

Joseph – part 2

Joseph suffers in the hands of Potiphar

by Victor Torres

Last time we started the story of Joseph, Israel's son with his beloved wife Rachel. Joseph brought an evil report to his father about his brothers and his brothers hated him for this. Not only that, but Israel (formerly known as Jacob) loved Joseph more than his other sons, and this made Joseph's brothers hate him more. His dreams to rule over them didn't help with their relation either.

Gen 37:3 (ESV) Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors.

Gen 37:4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, **they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.**

The robe or coat of many colors is a symbol of rulership, and this rulership was also confirmed in Joseph's dreams.

Gen 37:5 One day, Joseph told his brothers what he had dreamed, and they hated him even more.

Gen 37:6 Joseph said, "Let me tell you about my dream.

Gen 37:7 We were out in the field, tying up bundles of wheat. Suddenly my bundle stood up, and your bundles gathered around and bowed down to it."

Gen 37:8 His brothers asked, "**Do you really think you are going to be king and rule over us?" Now they hated Joseph more than ever because of what he had said about his dream.**

This hatred for Joseph resulted in his brothers planning to kill him.

Gen 37:18 (ESV) They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them **they conspired against him to kill him.**

But the Lord used Reuben to save Joseph's life, so his brothers ended up selling him to the Ishmaelites who were going to Egypt.

Gen 37:26 (CEV) So Judah said, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and hide his body?"

Gen 37:27 Let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not harm him. After all, he is our brother." And the others agreed.

Gen 37:28 When the Midianite merchants came by, Joseph's brothers took him out of the well, and for twenty pieces of silver they sold him to the Ishmaelites who took him to Egypt.

Gen 37:29 When Reuben returned to the well and did not find Joseph there, he tore his clothes in sorrow.

Gen 37:30 Then he went back to his brothers and said, "The boy is gone! What am I going to do?"

As Jacob's eldest son, Reuben is supposed to be the leader of his brothers. He was used by God to save Joseph from murder, but his brothers sold Joseph behind his back. If he really wanted to save Joseph, he should have told them to stop what they were planning in the first place. He should have brought an evil report to his father also as Joseph did. But he knows he will be hated by his brothers also if he would have done the right thing.

We are like Reuben in some parts of our life. We are afraid to be hated by others. We just want to fit in. But this need to belong in the larger group is not the calling of the elect of God. The elect are called to be the opposite: to be separated from their brothers.

Let's continue the story of Joseph:

Gen 37:31 (CEV) Joseph's brothers killed a goat and dipped Joseph's fancy coat in its blood.

Gen 37:32 After this, they took the coat to their father and said, "We found this! Look at it carefully and see if it belongs to your son."

Gen 37:33 Jacob knew it was Joseph's coat and said, "It's my son's coat! Joseph has been torn to pieces and eaten by some wild animal."

Gen 37:34 Jacob mourned for Joseph a long time, and to show his sorrow he tore his clothes and wore sackcloth.

Gen 37:35 All of Jacob's children came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. "No," he said, "I will go to my grave, mourning for my son." So Jacob kept on grieving.

This part of Joseph's story shows how heartless his brothers were. They would rather have their dad grieving for a long time so that their brothers would not turn on them.

Gen 39:1 (CEV) The Ishmaelites took Joseph to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, the king's official in charge of the palace guard.

Gen 39:2 – 3 So Joseph lived in the home of Potiphar, his Egyptian owner. Soon Potiphar realized that **the LORD was helping Joseph to be successful in whatever he did.**

If we are hardworking as any servant of God should be, God will make us succeed in whatever we do.

Gen 39:4 (CEV) Potiphar liked Joseph and made him his personal assistant, putting him in charge of his house and all of his property.

Gen 39:5 Because of Joseph, the LORD began to bless Potiphar's family and fields.

When we serve someone like we are serving the Lord Himself, this becomes our witness to them that we are true followers of Christ. Our end goal should be to show others what we are being taught by the Lord.

Tit 2:9 (BBE) Servants are to be under the authority of their masters, pleasing them in all things, without argument;

Tit 2:10 Not taking what is not theirs, but giving clear signs of their good faith, **in all things doing credit to the teaching of God our Saviour.**

Joseph must be following the example of his father who worked hard for Laban, as Laban was also blessed through Jacob.

Let's continue the story:

Gen 39:6 (CEV) Potiphar left everything up to Joseph, and with Joseph there, the only decision he had to make was what he wanted to eat. Joseph was well-built and handsome,

Gen 39:7 and Potiphar's wife soon noticed him. She asked him to make love to her,

Potiphar's wife is the symbol of Babylon or the false churches who seduces us with her false teachings or her flattery.

Isa 30:9 (CEV) They have turned against the LORD and can't be trusted. They have refused his teaching

Isa 30:10 and have said to his messengers and prophets: Don't tell us what God has shown you and don't preach the truth. Just say what we want to hear, even if it's false.

