

Joseph and Potiphar's Wife

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Preacher: Rev Andrew Coghill

[0 : 00] Now the narrative in Genesis takes up again after the interview of Judah and his misdemeanors, shall we say, and his waywardness and the incident with Tamar, his daughter-in-law.

It picks up again with the story of Joseph, who being brought down into Egypt is then sold as a slave. The one good thing you might say, I suppose, about his situation as a slave there is that his buyers, those who bought him off his brothers, have at least a vested interest in looking after him in the short term.

They want their product, for want of a better term, to look its best and to look healthy and well cared for so they will get the best possible price for him.

And Potiphar, as the captain of the guard is told here, is clearly looking to augment his household and whether he himself personally buys the slave or whether he does it through an agent or somebody else, it is he who is credited with buying Joseph, who bought him off the hands of the Israelites, which had brought him down further.

And the Lord was with Joseph and he was a prosperous man and he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. Now we know from the previous chapters that Joseph is 17 at the time when he is bought as a slave.

[1 : 20] It is highly unlikely, in fact, it is impossible that a 17-year-old, fresh off the slave market, is going to be made overseer of the house of the captain of the guard.

So I think we can safely take it that what is described in this chapter is events taking place over many years. We don't know exactly how many years.

But what we do know is that when Joseph is brought before Pharaoh, finally, we know that he is 30 years old then. In the references we looked at last time, we saw what age he was when he stood before Pharaoh.

And it's there in chapter 41, verse 46. And we also know that it says at the beginning of chapter 41, at the end of two full years, Pharaoh dreamed.

And behold, he stood by the river. And that's when the chief butler then says, oh yes, I now remember somebody who was in prison with me. So Pharaoh's dream is two years after the butler and the baker have their dreams that you read about in the subsequent chapter.

[2 : 28] So Joseph is 28 when their dreams are relayed. So there is 11 years between his being brought by Potiphar and his interpreting the dreams for the baker and the butler of Pharaoh.

So during the course of that 11 years, given that he is obviously put into prison at some point before that, we don't know exactly how long. We must take it that he has risen rapidly in Potiphar's household, but not totally rapidly.

He wouldn't just be a teenager when he was in charge of the whole house. But over the course of the years, having started, no doubt, with the most menial tasks, being the newest slave, the bottom of the heap, he would be given all the grubby jobs.

He would be given cleaning out the latrines if they had them or carrying out the muck or emptying the equipment of the bins or whatever it would be. He would be given the lowest jobs in the household.

But he would be in the household. That's a key thing. Some commentators have pointed out the fact that if a slave was taken in war, you know, like captives taken in war, they were considered, you know, pretty much a chaff.

[3 : 41] They would be sent out to work in the fields or in the mines or the outside menial hard labor tasks. But a slave that you had bought with money at the market was meant to be a sort of superior quality slave.

You would put them into your household. Slightly more refined kind of quality of person to be put to work. And this is where Joseph would be. Because he has been bought with money and because he is a comparatively young man, still just 17, he is clearly reckoned to be trainable in the ways that might be of help to the running of a household.

So he is put into Potiphar's household, the captain of the guard. Now, different commentators say, oh yeah, it doesn't mean captain of the guard. It might mean sort of the chief cook or in charge of all the fields or the plantations.

It might mean anything. Most likely, it means that he is in the one in charge of the protection of Pharaoh. The police, if you might say, the chief of.

So he is one who lives nearby to Pharaoh, almost certainly in the capital itself. It has been pointed out by some that his name means one who is dedicated to the worship of the sun, which was based in Heliopolis or On, which is at the top, or if you're looking at a map, I suppose you could say the bottom bit, of the delta, the Nile delta.

[5 : 08] And if you'll notice that when later on Joseph is married, and when Joseph is elevated in the sight of Pharaoh, that he is given the daughter of Potiphar, the priest of On.

And you'll see that there's a very, very similar name in chapter 41, verse 45. The daughter of Potiphar, priest of On. So, I mean, the priest of On, one dedicated to the worship of the sun.

So Potiphar, very, very similar name. Obviously one dedicated to this particular deity. So he would be in the capital, wherever the pharaohs would be based at that time.

Some have suggested it was in On or Heliopolis. It doesn't follow necessarily that Potiphar of the capital was precisely there, just because that's his name, but he would be based where Pharaoh was based.

The captain of the guard, a very high official. And the Lord in his providence is bringing Joseph into the proximity of mixing around those of the top quality, if you like, the high rulers and shakers in Egypt.

[6 : 18] Because Potiphar would be mixing with those who would be the top rulers in Pharaoh's court. He himself wouldn't be a ruler, he'd be a servant as the captain of the guard, but they would be in and around him.

