Genesis

**What to do when sitting in jail (40:1-41:32)**

*From a study of Luther’s Works: Lectures on Genesis, Paul Kretzmann’s Popular Commentary of the Bible, and the Lutheran Study Bible*

## **Joseph has company! (40:1-4)**

* The cupbearer and the baker get thrown into prison with Joseph
  + Why?
    - Pharaoh was angry
    - Although Moses gives no reason, Lyra (Jewish commentator at Luther’s time) had the idea that Pharoah jailed the cupbearer because a fly fell into the king’s cup and that the baker brought cakes in which the king found grains of sand.
      * Luther does not buy this.
        + He believes Pharoah to be a wise and good man, since God sends Joseph to him.
  + A house jail?
    - The place in which they were kept bound was in the house of the chief of the butchers, that is, Joseph’s master. This house the king had entrusted to his faithful care. From the history of the kings and of Jeremiah it is clear that the kings had prisons which they assigned to their nobles or overseers. But Joseph is in charge of the prison. Therefore the sin of which he was accused by the lady of the house was pardoned, and perhaps she herself atoned for her sin when the master found out that she was guilty of this crime.[[1]](#footnote-1)
* Has Potiphar had a change of heart?
  + Appears that Potiphar had been appointed by Pharoah as keeper of the prison.
  + As Joseph is now placed in charge of other prisoners…
    - Luther believes some reconciliation has taken place.
      * He is still alive!

## **What does this mean? (40:5-23)**

* The new inmates both have dreams.
  + They are troubled
    - Appears to be people in the palace that deals with dream interpretation.
    - Joseph has concern for them.
* “The interpretation of dreams belongs to God.”
  + For he does not conclude that the explanation of dreams is the business of human wisdom, because our interpretations are uncertain and fallacious. Furthermore, the devil arrogates to himself the ability to prophesy by means of visions and dreams; for he knows the order of the causes.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* The cupbearer’s dream
  + Three vine branches with ready grapes
  + The fruit of the vine was ready for Pharaoh
  + He places the cup in Pharaoh’s hand
    - Which Joseph interprets as good!
      * Luther believes prayer and meditation took place prior
      * Three branches = Three days
        + Three days before Pharaoh releases him to restore him to service.
      * Note how Joseph uses “lift up your head”
        + One of only two times we have this expression in Scripture.
        + Compared to “Lift up your eyes” that we see with regards to observance of good and bad outcomes.

Isaiah 40:26

Ezekiel 33:25

* Joseph’s request
  + Joseph is sure that the cupbearer’s release WILL happen.
  + “Remember me”
    - Get me out of here!
      * Luke 23:42
    - Another use?
    - Was Joseph sinning by his request?
      * If this was God’s will for him to be in prison, was Joseph’s (or our) desire for freedom a sin?
      * But when we are afflicted either by chance or by God’s will, then whatever misfortune there is must be borne steadfastly and with great courage, yet not in such a way that we neglect the plans and assistance by which we can be liberated. For it is tempting God to despise the remedies for evils—the remedies offered and shown by God.[[3]](#footnote-3)
      * 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
      * 1 Corinthians 7:20-21
        + Everyone should do what he should and can do in his position. But if he lacks success, he should be prepared for life or for death, for sorrow and joy alike, and to endure good and evil in such a way that the Lord God is our hope and confidence not only in this life but also in the future life, as is written in 1 Tim. 4:8: “Godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.” That is, one must hope and have confidence both for this life and for the future life, that the Lord God may be ours forever.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Romans 14:8

* The baker’s dream
  + Since the cupbearer’s dream had great news…
    - Three cake baskets on his head with baked goods for Pharaoh!
    - But birds were eating from the baskets.
  + Joseph interprets:
    - 3 baskets = 3 days
    - But not for release…
      * His head will be lifted up…
        + (2nd use)
        + From his body!
        + Deuteronomy 21:22-23
  + Luther’s take on his dreams…
* On the third day…
  + Pharoah’s birthday…
  + Dreams come true.
    - Cupbearer restored
    - Baker hanged
    - Joseph forgotten
      * Job 19:14
      * The importance of perseverance in/with the Lord.
        + But if we are preserved, we should persevere and wait in hope and faith; for God does not hate us or turn us away in hostile fashion, no matter how He may conduct Himself toward us otherwise. Let us rather conclude: “I know that I have been baptized, that I have eaten the body and drunk the blood of the Son of God, that I have been absolved by divine authority, that all my sins have certainly been forgiven me, and that victory over the devil, death, and hell has been promised me. What more should I ask for?”[[5]](#footnote-5)
      * The flesh, which we still carry about, brings it to pass that the joy of the spirit cannot be perfect and cannot do what it should; for this life cannot be without murmuring. Nevertheless, the flesh must be bridled and held in check, lest murmuring and impatience have dominion, even though it urges, incites, and drives a man to indignation.[[6]](#footnote-6)
      * Learn, therefore, to trust, believe, wait, and endure, and to depend on the Word and say with St. Paul: “The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Rom. 8:18). It is too little. “For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” (2 Cor. 4:17).[[7]](#footnote-7)
      * Psalm 27:14
      * Psalm 37:7, 34
      * Zephaniah 3:8
* 13 years have passed + 2 in prison since Joseph was sold

