

Joseph the Slave

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[0 : 00] I would like to turn once again to the book of Genesis and chapter 39 and reading at the beginning of that chapter.

Genesis 39 at the beginning. Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had brought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there.

The Lord was with Joseph and he became a successful man and he's in the house of his Egyptian master. Especially the words there at the beginning of verse 2, and the Lord was with Joseph.

Obviously this chapter begins with the arrival of Joseph in Egypt. It begins with the Ishmaelites selling Joseph to Potiphar.

And so his first experience we can expect was in the slave market there in Egypt. being viewed and examined to see what sort of man, what strength he had and whether he would be profitable to the man who was going to buy him.

[1 : 36] We can be thankful that in our own day that slaves are no longer a commodity which can be bought and sold. At least not in the loss of the lands in which we live.

Today more and more slavery is beginning to encroach into the lives of many who are being offered for sale in many of the countries which bring their slaves to this country and traffic them for all sorts of behavior and all sorts of conduct.

But Joseph's slavery began when Potiphar, captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites. As you know, this has a history, of course, that Joseph was living with Isaac and Jacob in Hebron before this happened.

He was sent by Jacob to go to seek out his brothers, and the brothers saw him and planned to kill him. But Reuben hatched this plan that he might cause him to escape from the plan to kill him and put him into a pit and later free him, which, of course, didn't work because not only was that a foolish plan, but also a plan which was not in accordance with God's own providence for Joseph.

So here we have Joseph in the land of Egypt. And however fortunate Joseph must have felt to be in the house of Potiphar, a good master, he was where he didn't want to be.

[3 : 34] He wanted to be back home with his father and his grandfather, Jacob and Isaac. He wanted to be there in that fellowship where God was spoken of and where he was worshipped and where he was the head of that house.

But in spite of the circumstances that Joseph found himself in the years, he becomes reconciled to it. And the fact that the God of his father was in control and he understood that the God of his father was in control of everything, he attended to everything that he was given to the best of his ability.

And so under the blessing of God, he became a successful man, as we're told here. So the Lord was with Joseph, we're told, and he succeeded in all that he did.

And Potiphar saw that the Lord was with Joseph and that he succeeded in all that he did. Potiphar made Joseph the overseer of his house. We saw in Joseph's speech to Potiphar's wife that he wasn't second to Potiphar in anything.

And that Joseph had control of all that he had, except in regard to the wife who was Potiphar's wife, and so outside the territory of Joseph.

[5 : 05] And so we can see what eminence Joseph had been raised to. We can see how the Lord had blessed him, and even in his captivity, even in his slavery, the Lord was blessing him.

And so that applies to all of us. In whatever situation we might find ourselves, if we're in the Lord's will, if we are living to his praise and his glory, then the Lord will bless us.

We might find the circumstances sometimes very difficult. We might think that we ask, what have we done to deserve this? But yet, if we are the Lord's, he is in it with us. And he will bring us through, and he will cause us to prosper.

The first thing that we can look at here is that Joseph's trials suddenly began to intensify in the degree to which he was suffering.

Joseph's purity of heart and his loyalty to his master Potiphar was the reason why he found himself in such harrowing straits as he was shortly going to find himself.

[6 : 18] When Potiphar was eyeing him and viewing him as someone with whom she could indulge her own fancies, Potiphar must have been continuing to think himself fortunate as to the type of slave that Joseph was.

And Joseph must also have rejoiced. His lines had fallen out in pleasant places. All seemed to be set fair in Joseph's life.

Everything was going on as though the Lord was in it, and the Lord was bringing to pass those dreams he still held in his heart, and he expected the Lord to bring to fruition in the days ahead.

If he was a slave, he would be the best of slaves. He would live up to the fact that he was God's servant and that he would do everything as unto God and not as unto men.

We have no real facts as to how long Joseph spent in Potiphar's house being a slave. But we can calculate it out by certain other statements through Scripture, and that's always the way with Scripture.

[7 : 49] We can always go to Scripture and prove and add to our information by what Scripture itself tells us. We're told that Joseph was about 30 years of age when he entered into the presence of Pharaoh.

We're also told that he spent two years in prison after interpreting the dreams of the cupbearer and the baker.

And perhaps even a year before that, while he was in the prison and the prison keeper, the jailer, saw what sort of man he was.

