

Falsely accused, Joseph has been served another injustice to cope with. Would he endure without sinning? When would it all end? Psalm 105 outlines God's plan and how He carried it out.

Psalms 105:17 He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant: 18 Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: 19 Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him. 20 The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. 21 He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: 22 To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.

But Joseph didn't know this in advance. Nevertheless he carried on faithfully to God in the small, dark corner where he had been put to shine. Apparently he was in fetters at first, but his attitude gradually gained the attention and respect of the keeper. At some point he was released from his chains and granted some freedoms within his confines. Apparently this was a place of confinement for nonviolent, or "political," prisoners. He rose to a trusted position serving the other prisoners. Two high ranking new prisoners were soon added to his care. They had offended Pharaoh in some way. Serving a king is not without risk. Yet quite a few faithful godly men have found themselves positioned under Gentile sovereigns (and suffered for it). But by their faithful service they have been used by God for the blessing and preservation of His people and to alter the course of history. These were people who did not have power in their own right but they influenced crucial royal decisions and helped forge new policies and new initiatives that changed history. To name a few besides Joseph there was Moses, Daniel, Esther and Mordecai, Ezra, Nehemiah. Can you think of others? And down through the centuries since Christ there have been Christians, often unrecognized, that served the "powers that be" without seeking power themselves. May we pray for those in authority that they might be given wisdom to make wise and beneficial decisions. And remember:

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

1 Timothy 2:1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

Dreams have been an effective means used by God to speak to people on earth, whether godly or ungodly, whether Jew or Gentile. Sometimes God spoke directly and clearly but He often spoke through symbolic visions which required interpretation by a third party. Joseph had simple vision-dreams as a young man and learned how to interpret them. As he grew older he found he was "gifted" with the ability to interpret dreams of others as well. The first

dream we read of in scripture involved Abraham although it may have been an real live appearance, not a dream. Stephen described it Acts 7. We aren't told exactly how God communicated with earlier men such as Cain, Enoch, Noah, but some, as with Adam, were "face to face" though no man has seen God at any time (John 1:18). Sometimes He simply spoke while remaining unseen and unheard by others nearby. He spoke in their ear or in their head. The Father spoke to Jesus with an unseen voice from heaven. Sometimes it was unintelligible to bystanders (as with Paul on the way to Damascus in Acts 9), other times not. Today the Father has spoken by His Son who is the Word. And the Holy Spirit silently uses scriptures to speak to us by bringing appropriate passages to mind. If He whispers in your ear be sure to check what you hear with the Scriptures. He will not tell you anything that is contrary to scripture. He inspired them. But be open and alert for His insights, wisdom and prompting. Walk with God. And, of course, listen to and weigh the messages of godly men and personal counsel from them as well.

Joseph, though he was repeatedly given considerable responsibility, retained his integrity, humility and servant spirit. He became a good steward of whatever was placed under his responsibility. We are to be that also. Be faithful in little, and then perhaps more.

1 Corinthians 4:1 (DBY) Let a man so account of us as servants of Christ, and stewards of [the] mysteries of God.

Luke 19:17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

Confinement has also been common in the lives of the godly. The personal hatred and enmity of Satan against Christ transcends the ages of time. Examples: Jeremiah, Daniel, John the Baptist; then James, Peter, Paul, Aristarchus (Colossians 4:10), Epaphras (Philemon 1:23), John (Revelation 1) and many others unnamed (Hebrews 11:36). Jesus forecast the imprisonment of faithful saints though He Himself was arrested but not imprisoned (Matthew 25:26-44, Luke 21:12). Paul spoke of himself as the "prisoner of Jesus Christ" though unjustly confined for his faithful witness to his countrymen. Persecution continues today and will persist even after the Bride is taken to glory. But when the King returns in His glory, it is Satan who will be bound.

Imagine Joseph's disappointment when his forecast came about favorably for the chief butler and the man simply forgot him. The brief final statement of chapter 40 tells all. But God had His own timetable and some extraordinary "circumstances" to put in place before Joseph's longed for release. He would not merely be released. He would be lifted into a glorious, powerful position where he could preserve Jacob's descendants and bless and feed the whole world. A picture of Christ's suffering and exaltation. Thus **He** said "This do remember me."

By Ronald Canner, December 22, 2010.