

Joseph--Genesis 39

Joseph Over Potiphar's House; Joseph in Jail

I. Additional Scriptures...

1. Flee sexual immorality (1 Cor 6:18; 2 Tim 2:22).
2. Resisting the devil (James 4:7; 1 Pet 5:9).
3. The Lord will be with faithful Christians (Mt 28:20).

II. Chronology.

We are still in the 3rd Period of Bible History: **Patriarchy**.

With the developments recorded in this chapter, we are coming ever nearer to the time when Abraham's descendants will be drawn down into Egypt to develop into a great nation.

III. Summary.

By following the well-traveled trade route from the East through the land of Canaan, the Ishmeelites, with their captive teenager Joseph, made their way to Egypt. Here Joseph was sold to Potiphar and begins a new chapter in his life. We learn that the Lord was continually blessing Joseph and "made all that he did to prosper" (v. 3). That there was something special about Joseph was noticed by his new master (little M), and Joseph was given the authority as overseer of his household. That decision by Potiphar was rewarded by the Lord. It developed to the point that Potiphar had no worries because Joseph was such a good steward.

Joseph was a handsome young man and Potiphar's wife was an immoral woman. That combination led to Joseph's first great conflict in Egypt. When she made immoral advances "day by day" (v. 10), Joseph's purity was severely tested. He passed the test, though it cost him his freedom, because of Mrs. Potiphar's lies. Joseph was honorable enough to follow the advice Paul would later give the Corinthian saints and young Timothy (1 Cor 6:18; 2 Tim 2:22), and ran from the ungodly woman. His reasoning shows such excellent maturity when he points out that if he did as she requested he would not only become a bad steward to her husband, but would also sin against God (v. 9) in doing such great wickedness.

Mrs. Potiphar first told her lie to the men of the house (whom she must have sent out earlier) and then to her husband. Potiphar mistakenly believed the lie and sent Joseph to prison. Even from this disaster, the Lord continued to shower down his blessings upon young Joseph and brought upon him the favor of the keeper of the prison. This brought to Joseph great responsibility in dealing with the other prisoners; and to the keeper, lack of worry about the daily workings of the prison (making his job much easier). It also set up the next phase of Joseph's developing popularity in Egypt.

IV. Outline.

1. Joseph is sold by the Ishmeelites to Potiphar (1).
2. The Lord blessed everything Joseph did as a servant to Potiphar (2-5).
3. Joseph was given great stewardship responsibility (6).
4. Potiphar's wife tempted Joseph (7).
5. Joseph resisted and explained why (8-10).
6. Potiphar's wife persisted and took the initiative--Joseph fled (11-12).
7. A dreadful lie is told about Joseph (13-18).

8. Potiphar, deceived and angered, sends Joseph to prison--where the king's prisoners were bound (19-20).
9. The Lord continued to bless Joseph with favor and he prospered even in prison (21-23).

V. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ The keeper of the prison was not as trusting of Joseph as Potiphar had been.
02. _____ Potiphar was the treasurer for the nation of Egypt.
03. _____ Potiphar believed his wife's lie about Joseph.
04. _____ After Joseph refused the immoral suggestion of Potiphar's wife, she did not bother him again with it.
05. _____ Potiphar was the first to hear the lie his wife told.

Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. _____ The word, (a) goodly; (b) prosper; (c) captain, is found twice in this chapter.
07. _____ Whose wrath is said to have been kindled in this chapter: (a) Joseph's; (b) Pharaoh's; (c) Potiphar's.
08. _____ Once Joseph was placed over Potiphar's household, Potiphar's worries and concerns over that household vanished: (a) YES; (b) NO.
09. _____ What evidence did Potiphar's wife present to her husband to support her lie: (a) none; (b) the garment of Joseph; (c) a confession.
10. _____ When the wife of Potiphar accused Joseph to her husband, what kind of servant did she say Joseph was: (a) Hebrew; (b) evil; (c) lazy; (d) none of these.

Fill in the Blanks

11. "_____ fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth _____ sinneth against his own body" (1 Cor ____:18).
12. An officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard was _____.
13. Submit yourselves therefore to God. _____ the devil, and he will flee from you" (_____ 4:7).
14. "... And Joseph was a _____ person, and well favored" (v. _____).
15. "There is none _____ in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but _____, because thou art his _____: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against _____?"

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be given on next week's handout

[Answers for Lesson 01-01... 1—False, she had already died bearing Benjamin; 2—False; 3—True, 7; 4—False, 9; 5—True, 10; 6—b, 11; 7—c, 2; 8—c, 9; 9—a, 8; 10—b, 3; 11—2, nation, great, blessing; 12—Reuben, Levi, Judah, Zebulun; 13—Jacob, Israel, power, prevailed; 14—7, covenant, Isaac, eighth, patriarchs; 15—more, hated, peaceably, Gen 37:4]

VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. *And Joseph was brought down to Egypt...* (v. 1). Now Joseph has made it into the land which will be the center of the next great period of Bible History: **Egyptian Bondage**. The incidents that follow in the life of Joseph all fall into the plan of God and play an important role in the fulfilling of the promise God made to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3.
2. *And the Lord was with Joseph, ... the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand* (vv. 2,3). It has always been as it is now shown in the life of Joseph that faithfulness to the Lord brings the blessings of the Lord to that one who is faithful. The thing that is so interesting here is that there was something very special and remarkable about the life