That leaves us with 10 years, because Joseph, when he was taken into slavery, was 17 years of age. And so that all brings us to the conclusion that Joseph spent 10 years in Potiphar's house as a slave there in Egypt, and he was doing everything to the glory of God.

No doubt the dreams were still very much in his own thoughts, wondering how and when they were going to be brought to pass. Perhaps someone else might have thought, well, these dreams would have meant nothing.

[9 : 06] I spent so long here that no one is thinking of me and I'm forgotten. But not Joseph. He was a man of God. He did believe the dreams had come from God. And so he was waiting on the Lord for God's purposes to be fulfilled for him.

And so I say, during all that time, the Lord had been with Joseph. And he had been the best slave that any master ever had. And Joseph was so good that Potiphar, as I said, left everything in his house in the charge of David.

He was Potiphar's right-hand man. But now the devil begins to seek opportunity to upset God's plans for Joseph. He tries to bring Joseph down and tries to destroy his whole reputation.

We're told that Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. And that Potiphar's wife cast her eye on Joseph and said, come, lie with me.

And so that's always the temptation that comes to everyone in this life. The devil comes into our experience. He places opportunities and he places things before us which are not in accordance with God's will and God's desire for us.

[10 : 33] And so she tried to make Joseph a partner in her shameless conduct. Others might have succumbed, but not Joseph. Others might have succumbed because they might have thought, here's a way whereby I can get out of imprisonment and find even greater favor in the country.

But as I said, not Joseph. He had all he had in Potiphar's house. Why should he want any more? He believed in God with conviction. And he wanted to please him.

And he did in Egypt what he would have done in Hebron in his father's house. No doubt the devil would have suggested to Joseph that this was the way to escape from his slavery.

This was the way for him to get out of the position in which he was in. But Joseph knew that neither Jacob nor Isaac would have approved.

That's something we all have to remember as we go through life. As we look back on godly parents and grandparents. Would they approve of what we are doing? Would they approve of where we go?

[11 : 45] Would they approve of our behavior? Would they approve even of the careers or the future that we are trying to set out for ourselves? And more importantly, would God approve?

For he said, how can I do this wickedness against Potiphar and sin in the sight of God? God was always in his view, always in his thoughts, always knowing that he was in God's hands.

But by taking such a principal stand in his relationship and his work in the house, he made himself an enemy. He made himself an enemy of Potiphar's wife.

And it's no wonder she did what she did to ruin him. She was determined to ruin him. And when on one occasion Joseph ran from her, leaving his garment with her, she immediately saw her moment of revenge.

It's said that there is none so angry as a woman who is scorned. And the result was that Potiphar, without giving Joseph any opportunity to defend himself, puts him in prison.

[13 : 08] And for the second time in his life, he's unfairly and harshly treated and punished this time. But he's there unjustly, and he could still cry to God.

If we're somewhere because of what we've done, we have great trouble in continuing to engage in that close fellowship with God, because we know sin separates between us and our God.

But not for Joseph. He knew he was there unjustly. He knew he could still cry to his God. And so he had that comfort, that God was his God. And he could look to God for his deliverance.

But for Joseph, that time had not yet come. And secondly, we can see another trial was soon to follow Joseph while he was in prison.

No doubt, for a time, Joseph was totally downcast and wondering, I suppose, what on earth have I done to find myself in this place?

[14 : 23] But his spirit's revived when he remembered that he was in God's hands. And once again, he did everything in accordance with God's word and God's will for him.

And we're told that the keeper of the prison saw that the Lord was with Joseph. And he put him in charge once again of the affairs of the prison. And so we see again the Lord prospering Joseph and causing him to be promoted in a small degree in the prison house.

While Joseph was in charge of the prison, the chief cupbearer and the chief cook had been sent to prison.

We're not told what they were sent to prison for, but obviously they were sent to prison there to await execution for some crime they had committed against Pharaoh. Perhaps it was poisoning of the wine or poisoning of the food or something like that.

But they were there in prison awaiting Pharaoh's decision as to their future. And they were put under his care.

[15 : 30] One morning he saw them looking downcast and sad. And he asked them, why were they sad? Why were they so downcast? And so seeing his empathy with them, seeing his sympathy towards them, they tell him the dreams that they both had.

