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## What Does the Bible Say About Joseph?

**Intro:** Joseph was betrayed by his own brothers and sold as a slave. Ishmaelite merchants purchased him for less than \$100.00. His brothers sold him for the price of a crippled slave! The Ishmaelites took Joseph to Egypt and put him up for sale in that land.

Try to put yourself in Joseph's shoes for a moment. You are seventeen years old. You are the favored son in a family of twelve sons. Your father had chosen you to be the head of the family and he had given you a beautiful robe to symbolize this fact. You are on the path to power, influence, and prominence in your family.

Then, in a moment of time, everything is gone. Stripped of your coat; betrayed by people who should have loved you, separated from your father; sold as a slave and carried off into a strange land. Imagine the humility of being examined and sold in a slave auction.

In many ways, you are just a simple country boy from an unsophisticated family, and you find yourself transported to the capital city of the most advanced nation on the earth.

Imagine how Joseph must have felt as the camels crested the last hill and the wonders of ancient Egypt spread out before him on the planes of Giza. The great pyramids would have been standing in Joseph's day. In fact, they would have been over a thousand years old when his great-grandfather Abraham visited that land many years before. Joseph would have seen the Sphinx, the great Egyptian temples and the opulent palaces of the Pharaoh and his people. It must have been a great culture shock to this young man from the country.

On the surface it seemed that circumstances could not have been worse for young Joseph. In truth, those difficult days were mere stepping stones along the path to greater glory. It may have appeared that all Joseph's dreams had been shattered, but the God who gave the dreams in the first place was working behind the scenes to ensure that they would all be fulfilled in His time.

What no one could see in all this trouble surrounding young Joseph's life is stated clearly in [Gen. 39:2](#) – (*And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.*). In that verses, the Bible says, "**And the Lord was with Joseph.**" I want us to learn the great truth that our God is always with His people to see them through their trials; to accomplish His plans in their lives; and to use them point a lost world to Himself.

I want to join Joseph in the early days of his slavery. I want to show you the **ways** we know "**the Lord was with him.**" As we study these truths please keep in mind that what the Lord did for Joseph, He will also do for you. Let me share with you the **ways** God blessed this young man.

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I. 37:36 **GOD PROTECTED HIM**

A. As stated a moment ago, it seemed that all had fallen apart for Joseph. Yet, if you will take a minute to examine the facts, it becomes clear that Joseph was in the hand of divine providence. Considering all he faced, too many things “**just happened**” to fall into place for him. Consider:

- **The intervention of Reuben – [Gen. 37:21-22](#).**

*<sup>21</sup>And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.*

*<sup>22</sup>And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.*

- **Judah’s idea to sell Joseph as a slave – [Gen. 37:26-26](#).**

*<sup>26</sup>And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?*

- **The appearance of the Ishmaelite traders – [Gen. 37:28](#).**

*<sup>28</sup>Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.*

- **The fact that he was sold to Potiphar – [Gen. 37:36](#).**

*<sup>36</sup>And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard.*

Potiphar is called “**the captain of the guard**”. His position seems to have been that of chief executioner. He was like the head of Pharaoh’s secret police. He was responsible for protecting his boss and for dealing with those who dared attack the Pharaoh. Potiphar, by virtue of his position, would have been in contact with many of the dignitaries and political officials of Egypt. It is not outside the realm of possibility that Joseph would have been introduced to many of the influential people who would later serve him.

- God set everything up just like it needed to be so that Joseph arrived exactly where he needed to be at the exact moment he needed to be there.

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- Joseph might have been a slave, but he was safe in the arms of divine providence. He might have been separated from his earthly father, but his heavenly Father went with him and before him into Egypt.

B. You can see how much control the Lord has by looking at the actions of the people involved in this account. Joseph's brothers, the Ishmaelite traders, and Potiphar were all serving their own selfish interests. His brothers wanted rid of Joseph and his dreams. The Ishmaelites were out for a profit. Potiphar was just looking for a good deal on a slave. What they could not see is that they were all unwittingly accomplishing the purposes of a sovereign God.

Isn't it a comfort to know that God can use lost people to accomplish His purposes? Isn't it a blessing to know that all the events of our lives are part of God's plan for us?

C. While the events of Joseph's life appeared to be out of control, they were actually being controlled by God. You see, Joseph was being protected by the Lord. Notice how God protected him.

