



*Relevant Discipleship*



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The Cupbearer and  
Baker



Acts 17:11 (NASB)

Now, these (Bereans) were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.



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## Egypt



## Egypt



We continue the story of Joseph in Egypt

#### Genesis 40:1-4

Then it came about after these things, that the cupbearer and the baker for the king of Egypt offended their lord, the king of Egypt. [2] And Pharaoh was furious with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker. [3] So he put them in confinement in the house of the captain of the bodyguard, in the prison, the same place where Joseph was imprisoned. [4] And the captain of the bodyguard put Joseph in charge of them, and he took care of them; and they were in confinement for some time.

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- In Hebrew, the first 12 verses, and 19/23 total verses in the chapter, begin with “and”+verb - (in some situations, it is smoother English to translate and as “then,” “but,” “so,” and so forth)
- Hebrew does not have the same rule on beginning a sentence with and. Hebrew LOVES run on sentences and LOVES to begin with “and”
- In the first four verses, we have: and it was; and furious, and confined, and placed, and cared, and imprisoned
- This is an action-packed passage!

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The cupbearer was a secret service type position who tasted the king’s food and drink to determine whether it was poisoned.

Nehemiah was a cupbearer to the Persian king

The king needed to have complete trust in the person in this role.

We aren’t told what the specific offenses was. It could have been as minor as they rolled their eyes in his presence or a more serious offense.

Typologically, these two positions speak of wine and bread. We’re going to see the bread will be broken while the wine will be raised.

Notice they were there for “some time” - we aren’t told how long. It could have been days or years.

### Genesis 40:5-7

Then the cupbearer and the baker for the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison, both had a dream the same night, each man with his own dream and each dream with its own interpretation. [6] When Joseph came to them in the morning and saw them, behold, they were dejected. [7] So he asked Pharaoh's officials who were with him in confinement in his master's house, "Why are your faces so sad today?"

- This is the second pair of the three pairs of dreams involving Joseph
- The first two were the dreams of the wheat stalks bowing down and the sun, moon, and stars bowing down, speaking of his brothers bowing down and his entire family bowing down respectively.
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- Note when we ask "how are you?" we usually don't really want to know the state of their soul and spirit. Joseph is genuinely interested.
- I like the phrase "people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."
- In some ways, this reminds me of Jesus' question when He encountered the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.
- Like the baker and the butler, Luke 24:17 tells us they were "looking sad."
- Like the baker and the butler, if they had realized the one with whom they were speaking had the answers to their questions, they would not have been sad.
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### Genesis 40:5-7

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Luke 24:17 And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" And they came to a stop, looking sad.

- In some ways, this reminds me of Jesus' question when He encountered the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.
- Like the baker and the butler, Luke 24:17 tells us they were "looking sad."
- Like the baker and the butler, if they had realized the one with whom they were speaking had the answers to their questions, they would not have been sad.
- When we get sad, we need to remember who holds the answer.

#### Genesis 40:8-11

And they said to him, “We have had a dream, and there is no one to interpret it.” Then Joseph said to them, “Do interpretations not belong to God? Tell it to me, please.” [9] So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph, saying to him, “In my dream, behold, there was a vine in front of me; [10] and on the vine were three branches. And as it was budding, its blossoms came out, and its clusters produced ripe grapes. [11] “Now Pharaoh’s cup was in my hand; so I took the grapes and squeezed them into Pharaoh’s cup, and I put the cup into Pharaoh’s hand.”

#### Genesis 40:8-11

And they said to him, “We have had a **dream**, and there is no one to interpret **it**.” Then Joseph said to them, “**Do interpretations not belong to God?** Tell it to me, please.” [9] So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph, saying to him, “In my dream, behold, there was a vine in front of me; [10] and on the vine were three branches. And as it was budding, its blossoms came out, and its clusters produced ripe grapes. [11] “Now Pharaoh’s cup was in my hand; so I took the grapes and squeezed them into Pharaoh’s cup, and I put the cup into Pharaoh’s hand.”

- Note it doesn’t say “we have had DREAMS but there is no one to interpret THEM.” Somehow the baker and cupbearer knew they had the same basic dream, but with certain details specific to each man.
- Again, Joseph points people to God.
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#### Genesis 40:12-15

[12] Then Joseph said to him, “This is the interpretation of it: the three branches are three days; [13] within three more days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office; and you will put Pharaoh’s cup into his hand as in your former practice when you were his cupbearer. [14] “Only keep me in mind when it goes well for you, and please do me a kindness by mentioning me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this prison. [15] “For 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 dungeon.”

- Like a good bureaucrat, the cup-bearer will forget the people who helped to contribute to his success.
- This is the closest we’ll get to Joseph complaining about his circumstances.
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#### Genesis 40:16-19

When the chief baker saw that he had interpreted favorably, he said to Joseph, “I also saw in my dream, and behold, there were three baskets of white bread on my head; [17] and in the top basket there were some of all kinds of baked food for Pharaoh, and the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head.” [18] Then Joseph answered and said, “This is its interpretation: the three baskets are three days; [19] within three more days Pharaoh will lift up your head from you and will hang you on a wooden post, and the birds will eat your flesh off you.”

- The baker got excited! He wanted to get in on a good thing! Unfortunately, this is not the interpretation he was looking for.

#### Genesis 40:16-19

[13] within three more days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office;

[19] within three more days Pharaoh will lift up your head from you and will hang you on a wooden post, and the birds will eat your flesh off you.”