- of Joseph (observed by Potiphar), which caused Potiphar to place great trust in him. It seems to me that the happiness and pleasure of remaining faithful to God was causing such a sense of optimism and good will in Joseph's heart that it bubbled out and could not be missed. Potiphar saw the results of God blessing Joseph and naturally wanted to attach himself to that prosperity. Joseph found GRACE in the heart of Potiphar. The text in Titus 2:10 comes to mind here.
3. *And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand (v. 6).* Here is just one of many figures used in Scripture to express authority. Joseph was given great authority in managing the household and all other possessions of this powerful Egyptian.
 4. *...Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured ... his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me (vv. 6,7).* The expression at the close of verse six speaks of Joseph as being physically attractive, or handsome. These two verses effectively put away the concept that it is **only** men who are attracted by the physical appearance of the opposite sex. It goes both ways. One lesson for us today is to recognize that it is not only the women who need to be concerned about modesty in dress, but men also. There is no indication at all here that Joseph was dressed immodestly, but men today often are.
 5. *...my master wotteth not what is with me in the house... (vv. 8,9).* In these two verses Joseph shows great maturity in understanding the import of stewardship. He was seeking to reason with the wife of Potiphar about what a dishonor it would be to his relationship with her husband for him to take that which had not been placed under his authority after having been trusted to such an extent as he had. A good question for us is: "Do we have the same concern for that which God has entrusted to our care?" That which is required in stewards is FAITHFULNESS (1 Cor 4:2).
 6. *...she spake to Joseph day by day... (10).* It is a remarkable demonstration of the purity of Joseph that he was strong enough to withstand the daily invitations of this whorish woman. James does teach us to resist the devil and he will flee from us (Js 4:7), but it is in order to recognize that the word RESIST (an Aorist Imperative) would imply continuous action. Our Lord valiantly resisted Satan, and yet it is said of Him that Satan departed from Him for a season (Luke 4:13). We must be like Joseph and continue to resist the devil, keep on resisting. After all, we cannot be MADE to sin (1 Cor 10:13).
 7. *...Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within (v. 11).* Surely Joseph must have been unaware that he was entering this house with no one else present but this one who had been attempting to seduce him. The indication is that he was going about his business as usual but Potiphar's wife had dismissed the others for her ambush. We can read explicit warnings about these kinds of situations from the wisdom of Solomon (Prov 6:23-29). Men are very unwise who do not use great caution in these kinds of settings!
 8. *...and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out (v. 12).* A very wise reaction from this young man (1 Cor 6:18; 2 Tim 2:22).
 9. *The Hebrew servant, which thou has brought unto us,...(v. 17).* Of this term HEBREW, the ISBE records the following: "The earliest name for Abraham (Gen 14:13) and his descendants (Joseph, Gen 39:14, 17; 40:15; 41:12; 43:32; Israelites in Egypt, Ex 1:15; 2:6, 11, 13; 3:18; in laws, Ex 21:2; Dt 15:12; in history, 1 Sam 4:6, 9; 13:7, 19, etc.; later, Jer 4:9, "Hebrewess," 34:14; Jon 1:9; in the New Testament, Acts 6:1; 2 Cor 11:22; Phil 3:5)." It is quite interesting that Mrs. Potiphar seems to partake of the same spirit as Adam when he tried to blame God for giving him Eve. She seeks to blame the present incident upon her husband for bringing Joseph into their home.

10. ... and he was there in the prison. But the Lord was with Joseph (vv. 20,21). Once again Joseph is mistreated and misjudged with no fault on his part. We might think that Joseph would react in a different way, however, he maintains his faithfulness and the Lord maintains the blessings upon him.
11. ...that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper (v. 23). There is a continual emphasis in the biblical story of Joseph upon the providential care of God.

VIII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

Q C A U G H T H M R Q J H I Y F Z K Q D
W W E N P T T G H A W K S H O W E D W I
E Q R M O Y R F J T D L G O T L X L E D
R C A L L E D D K Y E E F P R D E P R V
T A T N I W E N T U R M F K E S C F T F
C S B B U U E A P L T N D J W A V O T F
A D Y R O I W Q O O Y B S H Q Q B I Y L
S F U B O U Q W I O U L A G T W N U U E
T G I V Y U G E U K I E Q F O E M Y I D
Y H O C T O G H Y E O S W D O R M G O R
U J P F R P A H T D P S E S K T N A P E
I K L O E S S E T O L E R A A Y B V L D
O L K U W I D R T P L D T Z P U T E K C
P M J N Q N F T R K K B Y X Q Y V T J S
K N H D A K G Y E J J V U C W U C R E X
J B G X S J H U W H H E I V E I X R H S
H V G L I E J I A G R C O B R O V E G W
G C F Z D G K O S A G X P N T E Z W F Q
F L I F T E D P P F F Z L M D P A Q D A
D X D Q D F L S D C O M M I T T E D S Z

[The words listed below are VERBS found in Genesis 39. See how many of them you can find up above.]

Bought	Made	Found	Served	Put
Blessed	Left	Cast	Lie	Sin
Spare	Went	Caught	Fled	Called
Brought	Lifted	Took	Showed	Gave
Committed	Did			