## **What does this mean? Part 2 (41:1-32)**

* Two years have passed after the cupbearer’s release.
* Now Pharaoh dreams
  + The king of Egypt himself must dream a dream by divine ordinance, for the sole reason that Joseph may be led out of prison with great grace, honor, and glory. And although the heathen Pharaoh was ignorant of the God of the Hebrews, yet God deigns to speak even to a heathen king by means of a dream, not for Pharaoh’s sake but for the sake of His beloved son Joseph, who was in prison. Here Pharaoh is compelled to serve this prisoner, and all Egypt must unite to deliver this son from his bonds, not so much for the sake of Joseph himself as for the sake of the welfare of the kingdom of Egypt and the neighboring regions.[[8]](#footnote-8)
  + Furthermore, the first thing God speaks to Pharaoh in dreams is the Word of God; and He speaks it in order that it may finally be revealed and understood. For the Word is not given that it may remain covered and hidden. Thus the Lord says in Is. 55:11: “It shall not return to Me empty.” No, it must work, albeit sometimes more darkly and at other times more clearly.[[9]](#footnote-9)
  + It’s all about the cows
    - Strong and sickly
      * Health and pestilence
      * Good and evil
      * Hope and fear
    - Pharaoh feels that it is a revelation and does not understand it. Accordingly, the Holy Spirit comes and interprets it. Furthermore, this confusion was not violent and frightening; but his heart was smitten and inflamed with a desire to reflect on what these dreams meant to him. Therefore he sends messengers throughout all Egypt to summon the magicians and the wise men[[10]](#footnote-10)
    - When Pharoah seeks council from his “wise men” they don’t get it.
      * Matthew 2:1
* Now the cupbearer remembers Joseph
  + Note that he also remembers his “offenses”
  + Note also who he gives credit to for interpreting these dreams.
  + Pharoah calls for Joseph
    - Psalm 113:7-8
    - Daniel 5:16
* Joseph gives credit where credit is due.
  + Daniel 2:28
  + This, then, is the voice of one who humbles himself before the magistrate. “Even without me,” says Joseph, “God will give Pharaoh an answer that will bring him peace.” It is as if he were saying: “Even if I, who am unworthy of such a great gift, do not reply, nevertheless God will find another interpreter.”[[11]](#footnote-11)
    - Accordingly, those who enter upon civil authority or any other position of government, who are summoned to give advice at court, should prepare themselves for humility and the fear of the Lord. Thus Pharaoh, a heathen king, does not rely on his own prudence but respectfully consults others, who have sound judgment in affairs of state and in religion. But Joseph respects and fears God much more and replies in all modesty to the petition of the king: “Ah, who am I? God can surely do it through someone else.” These examples should be carefully observed, and there should be no doubt that political power is a divine arrangement ordained for the benefit of this life and also of the church, which it serves when it fosters and preserves peace, even though the church has another office, which pertains to the future life.[[12]](#footnote-12)
  + Therefore the example of Joseph must be carefully observed. He does not proceed to give advice to the king and to interpret his dream without a call and without prayer. No, he does so with due reverence and with meditation on the Word. With God’s assistance and blessing, therefore, everything turns out successfully.[[13]](#footnote-13)
* The whole dream repeated
  + And interpreted
    - there is a strong impression and a revelation, yes, a prophecy, properly so called, because Joseph confesses that this dream is the Word of God and is prophetic, as his words testify: “God announces to Pharaoh, etc.”[[14]](#footnote-14)
  + Cows = people??
    - But if the prophetic Spirit were absent, they would all be talking nonsense in regard to what the cows signify. For in Holy Scripture cows often designate nations, cities, or magistrates, as in Ps. 68:30: “The herd of bulls with the cows of the peoples.” Here bulls are called princes and magistrates, and cows are called cities and provinces of the peoples. Accordingly, it would not have been inept for him to have taken the seven fat cows to mean seven provinces and cities, and vice versa.[[15]](#footnote-15)
    - This is most certainly the work of the Holy Spirit.
  + The doubling of the dream?
    - He gives a reason why the dream is twofold and yet signifies the same thing. For what God speaks is certain and will have a speedy outcome. Accordingly, there are, as it were, two witnesses for one thing. It is to be certain and will come soon.[[16]](#footnote-16)

1. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge40.5-8&off=887&ctx=ish+court+today.%EF%BB%BF5%EF%BB%BF%0a~The+place+in+which+t), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge40.5-8&off=4157&ctx=particularly+noted.+~For+he+does+not+conc), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge40.12-15&off=2690&ctx=ers+upon+ourselves.+~But+when+we+are+affl), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 113. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge40.12-15&off=12476&ctx=wife%2c+and+children.+~Everyone+should+do+w), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 117. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.1-7&off=4165&ctx=all+their+troubles.+~But+if+we+are+preser), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 131–132. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge40.20-23&off=8026&ctx=belief+and+despair.%0a~The+flesh%2c+which+we+), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 126. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.1-7&off=16340), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 136–137. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.1-7&off=13814&ctx=is+present+account.+~The+king+of+Egypt+hi), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 135–136. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.1-7&off=21016&ctx=ss+goodness+of+God.%0a~Furthermore%2c+the+fir), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 138. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.8), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 139–140. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.16&off=2266&ctx=od+(Dan.+2%3a18+ff.).%0a~This%2c+then%2c+is+the+v), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 143. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.16&off=5209), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 144–145. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.16&off=11234&ctx=divine+institution.+~Therefore+the+exampl), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 147. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.25&off=211&ctx=ing+of+a+dream.+No%2c+~there+is+a+strong+im), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 148. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.25&off=4443&ctx=ss%2c+and+vice+versa.%0a~But+if+the+prophetic), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 7: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 38-44*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw07?ref=Bible.Ge41.32&off=117&ctx=y+bring+it+to+pass.%0a~He+gives+a+reason+wh), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 7 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 153. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)