- We see that the idiom of “lift up your head” may or may not be a good thing.
- Usually it is a positive reference to being elevated in position, but Joseph turns a phrase in reference to the baker. His head will literally be lifted up, i.e., he will be decapitated.
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#### Genesis 40:16-19

[17] and in the top basket there were some of all kinds of baked food for Pharaoh, and the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head.”... [19] within three more days Pharaoh will lift up your head from you and will hang you on a wooden post, and the birds will eat your flesh off you.”

Matthew 13:4 and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up.

Matthew 13:32 and this is smaller than all the other seeds, but when it is fully grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that THE BIRDS OF THE SKY come and NEST IN ITS BRANCHES.”

Genesis 15:11 And birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away.

- Here is another reference to birds being sinister.
- This is why I’m inclined to view the parable of the mustard seed as a negative event
- Matthew 13:31-32 He presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a person took and sowed in his field; [32] and this is smaller than all the other seeds, but when it is fully grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that THE BIRDS OF THE SKY come and NEST IN ITS BRANCHES.”
- Some would say “the church grows and grows, isn’t it great?”
- Could Jesus be saying that the church is supposed to be a gathering of like-minded believers, but we’ve turned it into a type of monstrosity with huge buildings with fancy marquis outside and something that looks more like a rock concern than a 1st century gathering inside?
- In fact, it’s so bad that the birds of the air, which represent the ministers of satan who tried to interfere with abraham’s blessing and who only a few verses prior at the good seed from the

rocky ground, can hide out and not be detected.

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**Genesis 40:20-23**

[20] So it came about on the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he held 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 office, and he put the cup into Pharaoh's hand; [22] but he hanged the chief baker, just as Joseph had interpreted to them. [23] Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

- Joseph's interpretations proved to be accurate.
- The cupbearer will forget about Joseph, but we have to think about God's timing.
- If Joseph was freed prematurely, he perhaps would not have been around to interpret Pharaoh's dream.

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**Genesis 40:20-23**

[23] Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

Romans 11:25 For I do not want you, brothers and sisters, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel **until** the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

- Perhaps the cupbearer's blindness was spiritually caused.
- This is similar to the supernatural blindness of Israel.
- Romans 11:25 For I do not want you, brothers and sisters, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;
- As with the cupbearer, the blindness will be lifted not a moment too soon and not a moment too late.
- We need to have patience with those who aren't seeming to get it no matter how often we explain it. They are on God's timeline.

*Messianic Parallels in Chapter 40*

- Bread and wine!
- Numbered with two transgressors
  - One “saved” the other perished
- Vine and branches
- Man hung on a tree, and man raised from “death to life”

There is not much to say about Joseph’s interpretations of both dreams. The simple, literal meaning is self-explanatory.

At the same time, this entire passage seems to be weighted with messianic imagery.

A caution that treating something symbolic can be a slippery slope. We need to make sure that there is another Scripture reference this points to, and not have the three branches be anything you want them to be.

To start with we have the bread and the wine - a clear reference to the passover seder and the last supper.

Two of the most popular Jewish blessings are for hamotzi lechem min ha’aretz, thanking God who gives us the bread from the earth; and borei pri ha’gaffen - thanking God who brings forth the Juice of the Vine.

He is numbered with two transgressors!

To one Jesus give life saying, “this day you’ll be with me in Paradise”

The other perished in his sins.

How about a vine and its branches, in a reference to John 15:

John 15:5 “I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

The baker’s dream will seemingly contain references to a man hung on a tree, and his death, while the butler’s dream seems to speak of His resurrection.

*Messianic Parallels in Chapter 40*

- Wine - victory; Messianic (Lord’s) Supper
- Bread - broken; suffer
- Jewish eschatology: a conquering Messiah ben David and a suffering Messiah ben Joseph
- Christian eschatology: Jesus is both Messiah ben Joseph (suffering & the literal adopted son of Joseph) and Messiah ben David (conquering & house/lineage of King David)

The sages thought that both dreams contained a hidden message for Joseph

Wine often speaks of Messiah (Jesus first miracle was...?)

So the sages taught that when Joseph heard the butler’s dream, Joseph knew that one day a descendant of His would be the Messiah

This made Joseph pleased so he gave the cupbearer the good news.

Similarly, Joseph interpreted the baker’s dream that it meant that Messiah Son of Joseph would be killed, by hanging on a tree.

Jewish eschatology holds that there will be two messiahs, one from the direct line of Joseph and one from the direct line of David.

Christians believe not in two different messiahs but in one messiah with two different comings; one to suffer like Joseph and one to rule like David.



Of course Jesus is not from the line of Joseph, but isn't it interesting that His father's name is Joseph. So literally He's Messiah ben David, because He's of David's lineage, but He is literally Messiah ben Joseph, because he's the literal son of a man named Joseph.

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*Messianic Parallels in Chapter 40*

- Three days
- Cup of remembrance
- Messiah's coming brings good news for some but bad news for others.

Both mention three days is interesting

The bread and wine was instituted three days from His being broken and poured out to His being lifted up.

How ironic that the Cup Jesus drank at the last supper was the cup of remembrance and he charged us to drink it in remembrance of Him. Yet the bearer of this cup forgot Joseph.

The two very different meanings of the same dream also remind us that Messiah's coming brings good news for some but bad news for others. Those that repented were given life. That generation failed to repent, so they went into exile and ultimately death.

In Revelation we study a group referred to as those who dwell upon the earth. If we are believers we are passing through here, we do not dwell upon the earth as it is used in the Bible. Those who dwell on the earth remain at enmity with God and they will meet a tragic end in the last half of the book of revelation.

Next time we'll get to the third pair of dreams as Joseph goes before Pharaoh. We'll see you next week for Genesis 41.

