

BOOK OF GENESIS

GENESIS 39

VERSES 1-6	ADDED TEXTUAL NOTES, QUESTIONS, OTHER
<p>1 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there. 2 The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. 3 When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, 4 Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. 5 From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the Lord blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the Lord was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. 6 So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph's care; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate. Now Joseph was well-built and handsome.</p>	<p>V. 2 - What phrase is repeated FOUR times in this chapter (vv. 2, 3, 21, 23)? What does this tell us about the theme of the chapter?</p> <p>V. 3 - How did Potiphar, a pagan Egyptian, recognize that God was with Joseph?</p> <p>3. Joseph was faithful as a slave before he became a ruler. Why is this significant? What theme does this follow so far in Genesis?</p> <p>4. Verse 5 says God blessed Potiphar's household "because of Joseph." How does this fulfill God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3?</p>

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	<p>NOTE:</p> <p>God's presence doesn't equal absence of suffering. Joseph is still a slave, still separated from family, still suffering injustice. But God is WITH him, and that changes everything. God's presence enables us to prosper even in difficulty.</p>
VERSES 7-10	ADDED TEXTUAL NOTES, QUESTIONS, OTHER
<p>7 And after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!" 8 But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. 9 No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" 10 And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her.</p>	<p>Vv. 8-9 - Joseph gives THREE reasons for refusing. What are they? Which reason does he emphasize as the ultimate reason?</p> <p>V. 9 - Why is it significant that Joseph calls sin primarily "sin against God" rather than just wrong against Potiphar? How does viewing all sin as primarily against God change behavior?</p> <p>V. 10 - "day after day" she persisted. This wasn't a one-time temptation but relentless pressure. What does Joseph's strategy teach us about handling persistent temptation?</p>

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	<p>Compare Joseph's situation to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3. Adam and Eve were in Paradise yet they sinned. Joseph is enslaved in a foreign land yet he resists. What makes the difference?</p> <p>NOTE: This chapter is situated amidst chapters wrought with sexual sin, and it demonstrates an example of faithfulness in contrast to previous characters. So far, all sin, but contextually sexual sin, has followed the pattern of “seeing and taking.” This pattern is interrupted in Joseph’s story.</p>
<p>VERSES 11-18</p>	<p>ADDED TEXTUAL NOTES, QUESTIONS, OTHER</p>
<p>11 One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. 12 She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house. 13 When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, 14 she called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "this Hebrew has been</p>	<p>V. 12 - This is the SECOND time Joseph loses a coat in a crisis (first in 37:23). How is his garment used against him both times? What do you suppose Joseph values more than his coat?</p>

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brought to us to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. **15** When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house." **16** She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. **17** Then she told him this story: "That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. **18** But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."

Though not fully naked – there is a connotation of nakedness. Nakedness has been a theme in Genesis, what do you suppose is meant here in this story?

Joseph RAN from sexual sin (v. 12). Why is "fleeing" better than trying to resist or manage temptation?

Vv. 14-15 - Notice Potiphar's wife's manipulation: belittling language ("this Hebrew"), blame-shifting ("you brought"), and reversing the story. How does she turn herself into the victim? What pattern or previous story does this remind you of in Genesis? What does this teach about how sin often operates?

NOTE:

"Better to lose your coat than your character!" Joseph was willing to LOOK like a rapist to avoid BEING one. He valued

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	<p>his conscience before God more than his reputation before people. The coat becomes "evidence" used against him, but Joseph loses his coat and keeps his character. Garments in Genesis represent identity and honor—Joseph keeps losing garments but never loses his integrity because his identity, honor, and integrity is found not in external things, but in God.</p>
VERSES 19-23	ADDED TEXTUAL NOTES, QUESTIONS, OTHER
<p>19 When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, "This is how your slave treated me," he burned with anger. 20 Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined. But while Joseph was there in the prison, 21 the Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. 22 So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. 23 The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.</p>	<p>V. 19-21 - Did Potiphar believe his wife's accusation? What evidence suggests he may have doubted her story? (Hint: What was the normal punishment for attempted rape? Where did Potiphar send Joseph?)</p> <p>Joseph did the RIGHT thing—he fled temptation, honored God, remained pure—and was PUNISHED for it. How do you reconcile this? What does 1 Peter 2:20 say about suffering for doing good?</p>

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V. 21 – Here we have our theme again. Is God's presence conditional upon our earthly circumstances/earthly perceptions of success?

Compare verses 4-6 with verses 22-23. What parallels do you see? What does this teach about Joseph's character and God's faithfulness?

NOTE:

Joseph was "successful" as both a slave and a prisoner. Biblical success isn't measured by comfort, freedom, or status—it's measured by faithfulness to God and God's presence with us. The chapter brackets with "the LORD was with Joseph" (vv. 2, 3, 21, 23). Location changed: house to prison. But God's presence didn't change. This is the overwhelming message of Chapter 39.