

### 11.03 Joseph in Potiphar's House (Genesis 37:28, 36; 39:1–19)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows  
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

#### Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- (optional) Flash cards from “Joseph,” Genesis Series 5, A Beka Book, Pensacola, FL
- (optional) Herein Is Love Commentary Series; *Genesis, A Commentary for Children*, by Nancy Ganz, Shepherd Press, 2002.

**Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:** Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *pharaoh*: the king of Egypt
- *captain of the body guard*: chief executioner; he had “the charge of prisoners, and the care of executing them, like our [British] sheriffs” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/genesis-37-36.html>).
- *valet* (pronounced val AY): a personal servant who helps his master in dressing, undressing, and by serving at the dinner table, *etc.*
- *Hebrew*: an adjective for Abram (Genesis 14:13), Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob’s sons (Acts 7:9)

#### Scripture: (NASB)

Genesis 37:28 Then some Midianite traders passed by, so they pulled him up and lifted Joseph out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. Thus they brought Joseph into Egypt. . . . 36 Meanwhile, the Midianites sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, Pharaoh’s officer, the captain of the bodyguard.

39:1 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard, bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him down there. 2 The LORD was with Joseph, so he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. 3 Now his master saw that the LORD was with him and *how* the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hand. 4 So Joseph found favor in his sight and became his personal servant; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he owned he put in his charge. 5 It came about that from the time he made him overseer in his house and over all that he owned, the LORD blessed the Egyptian’s house on account of Joseph; thus the LORD’s blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field. 6 So he left everything he owned in Joseph’s charge; and with him *there* he did not concern himself with anything except the food which he ate.

Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. 7 It came about after these events that his master’s wife looked with desire at Joseph, and she said, “Lie with me.” 8 But he refused and said to his master’s wife, “Behold, with me *here*, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge. 9 There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?” 10 As she spoke to Joseph day after day, he did not listen to her to lie beside her *or* be with her. 11 Now it happened one day that he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the household was there inside. 12 She caught him by his garment, saying, “Lie with me!” And he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside. 13 When she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled outside, 14 she called to the men of her household and said to them, “See, he has brought in a Hebrew to us to make sport of us; he came in to me to lie with me, and I screamed. 15 When he heard that I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled and went outside.” 16 So she left his garment beside her until his master came home. 17 Then she

spoke to him with these words, “The Hebrew slave, whom you brought to us, came in to me to make sport of me; 18 and as I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled outside.”

19 Now when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spoke to him, saying, “This is what your slave did to me,” his anger burned.

### **Introduction/Review:**

Joseph, favored son of Jacob, had dreams that imagined his being exalted above his brothers. Telling his dreams brought the hatred and wrath of those brothers upon him, so much so that they sold him as a slave and then deceived their father, Jacob, by creating false evidence that a wild beast had slain Joseph. ✓I doubt that they had considered the effect this falsehood would have on their father, for Jacob mourned exceedingly and refused to be comforted.

### **Story:**

While Jacob grieved, Joseph, now a seventeen-year-old slave, went with the traders’ caravan all the way to Egypt [locate]. There, the traders sold Joseph to someone else, a man named Potiphar, who had an important position in the kingdom of Egypt. He was captain of Pharaoh’s bodyguard.

#### ***The blessing of God***

Joseph’s new slave position was in Potiphar’s house. We don’t know what job he had at first, but we do know the Lord was with Joseph so that the Lord “caused all that he did to prosper in his hand.” In other words, even from the lowliest of jobs that he might have had, Joseph did so well—“by the ingenuity of his mind, by his ready and speedy learning the Egyptian language, by his dexterity in business, and by the prudence and faithfulness with which he did everything”

(<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/genesis-39-3.html>)—that Potiphar had to give credit to Joseph’s God, whom we know is the one true God.

So impressed was Potiphar with Joseph that he became his personal servant, a valet. Even in this position Joseph excelled so much that Potiphar promoted him to become the overseer of his entire household—over all the servants, over all his money, over all that he owned.

