Joseph, extended loyal love to him, and gave him grace in the sight of the chief jailer. 22 The chief jailer committed to Joseph’s charge all the prisoners who were in the jail, so that whatever was done there, he was responsible for it. 23 The chief jailer did not supervise anything under Joseph’s charge because Yahweh was with him, and whatever he did, Yahweh made to prosper.
 - (b) **Ro 8:35-37** 35 Who will separate us from the love of Messiah? Will tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword? ...37 In all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through him who loved us.
- c. Like Joseph, believers are to maintain integrity when experiencing unjust suffering.
- (1) **2 Co 4:8-11** 8 We [apostles] are afflicted in every way, but not crushed, perplexed, but not despairing, 9 persecuted, but not forsaken, struck down, but not destroyed, 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.
 - (2) **Eph 6:19-20** 19 Pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me [Paul] in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains.
 - (3) **Heb 6:11-12** 11 We desire that each one of you [believers] show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those [like Joseph] who through faith and patience inherit the promises.
- d. When believers maintain integrity when suffering unjustly, it gives God the opportunity to bless not only them, but those around them. Joseph is a consistent blessing to others no matter where he is or what is circumstances are. He is a blessing to others in Potiphar’s house, in prison, and in the palace. The blessing occurs because

³⁸ Ross, *BKC*, 1:90.

³⁹ Ross, *BKC*, 1:91.

- God sees Joseph's integrity, which foreshadows the integrity of Jesus. God can't wait to bless us and those around us. But he demands integrity.
- e. Through the experience of unjust suffering, God strengthens the character of believers and prepares them for future responsibility.
 - (1) **Heb 2:10** 10 It was fitting for [Jesus], ...in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.
 - (2) **Heb 2:18** 18 Because [Jesus] himself was tested in that which he has suffered, he is able to come to the aid of those who are tested.
 - (3) **Ro 5:3-5** 3 We...exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance, 4 and perseverance, proven character, and proven character, confident hope.
 - (4) **Jas 1:2-4** 2 Consider it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
 - (5) "God tests his people's faith in the promises before he entrusts them to positions of greater responsibilities. Those who are convinced that God desires to use them in greater capacities will demonstrate their unwavering faith in the midst of discouraging situations."⁴⁰
 - f. Present humiliation results in future exaltation. To the extent believers serve with integrity in the present, they will be exalted in the future, like Joseph and Jesus.
 - (1) **Php 2:5-11** 5 Have this attitude in yourselves that was also in Messiah Jesus, 6 who, although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself by taking the form of a bond-servant, being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Messiah is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
 - (2) **Mt 23:12** 12 Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.
 - (3) **Jas 4:10** 10 Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and he will exalt you.
 - (4) **1 Pe 5:6** 6 Humble yourselves [now] under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you at the proper time.
 - (5) **Col 3:1-3** 1 Because you [believers] have been raised up with Messiah, keep seeking the things above where Messiah is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died [positionally in Messiah] and your life is hidden with Messiah in God.
 - g. It is the loyal love of God, not the loyal love of man, believers must rely upon. The world does not care about believers or their future. Believers will be disappointed if they seek congratulations from the world. Instead believers are to seek the exaltation that comes from God alone. By faith they are to wait patiently for it.

⁴⁰ Ross, *Creation and Blessing*.

- (1) **Ge 39:21** 21 Yahweh was with Joseph, extended loyal love (רַחֲמֵי) to him, and gave him grace in the sight of the chief jailer.
- (2) **Ge 40:14** 14 Keep me [Joseph] in mind when it goes well with you, please do me a act of loyal love (רַחֲמֵי) by mentioning me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house [prison].
- (3) **Ge 40:23** 23 The chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph but forgot him.
- (4) **Ps 142:4** 4 Look to the right and see; For there is no one who regards me; There is no escape for me; No one cares for my soul.
- (5) **Ps 143:7-10** 7 Answer me quickly, Yahweh, my spirit fails. Do not hide your face from me [David], or I will become like those who go down to the pit (בּוֹר). 8 Let me hear your loyal love (רַחֲמֵי) in the morning, for I trust (בטח) in you. Teach me the way in which I should walk, for to you I lift up my soul. 9 Deliver me, Yahweh, from my enemies. I take refuge in You. 10 Teach me to do your desire, for you are my God. Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground.
- (6) **Ga 1:10** 10 Am I now seeking the favor of men or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Messiah.

7. Eschatology.

- a. God gives believers today understanding of future events, just as he did to Joseph.
- b. Believers are able to serve with distinction now because of their confident hope there will be a future exaltation.
- c. The careers of Moses, David, Jesus, Paul, Church age believers individually, the Church collectively, Israel collectively, and all creation follow the humiliation-exaltation pattern seen in the life of Joseph.
 - (1) **Ge 15:13-14** 13 God said to Abram: Know for certain that your seed will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. 14 But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions.
 - (2) **Ro 8:18-25** 18 I [Paul] consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. 23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. 24 For in hope we have been saved. But hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he already sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.
 - (3) **1 Co 15:12-20** 12 If Messiah is preached, that he has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Messiah has been raised. 14 And if Messiah has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. ... 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Messiah has been raised. 17 And if

Messiah has not been raised, your faith is worthless. You are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Messiah have perished. 19 If we have hoped in Messiah in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. 20 But now Messiah has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.

8. Closing Passages.

- a. **Ps 142** Maskil of David, when he was in the cave. A Prayer. 1 I cry aloud with my voice to Yahweh. I make supplication with my voice to Yahweh. 2 I pour out my complaint before him. I declare my trouble before him. 3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, you knew my path. In the way where I walk, they have hidden a trap for me. 4 Look to the right and see. For there is no one who regards me. There is no escape for me. No one cares for my soul. 5 I cried out to you, Yahweh. I said: You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living. 6 Give heed to my cry, for I am brought very low. Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me. 7 Bring my soul out of prison, so that I may give thanks to your name. The righteous will surround me, for you will deal bountifully with me.
- b. **Heb 11:32-12:3** 32 Time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David, Samuel, and the prophets, 33 who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. 35 Women received back their dead by resurrection, and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 And others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes also chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned. They were sawn in two. They were tested. They were put to death with the sword. They went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated 38 (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts, mountains, caves, and holes in the ground. 39 And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40 because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect. 1 Therefore, because we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him who has endured such hostility by sinners against himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Notes