

# **GENESIS 39: JOSEPH IS FALSELY ACCUSED**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. There are all kinds of injustice in this world
- B. Maybe you have even faced injustice and false accusation
  - i. How we deal with injustice reveals our faith in God
  - ii. Do we trust that God puts us in difficult situations for a reason and continue to work hard and act righteously?
- C. Joseph is going to face that very situation in this chapter

## **II. OVERVIEW**

- A. Joseph was bought by Potiphar and brought to Egypt
  - i. Joseph became very successful
  - ii. Potiphar put Joseph in charge of his entire household
  - iii. So God blessed Potiphar and his household
- B. But Potiphar's wife began to try to seduce Joseph
  - i. Joseph refused to lie with her
    - a. His master had put everything in his charge
    - b. He held back only his wife
    - c. It would be a sin against God
- C. One day they were alone and she tried to seduce him again
  - i. She grabbed his garment but he fled, leaving his garment with her
  - ii. She called the other men and told them he tried to lie with her
    - a. When she cried out he ran away
  - iii. She told Potiphar the same story when he returned home
- D. Potiphar became angry and threw Joseph in prison
  - i. God continued to show him favor in prison
  - ii. The keeper put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners
  - iii. He became successful again

## **III. BROUGHT DOWN – V. 1**

- A. Just like Judah went down to Hirah in the previous chapter
  - i. Genesis 38:1 ***It happened at that time that Judah went down from his brothers and turned aside to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.***

- ii. Both had an elevated position in the family and they now were demoted
- iii. Reveals the contrast between Joseph's and Judah's life

#### **IV. POTIPHAR – V. 1**

- A. Means devoted to the sun<sup>1</sup>

#### **V. OFFICER OF PHARAOH – V. 1**

- A. Likely Sesostris I<sup>2</sup>
- B. Officer is the same as the word for “eunuch”<sup>3</sup>
  - i. Not clear that Potiphar himself was a eunuch

#### **VI. CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD – V. 1**

- A. Head of the secret service of ancient Egypt<sup>4</sup>

#### **VII. THE LORD WAS WITH JOSEPH – V. 2**

- A. He went down to Egypt with Joseph
  - i. Just like he went with his father Jacob
- B. God didn't abandon him
  - i. But He was more interested in preparing Joseph for the future than He was in Joseph's happiness or comfort
    - a. He didn't change Joseph's circumstances
    - b. He brought Joseph success in the midst of circumstances
- C. This phrase is repeated four times in this chapter
- D. “The Lord” is repeated seven times in this chapter
  - i. Emphasizes God's covenant name
  - ii. Should bring to mind His faithfulness and mercy
- E. Jesus told us to expect persecution and trouble
  - i. But we will be blessed in the midst of it
    - a. John 15:20 **Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.**

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<sup>1</sup> Guzik, D. (2018). *Genesis 39 - Joseph In Potiphar's House*. Enduring Word. <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/genesis-39/>

<sup>2</sup> Down, D., & Ashton, Dr. J. (2006). *The Pharaohs of the Bible*. Answers in Genesis. <https://answersingenesis.org/archaeology/ancient-egypt/the-pharaohs-of-the-bible/>

<sup>3</sup> Armstrong, S. (2013, January 20). *Genesis 2011 - Lesson 39A*. Verse By Verse Ministry International. [https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis\\_2011\\_lesson\\_39a](https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_39a)

<sup>4</sup> Guzik

- b. Matthew 5:10-12 “**Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**”

#### **VIII. THE LORD WAS WITH HIM – V. 3**

- A. Joseph's integrity was a testimony of God to the pagan Egyptians

#### **IX. HE MADE HIM OVERSEER – V. 4**

- A. He was the highest ranking slave
  - i. But he didn't minimize his position
- B. Joseph had to be a servant before he could rule
  - i. This isn't always a linear path as we will see
  - ii. We need to learn to obey before we can lead<sup>5</sup>
  - iii. Matthew 25:21 **His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’**
  - iv. Matthew 20:25-28 **But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”**

#### **X. THE LORD BLESSED THE EGYPTIAN'S HOUSE – V. 5**

- A. Points toward the ultimate fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant
  - i. Genesis 12:3 **I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**”
- B. Just like God blessed Laban's house because of Jacob
  - i. Genesis 30:27-30 **But Laban said to him, “If I have found favor in your sight, I have learned by divination that the LORD has blessed me because of you. Name your wages, and I will give it.” Jacob said to him, “You yourself know how I have served you, and how your livestock has fared with me. For you had little before I came, and it has**

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<sup>5</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (2010). *Be Authentic (Genesis 25-50): Exhibiting Real Faith in the Real World*. David C. Cook.