From the time that Joseph became overseer, the Lord blessed Potiphar because of Joseph—God’s blessing was on all that Potiphar owned whether it was in the house or in the field. He didn’t have to worry about a single thing—business, money, crops, flocks—while all he owned was in Joseph’s charge. The only decisions he made had to do with what food he ate.

#### ***The testing from Potiphar’s wife***

The Bible tells us that Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. What does that mean? [He was good looking; his body was well-built.] The lady of the house, Potiphar’s wife, noticed Joseph and became intrigued with him. In fact, although she was married and should not have done this, she made romantic advances to young, handsome Joseph, even to the point of telling him to sin with her.

Joseph refused and said to his master’s wife, “Look, my master doesn’t concern himself with anything in the house; all that he owns is in my charge. No one greater in this house than I, and he has kept nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?”\* Notice that although the sin would be against himself, against his master, and against his master’s wife, the One who mattered most to Joseph was his God; he would not sin against God.

Nevertheless, this woman badgered him day after day. Joseph would not listen to her or be with her.

#### ***The purity of Joseph***

However, one day when he went into the house to do his work, all the men of the household were gone; no one was in the house except Potiphar’s wife. She became aggressive, catching Joseph by his coat. In order to get away from her, Joseph slipped his arms out of the coat, left his garment in her hand, and ran outside.

When Joseph fled outside and left his garment in the hand of Potiphar's wife, she devised a way she could get revenge on this slave who had rebuffed her. She called to the male servants and said, "My husband has brought in a Hebrew to us to make sport of us. Joseph tried to attack me, but I screamed. When he heard that I screamed, he left his garment beside me and ran outside."

Then this devious woman kept Joseph's coat until Potiphar came home. She spoke to her husband [with a pathetic voice], "The Hebrew slave, whom you brought to us, made romantic advances to me, but I raised my voice and screamed. Look, he left his garment beside me and fled outside." Oh, some people can be so deceitful!

When Potiphar heard the words of his wife, he was very angry. The Bible states, "His anger burned."

What will happen to innocent Joseph? Is God still with Him? Yes, He is even though it doesn't appear to be so.

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\* "[T]he words are emphatic in the original, 'this! this wickedness! this great one!'"  
(<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/genesis-39-9.html>).

### **Lessons from this lesson:**

- We see Jesus:
  1. Joseph was delivered into the hands of foreigners, and Christ into the hands of the Gentiles (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/genesis-37-36.html>).
  2. Scripture tells of no protest by Joseph against false accusations and unfair treatment. Isaiah 53:7 tells us Jesus was "oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: . . . as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth."
- The Lord was with Joseph in an amazing way. He is with believers too, even though they may not see the outward manifestation that Joseph saw.
- When tempted to sin, we might remember Joseph's words, "How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?"
- Remember that God is with believers even in difficult times.

### **Activities:**

- Play dough: coat; house
- Discuss whether Potiphar was angry with Joseph or with his wife. Most teachers think he was angry with Joseph, but a case could be made that he was angrier with his wife. Here are four points for consideration:
  1. The Bible doesn't tell us with whom Potiphar was angry.
  2. ✓The wife's assaults could have been going on for as much as a year. It is possible Potiphar was aware of his wife's intentions.
  3. Joseph had proven himself to be totally trustworthy and to have great integrity.
  4. [Later, when Joseph was put in prison, Potiphar might have been in charge of the prison.]
- Sing stanzas 1–3 of "Joseph" found at Lesson 11.01 or on the Songs page at [teachingthebibletochildren.org](http://teachingthebibletochildren.org), where an audio and a visual are available.
- Snack: raisins, grapes, or raisin cookies
- Sing Diana Dow's "Joseph, What Will You Choose?" found with audio at <http://www.biblesongsandmore.com/songs/old-testament-songs/josephchoosesong/>.