He would be moving in that strata of society. And Joseph, as a slave of the household, he would be around these people. He would be learning how to run a household for the benefit of these top administrators, top people.

His master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand. Now I think we can safely take it that a pagan like Potiphar would not be saying, oh yes, it's obviously Jehovah, the Lord of the Hebrews, who is with him.

But clearly he can see that everything Joseph does is blessed. Everything he does is diligently done, faithfully done, and the Lord causes it to be blessed.

Hebrews tells us, I'm thinking of Proverbs, tells us chapter 22, chapter 22 and verse 29, He won't be down amongst the lowest of the law.

[7 : 38] If he's diligent and faithful in his business, he will rise. And Potiphar can see that Joseph is diligent even in the meanest tasks. So if he's faithful in a few things, he is given more to do.

That's what Jesus teaches in the parable in Matthew 25, with the parable of the talents, where we read it in verse 21. His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant.

Thou hast been faithful over a few things. I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Now we can see from later on in this chapter, that it's not just that, no, everything Joseph touches turns to gold, and he doesn't have a hand in it.

It is clearly also a case that being diligent, he is scrupulously honest. He is faithful. He is attentive to his work, even though, yes, he's a slave, but he does it diligently.

He does everything that he does faithfully, and the Lord blesses that, because faithfulness is honoring to God. No matter what our situation is, we seek to do faithfully all that we should do, as to the Lord.

[8 : 52] Psalm 101 verse 6 says, My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me. He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.

Now, Potiphar didn't write those words, but the Lord has caused them to be inspired, that we serve the Lord, when we serve our employers, or our masters, or whatever our situation is, when we do it faithfully.

If a job is worth doing, it is worth doing well. And if you have been entrusted with the fulfilling, or discharging of a particular duty, you do it to the absolute best of your ability, as though it were being done unto the Lord.

And Potiphar sees that what Joseph does is blessed. It prospers. God is with him. Even if he doesn't recognize that it is the God of the Hebrews who is blessing Joseph, he sees that everything Joseph does is well done.

And so the more he puts him in charge of, the more in his household prospers. And what Joseph does, Potiphar knows, will be done well, and it is blessed.

[10:01] Now this is not something that you can notice in five minutes. We said that it was 11 years between Joseph being bought by Potiphar and interpreting the dream for the baker and the butler in prison.

We do not know how long he is in prison. We only know that two years elapsed between that interpreting of the dream and is being called to fail. So it is 11 years.

So it is 11 years during which he rises up in Potiphar's house. So he has the incident with Potiphar's wife and he is cast into prison. However long it passes between them, we do not know.

It is unlikely that he is in prison for less than five years. For example, he is probably in there six, seven years or whatever.

And he is in there the two years, the last two years, remember, are the years when after he is interpreted in the dream, he is languishing there thinking that he is forgotten about.

[11:04] So at any rate we can say that as he rises up through the household, at the time when Potiphar's wife looks upon him and decides she wants him, he is probably in his early to mid-twenties.

A handsome young man, one who appears to be powerful in the sense that he has complete control over the household. All the other servants have to do everything he says and power is something of an aphrodisiac.

Okay, he is still a slave, but this guy that almost everything he touches, prospers, that draws the attention and it makes him even more attractive.

He would always have been a good-looking boy, no doubt, but while he is down cleaning out the latrines or shoveling whatever it is in the courtyard, she is not going to see him. As he rises up through the household, he comes more and more into contact with the state rooms, the master rooms, the places in the house occupied by Potiphar himself and his wife and his immediate family. So as he rises, he comes more into contact with the master and the master's wife. Joseph found grace in his sight and he served them.

[12:18] And he made him overseer over his house and all that he had he put into his hand. 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 he had in the house and in the field. And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand that he knew not what he had save the bread which he did eat.

And Joseph was a goodly person and well-favored. And notice a little throbary comment there. All that he had in the house and in the field. We mentioned how that the lesser hands of slaves would be out laboring in the fields and the hard slog and the manual labor.

But he would be in charge of those who were in charge of them. If he is the overseer of the house, it means that all the other servants of Potiphar are under Joseph's command.

All the other slaves he has control over. Now, in the field, that means his crops. That means that that which he grows on his own land.

[13:24] And Joseph is gaining experience not only of husbandry of flocks and herds, which he would have had some experience of, obviously, as a shepherd before in his father's house, but of the crops and of the fertilizing of the fields and of the best and most efficient way of planting and harvesting and so on.

As I say, this isn't the work of five minutes. For him to be able to rise and be seen to be blessed year upon year. That Potiphar can see it's not just a freak bumper harvest one year.

It's not just that he happened, as you can use the word to get lucky, one year, not that there's any such thing. Or that it just happened to be a break that he got that made this thing go well or that thing go well.