*increased abundantly, and the LORD has blessed you wherever I turned. But now when shall I provide for my own household also?"*

**XI. HE LEFT ALL THAT HE HAD IN JOSEPH'S CHARGE – V. 6**

- A. It took Joseph 11 years to reach this point
  - i. We usually think promotion from God should come quickly
  - ii. But it's more effective for promotion to develop slowly

**XII. BUT THE FOOD HE ATE – V. 6**

- A. Because Egyptians could not eat with Hebrews
  - i. Genesis 43:32 *They served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians.*
- B. Likely because of the high variation in diet rather than from racial motivations<sup>6</sup>

**XIII. GOD TAKES AN ACTIVE ROLE IN JOSEPH'S STORY**

- A. He was with Joseph – v. 2, 3
  - i. And he became successful
    - a. He didn't pout or feel sorry for himself
    - b. But he went to work and did the best he could
- B. He caused all he did to succeed – v. 3
  - i. Everything Joseph put his hands to prospered
- C. He blessed the Egyptian's house – v. 5
  - i. Even though he likely did not worship God
  - ii. His wealth increased

**XIV. HANDSOME IN FORM AND APPEARANCE - V. 6**

- A. Same description for his mother Rachel
  - i. Genesis 29:17 *Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance.*

**XV. AFTER A TIME – V. 7**

- A. Or, immediately after – Rashi
- B. His status combined with his looks drew the attention of Potiphar's wife

**XVI. LIE WITH ME – V. 7**

- A. Previously, Pharaoh tried to take Abraham's wife because she was beautiful

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<sup>6</sup> Kimchi, D. (n.d.). *Radak on Genesis 39:6:1*. Sefaria. [https://www.sefaria.org/Radak\\_on\\_Genesis.39.6.1?lang=bi](https://www.sefaria.org/Radak_on_Genesis.39.6.1?lang=bi)

- i. Genesis 12:14-15 ***When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. And when the princes of Pharaoh saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.***
- B. Now the wife of the Egyptian ruler tries to take the handsome patriarch
  - i. Highlights Joseph's moral purity
    - a. Contrasted with the moral compromise of Abraham and Isaac
  - ii. Also highlights the contrast between man's role and God's role
    - a. Previous chapter shows God protecting the covenant
    - b. Joseph's story will show how obedience, integrity and surrender can bring about God's purposes<sup>7</sup>
      - i. Genesis 18:19 "***For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.***"
- C. This was a greater danger than being thrown in a pit by his brothers
  - i. Proverbs 23:27 ***For a prostitute is a deep pit; an adulteress is a narrow well.***
- D. She may have thought she could command him since he was a servant<sup>8</sup>

#### **XVII. JOSEPH REFUSES FOR THREE REASONS – V. 8-9**

- A. He has put everything that he has in my charge – v. 8
  - i. He didn't want to betray his master's trust
- B. Nor has he kept back anything from me except you – v. 9
  - i. Because she was Potiphar's wife
- C. How then can I... sin against God? – v. 9
  - i. Even if he could get away with it, it would still be a sin against God
  - ii. He cared about more than just what he could get away with
- D. This is a good model for how to resist sin
  - i. Recognize how it affects others
  - ii. He wasn't like Eve who negotiated with temptation
  - iii. He was clear and didn't try to be diplomatic<sup>9</sup>

#### **XVIII. DAY AFTER DAY – V.10**

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<sup>7</sup> Sailhamer, J. H. (2008). *Genesis-Leviticus* (T. Longman & D. E. Garland, Eds.). Zondervan.

<sup>8</sup> Wiersbe

<sup>9</sup> Armstrong, S. (2013, February 4). *Genesis 2011 - Lesson 39B*. Verse By Verse Ministry International. [https://versebyversemministry.org/lessons/genesis\\_2011\\_lesson\\_39b](https://versebyversemministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_39b)

- A. The text doesn't tell us how long Joseph had to resist her

#### **XIX. HE WOULD NOT LISTEN TO HER – V. 10**

- A. Joseph wouldn't compromise his integrity for his master's wife
  - i. Even though he likely knew it would cost him his job
- B. He didn't flirt with her or otherwise toe the line

#### **XX. JOSEPH RESISTED SIN IN THREE WAYS – V. 10**

- A. He would not listen to her
  - i. He wouldn't allow himself to hear temptation
- B. He would not lie beside her
  - i. He wouldn't allow himself to flirt with temptation
- C. He would not be with her
  - i. He wouldn't allow himself to be around temptation

#### **XXI. NONE OF THE MEN OF THE HOUSE – V. 11**

- A. Joseph always avoided Potiphar's wife
  - i. So she came up with a plan to corner him