- Find some background information on Egypt. Avoid highlighting Egypt's gods.
- Review questions: (Game: As head of the household, Joseph, living around 1750 B.C., probably had to keep records with papyrus, instituted around 3000 B.C., and a writing instrument. Students may put a pencil in a container for each correct answer they give.)
  1. To whom did the traders sell Joseph? [To Potiphar, Pharaoh's captain of the bodyguard.]
  2. How old was Joseph when he went to Egypt? [Seventeen years old.]
  3. How was it apparent to Potiphar that Joseph's God was with Joseph? [Everything he did prospered.]
  4. What is the first specific job Joseph had in Potiphar's house? [Potiphar's valet.]
  5. To what position was Joseph promoted? [Overseer of Potiphar's household.]
  6. Over how much did Joseph have control? [Over everything except what Potiphar ate.]
  7. Who wanted Joseph to sin? [Potiphar's wife.]
  8. Against whom was Joseph most concerned that he would not sin? [Against God.]
  9. How did Potiphar's wife lie? [She accused Joseph of sinning; she said she had cried out.]
  10. How did Potiphar respond to his wife's story? [He burned with anger.]

**Memory Verse[s]:**

- Genesis 39:9—"How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?"

**Handwork:**

- Younger students may color the clip art page found below.
- Older students may do the crossword puzzle found below.

**Pharaoh**

**captain of the body  
guard**

**valet**

**Hebrew**

















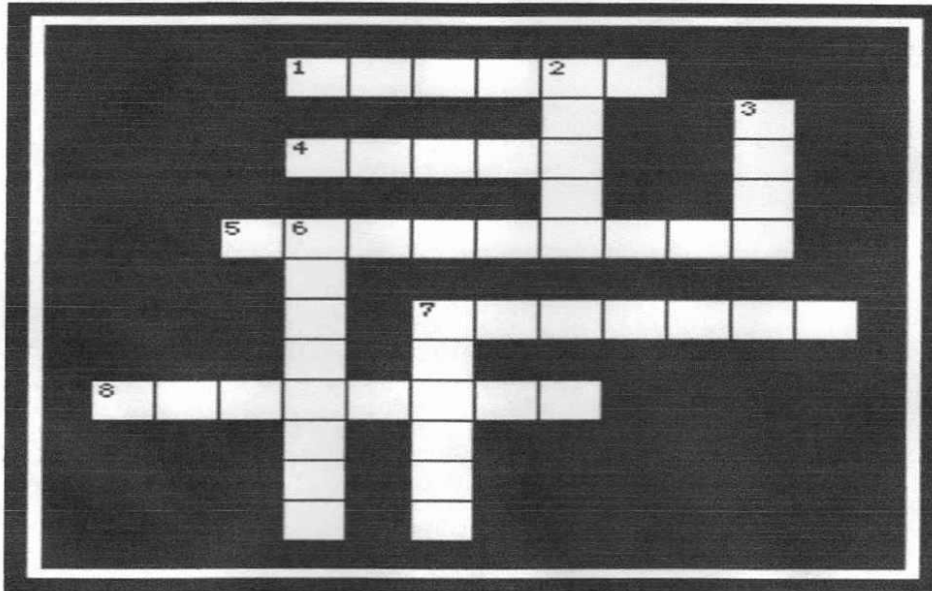


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## 29. JOSEPH & POTIPHAR (GENESIS 39:1-23)



- 1 ACROSS "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of \_\_\_\_." **MATTHEW 5:10**
- 2 DOWN "Now Joseph had been taken down to \_\_\_\_\_. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there." **GENESIS 39:1**
- 3 DOWN "And his master saw that the \_\_\_\_\_ was with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand." **GENESIS 39:3**
- 6 DOWN "So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him \_\_\_\_\_ of his house, and all that he had he put in his hand." **GENESIS 39:4**
- 8 ACROSS "So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field." **GENESIS 39:5**
- 7 DOWN Then Potiphar's anger was aroused against Joseph, and his "master took him and put him into the \_\_\_\_\_, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in prison."  
**GENESIS 39:20**
- 4 ACROSS "But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him \_\_\_\_\_, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison." **GENESIS 39:21**
- 5 ACROSS "And the keeper of the prison \_\_\_\_\_ to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in prison."  
**GENESIS 39:22**
- 7 ACROSS "The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph's hand, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it \_\_\_\_\_." **GENESIS 39:23**