

The Trial for Joseph

Genesis 39:1-23

- I. THE POSITION FOR JOSEPH (Genesis 39:1-6)
 - A. The Warden in the Position (Genesis 39:1)
 1. Potiphar's purchase
 - a. God's providential work was apparent in who purchased Joseph.
 - b. If the purchase had been by someone else the outcome of Joseph's story could've been very different.
 2. Potiphar's place
 - a. He was an "officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard."
 - b. In this position he would have been responsible for the protection of the king of Egypt and overseeing the punishment of those who incurred the king's disfavour.
 - B. The Welfare in the Position (Genesis 39:2)
 1. *"And the Lord was with Joseph"*
 - a. This truth will follow Joseph in all that he does (Genesis 39:21-22).
 - b. Because of this truth, he will gain favour with the jailer, Pharaoh and will be made governor of Egypt (Acts 7:9-10) (Note: Psalm 105:17-24).
 - c. Note: Joseph as a type of Christ: "The Lord was with Joseph" – God was with Jesus Christ (Acts 10:38).
 2. *"And he was a prosperous man"*
 - C. The Witness in the Position (Genesis 39:3)
 1. *"And his master saw that the LORD was with him"*
 - a. Joseph had a great opportunity to show God in his life (Genesis 39:3a)
 - (1) The Lord was with Abraham (Genesis 21:22)
 - (2) The Lord was with Jacob (Genesis 26:28)
 - (3) The Lord was with David (1 Samuel 18:14, 28)
 - (4) Peter and John were known to have been with Jesus (Acts 4:13)
 - b. The Christian today can show Christ in their life (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:15-16)

2. *“that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand”*
 - a. Joseph was successful in what he did (Genesis 39:3b, 23)
 - b. Joseph was blessed and successful because he served the LORD (Joshua 1:7-8; 1 Chronicles 22:13; 2 Chronicles 26:5). Note: Even for today, it is the LORD that blesses us with what we have and gives us our success (1 Corinthians 16:2)
- D. The Wisdom in the Position (Genesis 39:4)
1. Joseph’s response
 - a. Joseph found grace.
 - (1) Note: While Joseph surely found grace in the eyes of God. This refers to Joseph finding grace in the eyes of Potiphar.
 - (2) Note: Joseph as a type of Christ: Jesus Christ found grace in the eyes of the Father (Psalm 45:2)
 - b. Joseph served without a bad attitude.
 - (1) Joseph, though sold into slavery, did not pout, and take out his hurt feelings by bad labour for Potiphar.
 - (2) Rather, he wisely worked diligently. In fact, he worked so well that Potiphar promoted him (Ecclesiastes 9:10).
 2. Joseph’s rank
 - a. Joseph started at the bottom of the group, coming into Potiphar’s house as a regular slave (1 Corinthians 15:10; Colossians 3:23).
 - b. However, Joseph quickly rose in the ranks of the household staff and became the overseer of Potiphar’s house.
 - c. Note: Joseph as a type of Christ: Jesus Christ is over all of God’s house (Hebrews 3:1-6).
- E. The Worth in the Position (Genesis 39:5)
1. Potiphar made Joseph overseer (Genesis 39:5)
 2. Potiphar was blessed for having Joseph as overseer (Genesis 39:5b; Genesis 30:27)
 - a. The key to the well-being of Potiphar’s household was having Joseph in it.
 - b. The key to the well-being of any society or nation is the presence of God’s people.
 - (1) Godly people are worth more to a nation than all its other natural advantages and resources and might combined.
 - (2) A nation’s military force is legitimate for its protection, but its best protection lies in its godly citizens (Psalm 147:10-11).

F. The Watchfulness in the Position (Genesis 39:6)

1. The trust of Potiphar (Genesis 39:6a)
 - a. Leaving all that he had in Joseph's hand.
 - b. Knowing not what he had.
 - c. Save the bread which he ate.

2. The goodliness of Joseph (Genesis 39:6b)
 - a. Likely this refers to his appearance.
 - (1) Note how the word *goodly* is used in scripture:
 - (a) Appearing 33 x's in scripture
 - (b) Referring to:
 - i. The individual (Exodus 2:2; 1 Samuel 9:2; 1 Samuel 16:2; 2 Samuel 23:21; 1 Kings 1:6)
 - ii. Words (Genesis 49:21)
 - iii. Items (Genesis 27:15; Exodus 39:28; Numbers 24:5; Numbers 31:10; Deuteronomy 8:12; Joshua 7:21; 2 Chronicles 36:10, 19; Hosea 10:1; Joel 3:5; Matthew 13:45; Luke 21:5; James 2:2; Revelation 18:14)
 - iv. Fruits and vegetation (Leviticus 23:40; Deuteronomy 6:10; Psalm 80:10; Jeremiah 11:16; Ezekiel 17:8, 23)
 - v. A heritage (Psalm 16:6; Jeremiah 3:19)
 - vi. Misc. (Zechariah 10:3; Zechariah 11:13)
 - (2) Its historical use – "*goodly*"— Old English *godlic* "excellent; comely fair"
 - b. However, it could be applied to his inner man.
 - (1) Note: Potiphar left all that he had in the hand of Joseph because he believed he could trust him (Genesis 39:6a)
 - (2) So it is for the Christian; people should be able to trust the true believer because they know the Saviour and because of that they should have a testimony with everyone around them that they can be trusted (Proverbs 12:24; Proverbs 22:29; Ecclesiastes 9:10; Matthew 25:21-23; Romans 12:11)

II. THE PROPOSITION FOR JOSEPH (Genesis 39:6-12)

B. The Presentation of the Proposition (Genesis 39:7-9)

1. The call to sin (Genesis 39:7; Proverbs 7:13)
 - a. The call – "Lie with me"
 - b. The eyes
 - 1) We are often tempted by what we see.

