

# Genesis 40:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound.

## Analysis

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**And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where J...** This passage is part of the Joseph narrative, a masterfully crafted account demonstrating God's sovereign providence working through human choices and circumstances to accomplish His redemptive purposes. The Joseph cycle shows how God transforms evil intentions into instruments of salvation.

Central themes include divine providence orchestrating events toward redemptive ends, the testing and refinement of character through suffering and success, forgiveness overcoming betrayal and injustice, and the preservation of God's covenant people through famine. Joseph's rise from slavery to second-in-command of Egypt illustrates how God exalts the humble and uses seeming disasters for ultimate good.

Theologically, these chapters reveal:

1. God's meticulous sovereignty over all events, even evil human actions
2. suffering as preparation for future service rather than punishment
3. forgiveness as reflecting divine character and enabling reconciliation
4. God's covenant faithfulness across generations ensuring the survival and blessing of His people
5. how present suffering gains meaning when viewed from the perspective of God's larger purposes.

Joseph's words "you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" (50:20) epitomize biblical theodicy and providence.

## Historical Context

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The patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12-50) reflect the cultural, social, and legal customs of the ancient Near East during the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1500 BCE). Archaeological discoveries including the Mari tablets, Nuzi tablets, and Egyptian records confirm many details: nomadic pastoralism, covenant-making ceremonies, marriage customs, property laws, and international travel patterns described in Genesis.

The cultural practices reflected include: treaty/covenant forms (Genesis 15), bride-price customs (Genesis 24, 29), inheritance laws favoring firstborn sons (Genesis 25, 27), adoption practices (Genesis 15, 30), levirate-type arrangements (Genesis 38), and Egyptian administrative systems (Genesis 41, 47). These parallels confirm Genesis's historical reliability while showing how God worked within ancient cultural frameworks to accomplish His purposes.

For later Israelites, these narratives established their identity as Abraham's descendants, explained their claim to Canaan, justified their possession of Joseph's bones (Exodus 13:19), and provided models of faith despite imperfection. The patriarchs' failures and God's faithfulness encouraged Israel that covenant relationship depended on God's grace rather than human merit. The movement from Mesopotamia to Canaan to Egypt set the stage for the Exodus and conquest narratives.

## Related Passages

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. What theological truths about Dreams in Prison emerge from this passage?
2. What specific changes in thinking or behavior does this verse call us to make?
3. What connections can we trace from this verse to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?

## Interlinear Text

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וְיִשְׁלַחְתִּי	וְאֶתְּנַחֲמָה	בְּחַמְשָׁתִים	רֹאשׁ	בֵּית	בְּיַתְּרָה	שֶׁר	לְפָנֵי	כַּפְרָנָה	לְפָנֵי
<b>And he put</b>	H853	<b>them in ward</b>	H4929	<b>in the house</b>	H1004	<b>of the captain</b>	H8269	<b>of the guard</b>	H413
H5414								H2876	

  
בֵּית	מִקְרָא	רֹאשׁ	בְּפָנֵי	יְוָיָּה	וְאֶתְּנַחֲמָה	שֶׁר	לְפָנֵי	כַּפְרָנָה	לְפָנֵי
**in the house**	H5470	**the place**	H4725	H834	**where Joseph**	**was bound**	H3130	H631	H8033
H1004									

## Additional Cross-References

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**Genesis 39:20** (Parallel theme): And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.

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