

Lesson: Joseph’s Favor and the Promise Pt. 1 (Genesis 39:1-23)

Joseph was thrown into a pit and sold into slavery by his brothers. But they had no idea that his descent into a pit would lead not only to his ascension to a seat of authority but toward the uplift of the entire family. The next several chapters detail to how God favored Joseph to fulfill his divine dreams so that God’s promise might be preserved for the salvation of his family and the whole world.

Biblical Takeaways

1. ***Joseph’s captivity (Gen 39:1):*** Joseph’s brothers sold him into slavery for 20 pieces of silver. People were sold and often sold themselves into slavery all the time. This is why the practice receives some level of regulation in the Bible. In this time, as in the New Testament, slavery was often a better alternative to impoverished freedom. The problem with this case was Joseph was born free and part of a wealthy family. It made no sense for him to be sold as a slave. His life ended up being a precursor to what would happen to the rest of his family after his death. Though a slave, he was a high-class slave, being sold to the captain of Pharaoh’s guard.
2. ***Joseph finds favor with God (Gen 39:2-6a)***
 - a. A theme that will be repeated in this story is God’s presence in the midst of seemingly bad circumstance. Despite being sold into slavery, the Lord was with Joseph. God was still in control in a chaotic situation. He was a slave getting closer to Pharaoh’s house.
 - b. Joseph was promoted in Potipher’s house because despite his enslavement, he was still favored by God. He was promoted **in** Potipher’s house. Joseph’s promotion was a sign of a greater promotion over all of Egypt.
3. ***Trouble finds Joseph (Gen 39:6b-20)***
 - a. Joseph’s favor also attracted trouble. Joseph’s good looks brought unwanted attention from Potipher’s wife and she attempted to violate him. Being favored by God will always attract trouble. Favor demands an enemy to demonstrate its potency. You will not know the power of favor until you have a problem.
 - b. Potipher’s wife used xenophobic tactics attack Joseph. The fact that he was a non-Egyptian was used to suggest he would have been inclined to hurt her. Joseph was condemned by Potipher without proof except the word of his wife. His class status (enslaved) and foreign identity made him easier to shut away.
4. ***Joseph prospers in prison (Gen 39:21-23)***
 - a. The Lord remained with Joseph even after being placed in prison. Suffering persecution in no way proved the absence of God. God was still keeping and protecting Joseph who carried the promise in order to protect his family from upcoming danger.
 - b. Favor followed Joseph into prison. God’s favor follows you into whatever place you may enter. Again, the circumstances of life never dictate the favor of God. Joseph oversaw Potipher’s house because of God’s favor, now Joseph would oversee the prison. God knows how to make the best out of a seemingly bad situation. We should always remember to walk in God’s favor, in peace, without sinking to the level of our circumstances. God can still bring elevation in low places.