Both of us had a dream this night. And Joseph says again, giving glory to God, do not interpretation of dreams belong to God.

But please tell me what they are. Implying what? Implying that he has God's ear. Implying that God still speaks to him while he is in that place.

And he is assured that God will give him understanding as to what these dreams are and what they imply for these two men. And his willingness to interpret their dreams proved that Joseph still believed in his own dreams.

His own dreams that one day he would be raised to some eminence. One day his family would come and bowed themselves down before him as he remembered 13 years previously.

[16 : 48] And so God's providence continues to prepare Joseph. When they see how he sympathizes with them, they told Joseph their dreams.

The cupbearer's dream was interpreted by Joseph to mean that within three days, he would be back in Pharaoh's presence serving him his wine. The baker, chief cook, being encouraged by Joseph's interpretation of the dream, told him his.

But he got a sad surprise. He was told that within three days, Pharaoh would lift his head from off his shoulders and he would be hind. And the birds of the air would come and eat on his flesh.

And as the cupbearer is being released, Joseph pleads very feelingly, Only remember me when it is well with you.

And please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh and so get me out of this place. But I was stolen out of the land of the Hebrews.

[18 : 09] And here also have done nothing that they should imprison me. This shows us how deeply Joseph felt about the whole thing.

How despondent really he was in this place. And who wouldn't be? He was in prison. He was in prison. He was in prison. He was in prison. He was in prison. He was in prison. Being a slave. Being kept away from his father and his grandfather.

And here in a foreign land. And so the two men left to face their destinies as prophesied by Joseph.

One restored to the palace. One to the gallows. And Joseph left behind to see if he would be freed. We're told that the cup bearer did not remember Joseph.

He forgot him. And so for two whole years, Joseph lingered in prison until the fullness of God's time was come for him. We all have to wait God's time.

[19 : 13] We all want to hurry on with life and achieve things that might not be in God's purpose or God's time for us. So Joseph had to linger in prison.

Joseph had to endure the privations of that place while God's time was fulfilled. And God's time is perfect. Although the delay was due to the ungratefulness of the cup bearer, it's the overruling of God's providence.

And that can be clearly seen as to when and why the cup bearer remembers his dream and tells Pharaoh about it. And he says, I remember my offenses today.

What we cannot fail to see is God's providence here regarding Joseph. And throughout it all, Joseph was waiting for God's time for him.

Remember his words to his brothers on a future occasion. And he said, you meant it for evil, but God for good. Thinking of the timing of the coming of the Ishmaelites to take Joseph into Egypt.

[20 : 35] His being bought by Potiphar. His being put into prison through false accusation. Still being there when the cup bearer and the cook were imprisoned.

See, every man and woman's life is a plan of God. Every experience we go through. Every perhaps mishap. Every heartache.

Every perhaps even promotion. And good. It's all in God's plan for us. And we can all point to experiences that speak of God's plan.

Where we come to live. What brought us to a place. Who are we married. All these and others are evidences of God's plan for you and for me in our lives.

And so, it's only the fool who says in his heart that there is no God. May it not be that any of us in here today would be of that mind and of that opinion.

[21 : 47] That we will become wise with the wisdom of God. We will become wise in seeking after God. And finding him to be not only the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But to our Lord and our God also. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us then conclude our worship.

Sing into God's praise in Psalm 130. Psalm 130. Lord, from the depths to thee I cried my voice. Lord, do thou hear. And to my supplications voice.

Give and attend to the ear. We sing the whole psalm, five stanzas to God's praise. Amen. ■ wait.

For from the very in spout. To thee I cry. My voice, Lord, do thou hear.

[22 : 52] Unto my soul, the nations of the Lord, Give up the gentle ear.

Lord, who shall stand in trouble, O Lord, Should speak in me with thee, But yet will thee forgivenesses, The fear thou mayest be.

I wait for God, my soul doth wait, My hope is in His word.

For the day, Lord, one morning watch, My soul doth wait for the Lord.

I say, Lord, I may not do watch, The morning light to see, Let Israel, O Lord, the Lord, For with His mercy's feet, And let Jesus redemption Is ever come within, And from all His inirages,

[25 : 22] He is, He is, Thresh of the Redeem. And now may grace, mercy, and peace, In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God, rest on you, And abide in you now and always.

Amen.