There is a consistency. A consistency that can only be observed with the passage of time. Now, one reason we should take notice of this is that God clearly has a purpose for Joseph. And the purpose for Joseph is that as he rises, he is eventually put in a situation where he can save an entire nation and his father's household.

[14 : 35] The entire nation of Egypt and the covenant line of his own father's household. Had Joseph not been the slave, had he not been sold into Egypt, had he not been bought by Potiphar, had he not been in prison, in contact with the butler and the baker, and thereby in a position to have his gifts relayed into the very ear of Pharaoh himself, then he would not have been in the position of being able to save so many people alive through his divinely given foresight about the bumper years and then about the fire.

So God has a plan in all of this. And part of God's plan is that Joseph should be seen to prosper in Potiphar's house. And as he does, so this is something that will take several years to accomplish. Now, for us in our day and age, there is a tendency for us to maybe, if we do finally resort to prayer, to maybe fall on our knees, maybe ask the Lord for something and then look around to see why it hasn't happened yet.

We are used to an instant society where you can flick the remote control and change channels at any minute, where you can press the button in the microwave and ping, out comes a ready-cooked meal, where you can punch in the numbers into the order bag and out comes cash instantaneously. We expect things instantaneously. God does not work instantaneously. God is not governed so much by time as by the plans of eternity.

[16 : 08] Now, as the Lord has his perfect plan, he will unfold it in his perfect time. And it will take time. Part of Joseph's faithfulness here, and as we will see, we can safely say, it is faithfulness in the God of his fathers, not just diligence in his business, is that he is prepared to submit to God's providence and to discharge his duties as faithfully and diligently as he can.

In one sense, not that he has much choice. He hasn't got any choice about being a slave. There is so much in our lives that we don't have a choice about.

But that doesn't negate the fact that we do have a choice of how we respond within that context. We may be in a place or a situation or even a job or a location that we didn't want to be in.

Something may have happened to us, which meant that we are not in a place where we wanted to be. We maybe can't affect that. We cannot affect what happens to us or around us, but we can decide how we are going to respond within that context.

And the response that will be the most pleasing to God, and which he will bless, will be the response of faith and of diligence in doing that which God would approve.

[17 : 39] That's what Joseph does. And that is what God blesses him for. And it came to pass after these things. This is a phrase which particularly the Old Testament uses to denote the passage of the years.

A passage of indeterminate years. We don't know how many years. It's likely, as we say, that Joseph was probably in his mid-twenties by this stage. He's probably been in the master's house for perhaps seven, eight years.

He is a top bod in the house. And because his business now takes him into close proximity with the family, Potiphar's wife notices him.

And having noticed him, she notices, yes, he's a nice, young, handsome man. Cast her eyes upon Joseph. And she said, lie with me. Now, we do not know whether or not this was routine in pagan Egypt.

We don't know whether the master's wife was permitted her pick of the slaves if she wanted them. We don't know whether this was normal and whether Joseph's reclining of her then was the ultimate insult, that he should, in their society, just have given it to her.

[18 : 53] But he didn't. We don't know whether it is just that she is unduly lustful or whether this was just normal practice for peers. Clearly, it is that which, as you'll see in the context, it's something which, if you read between the lines, it's not something that causes quite so much shock or surprise as you might think.

She cast her eyes upon Joseph and said, lie with me. But he refused and said unto his master's wife, behold, my master would have not what is with me in the house.

He hath committed all that he hath to my hand. There is none greater in this house than I. In other words, look, Potiphar's been good to me. I am doing well in my job. I rule this house and his

establishment and the fields and the land and the crops.

I'm no one in charge. He has kept nothing back from me. I am doing well under Potiphar's hand.

How can I repay his kindness by sinning against him in this way?

He has kept back nothing from me but thee because thou art his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness? And here's the ultimate thing.

[20 : 06] Not just sin against Potiphar, but sin against God. And here is the ultimate witness to all our good and our sin.

Now, we need to recognize here the reality of the situation. And it is all very well for us at several thousand years removed to say, well, of course, that is the answer you should have given.

Quite right to imagine possibly ever wanting to lie with your master's wife. That would be terrible.

Remember that when she makes an accusation, Potiphar is out.

He has to come home at the end of the day. Standard, you might think. Of course he's out. He's doing a job during the day. Of course he's going out. But that means that is normal. It means that every day he is out most of the day.

Every day there is ample opportunity. He is captain of the guard. His wife will be a lady not only of measure but of quality. Whatever will be the best that bathings and cosmetics and attentiveness to hair and makeup and everything can possibly do, she will have the best of the best.

