

Genesis 39

Genesis 39:1-23 NKJV

Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand. So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field. Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to

lie with her or to be with her. But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside. And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside, that she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, "See, he has brought in to us a Hebrew to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. And it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside." So she kept his garment with her until his master came home. Then she spoke to him with words like these, saying, "The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to mock me; so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside." So it was, when his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, saying, "Your servant did to me after this manner," that his anger was aroused. Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison. But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing. The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper.

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 2 – As we read through this story, it's important to see that God is always with Joseph through the up and down path to him becoming the second most powerful person in the nation of Egypt. Here it tells us that Joseph was successful because God was with him.

Verse 3 – Even Potiphar saw that the Lord was with Joseph & it was the Lord who made everything he did prosper.

Verse 4 – Jewish historian Josephus records that Potiphar taught Joseph and instructed him beyond what would have been common to a slave.

Verse 5 – Potiphar's house & field is being blessed and made to prosper by God due to Joseph's presence.

Verse 6 – The NKJV states that “Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.” The Hebrew phrase is:

“[yapheh to'ar yapheh mar'eh](#)”.

We find this exact same Hebrew phrase used of Joseph's mother Rachel in Genesis 29:17 where it states “Rachel was beautiful of form and appearance.” Well, I guess he didn't get his good looks from his father.

Verse 7 – Jamieson–Faucet–Brown states “the ancient women of Egypt were very loose in their morals. Intrigues and intemperance were vices very prevalent among them, as the

monuments too plainly attest [Wilkinson]. Potiphar's wife was probably not worse than many of the same rank, and her infamous advances made to Joseph arose from her superiority of station." [END]

Verse 9 – Marriage was designed by God. Joseph knew that he would be sinning first and foremost against God if he committed this act.

Verse 10 – This went on day after day after day. How awful! What a test of his conviction and faithfulness!

Verse 11 – Jewish historian Josephus states “there was a public festival coming on, in which it was the custom for women to come to the public solemnity; she pretended to her husband that she was sick, as contriving an opportunity for solitude and leisure, that she might entreat Joseph again.”

Verse 21 – 23 – Even in this down turn of events, God was still with Joseph, still giving him favor and again causing him to rise through the ranks and prosper.

The UCG reading program adds some additional insights. I encourage you to look up the scriptures in third paragraph

as they clearly show Joseph following these many biblical principles:

“Joseph was sold again by the Arabian traders to an officer of the Egyptian pharaoh. God surely had a hand in Joseph being sold to Potiphar, “in order that in the house of one so closely connected with the court, he might receive that previous training which was necessary for the high office he was destined to fill, and in the school of adversity learn the lessons of practical wisdom that were to be of greatest utility and importance in his future career” (*Jamieson, Fausset & Brown Commentary*, note on verse 1).

Although Joseph prospered in Potiphar’s house, this was not God’s ultimate purpose for Joseph in his human life—God had a greater design for him. To reach that intent, Joseph had to be thrown into prison, creating the environment where God would later exalt Joseph to the right hand of Pharaoh. This illustrates something very important for us to remember: Sometimes Christians must endure hardship and trial to reach God’s final outcome. Keep in mind that God has created us for an awesome purpose. While Joseph would eventually be taken from prison and given a position in Egypt equivalent to what we would call the nation’s prime minister, we will eventually be

taken from this physical, limiting existence and, along with Joseph, will be made co-rulers with God over the entire vast universe! So, if it takes suffering and tribulation to help us attain that purpose, God will allow us to be subjected to it. Yet, although things may look quite bleak at times, God will never leave us nor forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:6; Hebrews 13:5). So we can be patient in times of trial, trusting God and continuing to serve and obey him, knowing that “all things work together for good to those who love God” (Romans 8:28) and that He will not allow us to be tried beyond what we are able to endure (1 Corinthians 10:13). We can learn *many* lessons from Joseph’s example. Take some time to look up the following scriptures and notice their relation to this trying period of Joseph’s life: Proverbs 22:29; Proverbs 10:4; Proverbs 12:24; Matthew 25:21; 1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Peter 3:17; Romans 5:3–4; Romans 8:35–39.

One important lesson is that obeying God in all circumstances ultimately works out for the best. Joseph knew that adultery was sin and refused—even though it may have cost him his life—for He trusted in God to bless those who obey Him. (And even if Joseph had lost his physical life, God would have blessed him in eternity.)

Incidentally, this particular episode brings up something else we should notice. Joseph's response to Potiphar's wife's seduction provides us with important information that has sometimes gone overlooked. Joseph asks, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9). Many today believe that the Ten Commandments were not in place before the time of Moses. Yet not only do we see Joseph's virtue in his response, but we also find proof that God's law was known at the time. According to Romans 5:13, "Sin is not imputed when there is no law." Yet Joseph clearly calls adultery sin, thereby showing that God's law was in force prior to its codification around 250 years later at Mount Sinai." [END]