#### **XXII. HE LEFT HIS GARMENT – V. 12**

- A. Because he left in such a hurry
- B. This is the second time he has left his garment behind
  - i. Both times resulted in him being imprisoned

#### **XXIII. FLED – V. 12**

- A. We are to flee from sexual immorality
  - i. 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 ***Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.***
- B. God will always provide a way to escape the temptation
  - i. 1 Corinthians 10:13 ***No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.***

ii. But we must take the way out<sup>10</sup>

**XXIV. LAUGH AT US – V. 14**

- A. She includes the servants as victims of Joseph's alleged assault
- B. Or, mock us
  - i. Judah was afraid he would be mocked if his sexual sin was found out
    - a. Genesis 38:23 *And Judah replied, “Let her keep the things as her own, or we shall be laughed at. You see, I sent this young goat, and you did not find her.”*
  - ii. Now Joseph is being falsely accused of sexual sin for the purpose of mocking her

**XXV. THE HEBREW SERVANT – V. 17**

- A. Potiphar's wife couldn't use Joseph's actual name
  - i. Because she knew her false accusation would likely result in his death<sup>11</sup>

**XXVI. WHOM YOU HAVE BROUGHT AMONG US – V. 17**

- A. Now she blames Potiphar for bringing Joseph into the house

**XXVII. HIS ANGER WAS KINDED – V. 19**

- A. Because he knew Joseph's integrity
  - i. He may have even known his wife was lying
- B. Because he was in an impossible situation
  - i. Either believe his wife and lose the man who ran his household
  - ii. Or believe his servant and lose his wife

**XXVIII. JOSEPH'S MASTER TOOK HIM – V. 20**

- A. No indication Joseph tried to defend himself

**XXIX. PUT HIM INTO THE PRISON – V. 20**

- A. This is the second serious injustice against Joseph
  - i. Previously his brothers acted out of jealousy due to Joseph's immature prodding
  - ii. This time Joseph shows maturity and resists wickedness and is still punished
- B. Joseph's resistance to sin resulted in persecution
  - i. We must be prepared for this
- C. May have been mercy on Potiphar's part
  - i. He could have put him to death

**XXX. STEADFAST LOVE – V. 21**

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<sup>10</sup> Guzik

<sup>11</sup> Guzik

A. Love that endures

i. Results in our own endurance

a. Hebrews 10:32-36 *But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.*

**XXXI. IN JOSEPH'S CHARGE – V. 23**

A. God is using these situations to refine his administrative skills

i. So that one day he can administrate a nation that will provide salvation to many nations

**XXXII. POINTS TO JESUS**

A. Joseph foreshadows Jesus

i. He was obedient when facing injustice

a. Philippians 2:8 *And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

ii. He face injustice for the purpose of saving the world

a. Isaiah 53:4-6 *Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

iii. He was tempted to sin

a. Matthew 4:1 *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.*

iv. He resisted temptation

a. Matthew 4:10 *Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.””*

- v. He was falsely accused
  - a. Mark 14:55-56 **Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none. For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree.**
- vi. His robe was stripped from him
  - a. Matthew 27:31 **And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.**
- vii. He did not defend himself against his accusers
  - a. Isaiah 53:7 **He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.**
  - b. Matthew 27:13-14 **Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?” But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.**
- viii. He was punished for the sins of others
  - a. Isaiah 53:5 **But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.**

### **XXXIII. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION**

A. What are some examples of how your work reflects the God you worship to others? Do others recognize your faith based on your ethic and integrity in your work?

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B. How do you think you would feel if you were falsely imprisoned because of your godly behavior? What would your response be?

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C. Do you think suffering for righteousness should be embraced and welcomed? Or should it be tolerated and endured?

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D. How did Joseph respond to the injustice he suffered? What can we learn from this?

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E. How did God respond to Joseph's actions while suffering? What can we learn about God from this?

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#### **XXXIV. FURTHER STUDY**

A. What does Psalm 1:1-3 say about the righteous man? How does Joseph exemplify this principle in this chapter?

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B. What happened to Obed-edom's house when the ark of the covenant was there in 2 Samuel 6:11? How is this similar to what happened to Potiphar's house? What does this tell us about Joseph?

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C. What are the consequences of adultery according to Proverbs 5:15-23 and Proverbs 7:21-23? What is a man ensnared by adultery compared to in these passages?

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D. Why should we develop the same self-control that Joseph displayed (Proverbs 25:28)?

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E. Read Judges 16. How did Samson deal with temptation differently than Joseph? What was the result in Samson's life and how does that contrast with what we will see in Joseph's life?

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F. What does suffering produce in our lives? Does this change how you view suffering? See Romans 5:3-4.

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