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Do Not Interpretations Belong to God?

Tell Me Your Dreams

40: 1-8

Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams DIG: Why do you think Joseph ends up in prison with officials of the Egyptian government? How profound was the reality of God in the life of Yosef? How does Yosef show concern for the cup-bearer and the baker? Does Joseph's reference to ADONAI ring true? In what way did Joseph foreshadow the life of Christ?

REFLECT: It takes a real person of conviction to hold fast to his or her conviction and integrity during a time of suffering such as Joseph experienced. How deep are your spiritual convictions? Is the name of the Lord close to your lips? Why or why not?

Therefore, **some time later**, after **Joseph's** imprisonment, **the cup-bearer and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their master, the king of Egypt, and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard (40:1 and 3a)**. According to the custom in the Near East, **the prison** formed part of the house of the chief of the executioners.⁶¹⁰ Thus, it was an extension of **Potiphar's house**. Maybe part of the reason **Potiphar** put **Joseph** there was the hope that some of **his** blessing would continue to rub off onto **him**.

Some time later . . . expresses an indefinite period of time. However, we do know that **Joseph** was twenty-eight at this time. **He** will be brought before **Pharaoh** two years after these events **(41:1)** and will be thirty years old at that time **(41:46)**. So **Yosef** had been in **Egypt**, either as a slave in the household of **Potiphar**, or in prison for eleven years **(37:2)**.⁶¹¹

The cup-bearer was a position of great honor. In a later day **Nehemiah**, who was **the cup-bearer** to Artaxerxes, was a man of influence and much ability **(Nehemiah 2:1)**. **He** was probably the overseer of **Pharaoh's** vineyards and wine cellar. **They** were generally eunuchs; **they** held **the cup** in **their** left hand and a

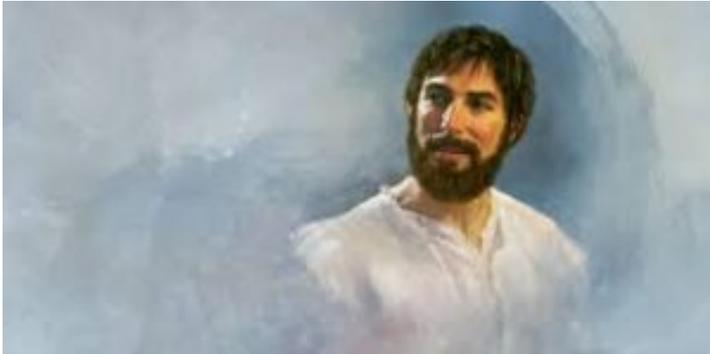
fly-flap made of split palm leaves in **their** right hand. A long napkin, richly embroidered and fringed, was normally thrown over **their** left shoulder to wipe the lips of **the king of Egypt**. Before serving, **the cup-bearer** would take some of the wine intended for **Pharaoh** and pour a little into the palm of **his** left hand and drink it. So if the wine were poisoned, **the cup-bearer** would die and **the king of Egypt** would be protected.⁶¹²

Now **Pharaoh was angry with his two officials, the chief cup-bearer and the chief baker and put them in the same prison where Joseph was confined (40:2 and 3b). 38. Both Yosef and Yeshua were with two other prisoners. Yosef was not alone in his place of shame and suffering. Nor was Jesus as he hung on the old rugged cross at Calvary. And just as there were two criminals imprisoned with Joseph, there were two criminals crucified with Messiah (Luke 23:32-33).** There are eighty ways that the life of **Joseph** would prepare the Jews for the coming of **Jesus Christ** (see the commentary on **Genesis 1w - The Written Account of the Generations of Jacobs**).

These **two** high government **officials** were put in **prison** until **their** cases had been decided. Presumably, **their** crimes had something to do with **Pharaoh's** table; possibly even an attempt on **his** life. Not knowing which one was guilty, both were thrown in jail until **their** guilt or innocence could be proven. **The prison warden assigned Yosef to wait on them (40:4a).** This is the same verb used back in **39:4** to describe **Joseph's** relationship to **Potiphar**. So although **Joseph** still maintains **his** position of authority, when **the chief cup-bearer and chief baker** arrive on the scene, **his** responsibilities are expanded to include meeting the needs of these **two** very important prisoners.⁶¹³ In other words, **Potiphar** wanted to make sure they were taken care of, and who better to put **his** mind at ease than **Joseph!** This sets the stage for **Yosef's** rise to prominence.

After they had been in custody for several days, each of the two men, the cup-bearer and baker of the king of Egypt, who were being held in prison, had a dream the same night, and each dream had a meaning of its own. When Joseph came to them the next morning, he saw that they were dejected. God had three days accomplish His task because Pharaoh's birthday was three days away. So, prompted by the Ruach ha-Kodesh, Joseph asked Pharaoh's officials who were in custody with him in his master's house, "Why are your faces so sad today?" They answered: We both had dreams, but they were so difficult that there is no one to interpret them (40:4b-8a). The Egyptians did have professional **dream** interpreters, but none

were available to **them in prison**.



Then Joseph said to **them**, “**Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams**” (40:8b). Here **he** put **himself** in the position to prophesy and be **God’s** mouthpiece, while at the same time denying any magical or mystical power in which the Egyptians believed. **Yosef** did not use the word **ADONAI**, when speaking to the Egyptians. **He** used the word **God**, or **Elohim** because it is a more generic name for the deity and would be less offensive to the Egyptians. **ADONAI** was a name that was particularly identified with the Hebrews as a people.⁶¹⁴

***Joseph** gives **God** all the glory in this. Later on we will find another young Hebrew in a foreign court who will do the same thing. **Dani’el** also gave **God** the glory, and we should do the same. Anything we do for **the Lord** should be done to the praise of **God**. Make sure that **God** gets the glory for it. When we hog the glory for ourselves, we squander our own blessing. We need to give **God** the glory as **Joseph** does here. It is interesting to see that **God** used dreams in the TaNaKh. We don’t need dreams today because the canon of Scripture is complete, but in that day, **God** did speak in dreams.*⁶¹⁵

Consequently, **Joseph** understood that their **dreams** had come from **ADONAI**. Not only that, **he** realized that **God** was beginning to work **His** will through **two** more **dreams** like he had when **he** was a teenager (37:5-11). The interpretation of *those two* previous **dreams** had led to **his** slavery in **Egypt**, but **his** interpretation of *these two* dreams would lead to **his** position of authority over all **of Egypt**.