- **By God's presence** – [Gen. 39:2](#)

2 *And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.*

- **From a bitter spirit** – There is no hint that Joseph was angry about his difficulties. He surrendered even to his hardships.

- **By God's providence** – The dreams God gave Joseph in [Gen. 39:5-11](#)

5 *And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.*

6 *And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.*

7 *And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.*

8 *But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand;*

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- 9 *There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*
- 10 *And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.*
- 11 *And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within.*

were not off track. They were being fulfilled, in God's time and in God's way. I am sure those dreams sustained Joseph during the dark days of his servitude.

You and I have the same protections that Joseph enjoyed.

- **We have His presence – [Heb. 13:5](#);**

- 5 *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

[Matt. 28:20](#)

- 20 *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

- **We have His help to deal with our past, our problems and our pain His way – [Eph. 4:29-32](#).**

- 29 *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

30 *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

31 *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:*

32 *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

(III. We do not have to become bitter, angry or unforgiving. We can display a sweet spirit, even during the most trying of times with our Lord's help!)

**We have God's promise that all "*things work together for our good*",**

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**Rom. 8:28.**

**28** *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

*A lot of what happens in life does not make good sense, but it does not change the fact that God is in control of everything that happens to us,*

*Eph. 1:11*

**11** *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*

*Isa. 46:10*

**10** *Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:*

*2 Cor. 4:17-18*

**17** *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;*

**18** *While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

*Rom. 8:18.*

<sup>18</sup>*For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

D. Obedience to the Lord may lead us into the eye of a terrible storm. This proved true in Joseph's life. This was also true of the Lord Jesus, Ill. *Isa. 53:10.*

<sup>10</sup> *Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.*

As I have told you before, God's purpose in our trials is not to harm us, but to develop us. We can trust Him to protect us and grow us amid the hardships of this life,

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*Jer. 29:11*

*<sup>11</sup>For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end..*

Our God is in control!

## II. *Gen. 39:2-3* **GOD PROSPERED HIM**

*<sup>2</sup>And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.*

*<sup>3</sup>And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand.*

- A. When Joseph arrived in Egypt, he no longer had his coat of many colors. He may have lost his coat, but his character was very much intact!

The coat Jacob gave Joseph was a symbol of his position in the family. It marked him as the overseer. It marked him as the head of the family. It marked him as the one in charge of all things. It marked him as a man with authority. Joseph's authority did not come from a robe. His authority did not come from some piece of cloth. Joseph's authority came from his character! He was a godly young man who walked before his father in absolute integrity.

When Joseph lost his coat, he lost nothing that made him a great man. Joseph's greatness did not come from the clothes on his body, but from the character of his heart. He may have worn the humble garments of a slave, but he was still a man of character and integrity!

(III. We ought to have the same testimony! We need to be people of character and integrity. Some people are different depending on when you meet them. You meet them at church and they are one person; meet them in town and they are someone totally different.

I would suggest to you that we need to be the same people regardless of where we go. We should strive to do the right thing at all times. We should determine in our hearts that we will have a good attitude and demonstrate Christ-likeness all the time!)

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- B. When Joseph arrived in Egypt, he could have taken several paths. He could have adopted the ways and customs of his new land. He could have abandoned his God and embraced the polytheistic religion of Egypt. But, Joseph just stayed the course! You see, he may have been purchased by Potiphar, but Joseph belonged to God! He had already made up his mind how things would be in his life.

It made no difference to Joseph whether he was in his father's house; in a pit; in the possession of slave traders; or in the house of his master, Joseph had purposed in his heart that he was always going to do the right thing. And, that is just what he did! Joseph was a man of integrity regardless of the situation in which he found himself.

(III. Like Joseph you and I need to establish some boundaries for our lives. We need to make up our minds that there are some things we just are not going to do. (i.e. drinking, drugs, bad language, premarital sex, adultery, pornography, gossip, etc.) Then, when a situation arises, we do not have to debate it, we just know what we will and will not do. We have already made up our minds and the issue is settled!)

- C. We are told in [verse 2](#) that Joseph was “**a prosperous man**”. [Verse 3](#) tells us that “**the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand.**” Some might have looked at Joseph's advancement in the home of Potiphar as “**good luck**”. They see a young man like Joseph and he has some bad breaks, then things turn around for him. Things start heading the other way. People look at that and they say, “**Man. He sure is lucky.**” I want you to know that “**luck**” had nothing to do with Joseph's success. In fact, there is no such thing as “**luck**”. Luck is for fairies, gnomes, sprites and other mythical creatures; not for the children of the living God!