But Joseph must have been taught well by Jacob and he was given the faith to resist this woman's seduction:

Gen 39:8 (CEV) **but he refused and said**, "My master isn't worried about anything in his house, because he has placed me in charge of everything he owns.

Gen 39:9 No one in my master's house is more important than I am. The only thing he hasn't given me is you, and that's because you are his wife. I won't sin against God by doing such a terrible thing as this."

Gen 39:10 She kept begging Joseph day after day, **but he refused to do what she wanted or even to go near her.**

We will all want something in this life that will take us away from our service to God. This conviction by Joseph is coming from the Lord. Through studying His words, God will give us this same conviction to resist the "flattering words" of false churches and false ministers.

Pro 6:23 (CEV) The Law of the Lord is a lamp, and its teachings shine brightly. Correction and self-control will lead you through life.

Pro 6:24 They will protect you from the flattering words of someone else's wife.

Let's continue the story of Joseph:

Gen 39:11 (CEV) One day, Joseph went to Potiphar's house to do his work, and none of the other servants were there.

Gen 39:12 Potiphar's wife grabbed hold of his coat and said, "Make love to me!" Joseph ran out of the house, leaving her hanging onto his coat.

Gen 39:13 When this happened,

Gen 39:14 she called in her servants and said, "Look! This Hebrew has come just to make fools of us. He tried to rape me, but I screamed for help.

Gen 39:15 And when he heard me scream, he ran out of the house, leaving his coat with me."

Gen 39:16 Potiphar's wife kept Joseph's coat until her husband came home.

Gen 39:17 Then she said, "That Hebrew slave of yours tried to rape me!

Gen 39:18 But when I screamed for help, he left his coat and ran out of the house."

Even if we do everything right, we shouldn't expect people will always treat us good. Some of them are being used by God to test our faith in Him. Joseph was accused of a crime he did not do as our Lord who did not sin was also accused of all sorts of things, even calling Him possessed by demons or bad spirits.

Mar 14:55 (CEV) The chief priests and the whole council tried to find someone to accuse Jesus of a crime, so they could put him to death. But they could not find anyone to accuse him.

Mar 14:56 Many people did tell lies against Jesus, but they did not agree on what they said.

Mar 14:57 Finally, some men stood up and lied about him. They said,

Mar 14:58 "We heard him say he would tear down this temple that we built. He also claimed that in three days he would build another one without any help."

Mar 14:59 But even then they did not agree on what they said.

Mar 14:60 The high priest stood up in the council and asked Jesus, "Why don't you say something in your own defense? Don't you hear the charges they are making against you?"

Joseph did not defend himself but he suffered quietly in the hands of Potiphar.

Gen 39:19 (CEV) Potiphar became very angry

Gen 39:20 and threw Joseph in the same prison where the king's prisoners were kept. While Joseph was in prison,

This is a direct parallel to our Lord who also did not defend Himself on the accusations against Him.

Mar 14:60 (ESV) And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?"

Mar 14:61 **But he remained silent and made no answer.** Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"

Mar 14:62 And Jesus said, "**I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.**"

But when our Lord was asked if He is the Christ, the anointed or chosen one of God, He did not hesitate to answer them.

This angered the high priest and the Jewish leaders, as Joseph's brothers hated him when he claimed he was chosen by God to rule over them.

Mar 14:63 (CEV) At once the high priest ripped his robe apart and shouted, "Why do we need more witnesses?"

Mar 14:64 You heard him claim to be God! What is your decision?" They all agreed that he should be put to death.

Mar 14:65 Some of the people started spitting on Jesus. They blindfolded him, hit him with their fists, and said, "Tell us who hit you!" Then the guards took charge of Jesus and beat him.

We must always remember how our blameless Savior took all these undeserved punishment silently as we, the elect, are also bound to suffer the hatred of those who can't accept Christ's teachings.

Gen 39:19 (CEV) Potiphar became very angry

Gen 39:20 and threw Joseph in the same prison where the king's prisoners were kept. While Joseph was in prison,

Gen 39:21 the LORD helped him and was good to him. He even made the jailer like Joseph so much that

Gen 39:22 he put him in charge of the other prisoners and of everything that was done in the jail.

Gen 39:23 The jailer did not worry about anything, because the LORD was with Joseph and made him successful in all that he did.

As we suffer, the Lord will also help us and encourage us through those who have His mind. It is the Lord's plan to give the rulership of this world to those whom He chooses. This will happen without a shadow of a doubt, and this truth should encourage us as we go through all our trials.

1Pe 1:3 (CEV) Praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is so good, and by raising Jesus from death, he has given us new life and a hope that lives on.

1Pe 1:4 God has something stored up for you in heaven, where it will never decay or be ruined or disappear.

Luk 12:32 (ESV) "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.