- 2) We should, as much as possible, guard what we see (Psalm 101:3; Isaiah 33:15; Job 31:1)
 - c. The ears – Temptation also comes through the ear gate. What we hear should also be guarded (ex. Proverbs 7:6-10, 11-23)
2. The refusal to sin
 - a. His obligation to his master (Genesis 39:8-9)
 - b. His obligation to his God (Genesis 39:9; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15)
- C. The Continuation of the Proposition (Genesis 39:10)
 1. The frequency of the proposition – “day by day”
 2. The details of the proposition (compare this to the woman of Proverbs 7) (Proverbs 7:13-20)
 - a. To lie by her
 - b. To be with her
 - c. Note: She changed her request; she first asked him to “lie with her;” once he refused that she changed it to “lie by her;” then “to be with her.”
 3. The refusal by Joseph of these propositions/temptations on a continual basis (Job 31:1; Proverbs 1:10; Proverbs 2:16).
- D. The Situation in the Proposition (Genesis 39:11-12)
 1. His guard was down (Genesis 39:11)
 - a. Joseph did not sin in this situation, in fact, he showed great character.
 - b. However, he did not show the best wisdom in allowing himself to be alone in the house with Potiphar’s wife.
 - c. Not only do we need to do right, but we also need to keep ourselves out of situations that can allow us to be trapped or to compromise our testimonies (Proverbs 4:14-15; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).
 2. She trapped him (Genesis 39:12)
 3. He fled from this temptation (Genesis 39:12b; 1 Corinthians 6:18; 2 Timothy 2:22)
 - a. As much as possible, we need to avoid the occasions of temptation (Proverbs 4:14-15).
 - b. However, there will be times when this is not possible or when we are caught in a bad situation unawares.
 - c. In these cases, we need to flee as the scripture says (1 Corinthians 6:18-20; 2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Peter 2:11).

III. THE PROSECUTION OF JOSEPH (Genesis 39:13-20)

- A. The Accusation Against Joseph (Genesis 39:13-18)
 1. Falsified evidence (Genesis 39:13)
 - a. Joseph fled from the temptation and in the process, she caught his coat which he was wearing.

- b. She sees the garment now in her hand and plans to use it as evidence against Joseph.
 - 1) Note: Ironically, Joseph's first coat, the one given to him by Jacob, was used by his brothers to deceive their father concerning his condition (Genesis 37:31-34).
 - 2) Potiphar's wife uses this coat to deceive people concerning the character of Joseph.
- 2. Falsified information (Genesis 39:14-18)
 - a. Given to the men of the house (Genesis 39:14-15)
 - 1) Potiphar blamed for bringing Joseph into the house (Genesis 39:14)
 - 2) Joseph, the Hebrew, came in unto her to lie with her (Genesis 39:14)
 - 3) She cried out with a loud voice for help (Genesis 39:14)
 - 4) When Joseph heard the cry, he ran and accidentally left his garment with her (Genesis 39:15)
 - b. Given to Potiphar when he returns home (Genesis 39:16-18)
- B. The Incarceration for Joseph (Genesis 39:19-20)
 - 1. Potiphar accepts the witness of his wife (Genesis 39:19)
 - a. Potiphar hears the witness of his wife and reacts to her one-sided testimony.
 - b. Note: This illustrates an excellent reason for God's law concerning the need for at least two-witnesses in a matter (Deuteronomy 19:15).
 - 2. Potiphar apprehends Joseph and places him in prison (Genesis 39:20)
 - a. It is possible that this prison holds individuals who have directly committed a crime against the Pharaoh. At least a section of the prison was used as such (note: Genesis 39:20; Genesis 40:3)
 - b. Some have pointed out that it being noted that this was the place where the king's prisoners were placed is an indication that Potiphar may have doubted his wife's testimony. At the very least, it is safe to say, "if Potiphar had really believed his wife, Joseph would probably have been tortured and then put to death. To save face, since the woman had publicly made it known, Potiphar placed Joseph in the king's prison.

IV. THE BLESSING FOR JOSEPH (Genesis 39:21-23)

B. Given Favour Even in Prison (Genesis 39:21)

C. Made Overseer of the Prison (Genesis 39:22-23)

- 1. The keeper of the prison committed everything into Joseph's hands (Genesis 39:22).
- 2. The Lord made Joseph prosper in all that he did (Genesis 39:23).