

Joseph Resists Potiphar's Wife

Genesis 39

How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? Genesis 39:9

Jacob's son Joseph was sold by some of his brothers to a caravan of Ishmaelite merchants. They took Joseph to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, the captain of the guard for Pharaoh, who was the ruler of Egypt (see Genesis 39:1).

Joseph was a righteous young man, and the Lord blessed him. When Potiphar saw that Joseph worked hard, was trustworthy, and was blessed by the Lord, he appointed him overseer. This meant that Joseph was responsible for Potiphar's house and all that he owned. Because of Joseph's righteousness, the Lord blessed Potiphar's house and fields. (See Genesis 39:2–5.)

Potiphar's wife desired Joseph because he was handsome and talented. She tried to tempt him to do wrong, but Joseph refused. He told her that Potiphar had trusted him with everything except her. (See Genesis 39:6–9.) "Thou art his wife," Joseph said, "how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9).

Day after day Potiphar's wife tried to get Joseph to do wrong, but he would not (see Genesis 39:10).

One day when Joseph went into the house to take care of his responsibilities, none of

the men who worked in the house was there. When Potiphar's wife saw that she was alone with Joseph, she caught hold of his cloak and tried to coax him to come to her. Joseph pulled away and ran, leaving her holding his cloak. (See Genesis 39:11–12.)

Potiphar's wife called the men of the house and showed them Joseph's cloak. She told them a false story, saying that Joseph had tried to do wrong with her but that she had "cried with a loud voice" (Genesis 39:14). She told them that when she screamed, Joseph ran away, leaving his cloak (see Genesis 39:15).

When Potiphar came home, his wife showed him Joseph's cloak and told him the same false story (see Genesis 39:16–18). Because Potiphar believed his wife, he was angry and had Joseph put into prison (see Genesis 39:19–20).

"But the Lord was with Joseph" (Genesis 39:21). He loved Joseph and helped the keeper of the prison to think well of him. Soon the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of the other prisoners and all that went on in the prison. Joseph was successful, even in prison, because he was obedient and the Lord was with him. (See Genesis 39:21–23.)

Summary

Joseph was a righteous young man who had been sold into Egypt. He served Potiphar, captain of Pharaoh's guard. Potiphar trusted Joseph and gave him an important position in his house. Potiphar's wife liked Joseph and kept trying to get Joseph to do wrong. Joseph refused to give in to her. Then one day Potiphar's wife caught hold of Joseph's cloak and tried to

tempt him to sin. Again he refused, and he ran from the room, leaving his cloak in her hand. Potiphar's wife called to the men of the house and claimed that Joseph had come to try to do wrong with her. She told the same untrue story to Potiphar, who had Joseph put into prison. But the Lord was with Joseph and blessed him.

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