Joseph prospered because God blessed him! Joseph prospered because God saw in Joseph a man He could trust to do His will. What some would call “**luck**” in a person's life may be nothing more than the manifestation of a good, godly character.

Maybe God blesses some people more than He does others because they have the right kind of character. Maybe they enjoy His blessings because they have integrity. Maybe they are blessed because He can trust them to do right!

- D. What I want you to see here is this: Joseph was in a bad situation, but he still lived a life that was blessed by the Lord. I am sure that his life was a life of endless drudgery and service, but he was faithful to his tasks. His character caused him to be faithful to his God and to his human master. As a result, God blessed his life and his work.

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Here are two thoughts I do not want you to miss.

- Just because you are going through trials and problems does not mean that God is not blessing you. You might not see Him moving in your life, but just trust Him and in His time, He will manifest His presence, His glory and His power.
- Joseph made the best of a terrible situation. He demonstrated a proper attitude in the midst of his trials. So should we! The secret to happiness in the hard times is how you respond to what is happening to you. Ninety percent of living a joyful life is simply responding well to your trials. Life is what you make it!

### III. [39:4-6](#) **GOD PROMOTED HIM**

*<sup>4</sup>And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.*

*<sup>5</sup>And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.*

*<sup>6</sup>And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.*

- A. Potiphar saw that the hand of God was upon the life of Joseph, **v. 3**. He knew there was something special about this Hebrew slave. As he watched Joseph work, and as he saw the results of his work, Potiphar saw that everything Joseph touched turned to gold.

Potiphar promoted Joseph and made him the overseer of his entire household. Joseph was in control of everything that happened in Potiphar's home and in his business interests. Potiphar learned that he could trust Joseph to do the right thing. He discovered that Joseph was a man of industry and integrity. He was a worker who did the best job that he could for his master. Joseph served Potiphar like he was serving the Lord!

(III. There is a word here for every person in this room. We all answer to someone! Whoever that person or group of people is we should give them our best at all times. That means giving eight hours of work for eight hours of pay. That means doing what they tell you to without complaint and without an attitude.



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That means serving your employer like you were serving the Lord,

[Eph. 6:5-9](#)

*<sup>5</sup>Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;*

*<sup>6</sup>Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;*

*<sup>7</sup>With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:*

*<sup>8</sup>Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.*

*<sup>9</sup>And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.*

[Col. 3:22](#)

*<sup>22</sup>Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God;*

[4:1.](#)

**<sup>1</sup>Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.**

It means working with industry and integrity for the glory of God.)

B. Like cream Joseph continues to rise to the top. Regardless of the situation in which he finds himself, he walks with integrity, seeking to glorify his God, and it showed in his life.

Even Potiphar the pagan Egyptian saw something different in the life of Joseph. Joseph didn't have to blow his trumpet and tell Potiphar was a great believer he was. The life he lived proclaimed the glory of his God and Potiphar saw for himself the influence of God in the life of Joseph! The touch of God on his life opened the door for Joseph to share his faith with Potiphar.

(III. The same thing ought to be true of each of us! The lives we live should be so different from the world around us that the mark of God's favor will be clear to see,

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*Matt. 5:16.*

*<sup>16</sup>Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.)*

C. Joseph lived a godly life. He glorified God and God promoted him and used him in a powerful way. The Lord will do the same in your life and mine. If He can trust us with the tasks He assigns to us, He will entrust us with greater things down the road. ***“He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much,”*** *Luke 16:10*

*<sup>10</sup>He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much..*

When we bloom where we are planted and when we serve the Lord with industry and integrity, He will open up new avenues of service for us. He will use us when we get in a place of usability!

**Conc:** God used the sorrows of Joseph’s life to shape him into the man He desired him to become. The trials Joseph faced, and the trials you and I face, are never easy. They do, however, teach us to depend on God. Our trials help us to maintain a tender and compassionate heart. Our trials teach us the value of tears. Our trials make us useful to the Lord. We should never seek to shun the trials of life. In shunning our trials, we are also shunning the best of God’s blessings in this life. A.W. Tozer once said, ***“It is doubtful that God ever used anyone greatly without first hurting them deeply.”***