[21 : 15] She will be the best groomed. As far as outward appearances can make a difference, she will be outwardly as beautiful as these outward things can make her. She may not be in a natural beauty in herself, although all that Egypt's cosmetics could do, she would have the best of.

The tempter, as was Matthew Henry the Comptonist said, the tempter was his mistress, a person of quality whom it was his place to obey and in his interests to oblige, whom whose favour would contribute more than anything to his preferments, to his progress, to his career, and by whose means he might arrive at the highest honours of the court.

On the other hand, it was at his utmost peril if he slighted her and made her his enemy. So he has a lot to lose here.

And there's plenty of opportunity. Opportunity, his business takes him into the house. Opportunity makes a thief, makes an adulterer. You see somebody else's possession on a valuable slide, they say, oh, well, they were just asking for it to be taken.

No, they weren't. But opportunity makes a thief. Opportunity makes an adulterer advance what is in our heart. And that favoured the temptation that is now made before him.

[22 : 38] And you should recognise it is a temptation. There is a temptation for him. It's not just he's been asked to do a terrible thing, which he's not, at least very quiet.

But this is a temptation. The tempter was in the house with him. His business led him to be without any suspicion where she was.

None of the household were within at the time. Verse 11 came to pass. About this time, Joseph went into the house to do his business. There was none of the men of the house there within.

There appeared no danger of it being discovered. Or if it should be suspected, his mistress would protect him. If he is prepared to become her toy boy, then she will look out for him.

She'll protect him. She'll make sure that he has access to everything that he needs. So he'll be above suspicion for as long as she doesn't tire him. But here's the thing. He recognises this to be a sin against God.

[23 : 38] But never lose sight in the fact this is a real temptation. She is there. She is available. She is offering herself on a plate.

She will be amongst the most attractive and well-groomed of Egyptian society. She wants him. She is giving him permission. All he has to do is acquiesce in it.

He is a normal male. Probably in his mid-twenties. Where there's normal feelings and temptations and drive. And this is being presented to him constantly.

Because we read, it came to pass as she spake to Joseph day by day. It is a constant temptation. A constant threat.

It's not he declines once. He says, oh well, fine off. That's how you feel. She keeps at him. Day by day. The temptation is there. It must have been almost impossible for him to resist.

[24 : 40] Almost. Came to pass as she spake to him day by day. He hearkened not unto her to lie by her or to be with her. And she came to pass about this time.

Joseph went into the house to do his business. There was none of the men of the house there with him. And she caught him by his garment and said, lie with me. And he left his garment in her hand and fled and got him out.

Now she actually tries to make hands for him. What could he do? He left his garment and fled. Now why does he flee? Why does he just push it off and say, no, we must not do this.

No. Why does he run? He runs because, as the Bible tells us, that is what we are to do in the face of temptation. To flee idolatry. He, I suspect, I would suggest to you, knows that if he stays in her company for even a moment longer, he will give in.

He cannot trust himself not to acquiesce in that which is a real temptation. And let's not pretend.

[25 : 42] It wouldn't have been, in a sense, pleasurable. In a sense, desirable for him. That's partly what makes it a temptation. It appears to be risk-free.

It is there. It is being offered. It is in every way protected. But it is a sin against God. Quite apart from a sin against Potiphar, she could make it and say, Potiphar will never find out.

Now, of course, Potiphar would have found out. Servants talk. Everybody would know. Everybody would see. Everybody would be aware. That she had her eye upon Joseph.

And that so far, Joseph had not given in. And they would all be concluding that he was playing a dangerous game. Perhaps some of them might have thought, I don't know what he's hanging back for.

If it was me, I would definitely go for it. They might have been saying to themselves, but here he has this opportunity. And he is whacking up the angel for himself. Because if he makes an enemy of his master's wife, then she has the power to do him great harm.

[26 : 44] As we discover. It came to pass when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and was fled forth. She called unto the men of her house and spake them, saying, See, he had brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us.

He came in unto me to lie with me. And I cried with a loud voice. It came to pass when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried. He left his garment with me and fled and got him out. And she laid up his garment by her until his lord came home.

Now notice what she's doing here. What is the nationality of the other servants? We don't know. But they almost certainly wouldn't be Hebrews. They might have been other Egyptians who were slaves. They might have been those of other nationalities.

But she describes him as a Hebrew. She is appealing to their racial prejudice. She is trying to make an enemy of Joseph who, remember, rules over all the other slaves.

And would thereby probably be resented by some of them because of that. And to stoke up the resentment against them. In a house such as that, it would be impossible to keep any such actual liaison secret for any length of time.

[27 : 52] The likelihood is that these servants, the men to whom she calls, are probably saying, Oh, that's terrible thing. And we never heard you cry. We never heard you scream. But never mind.

Okay. We're not going to say anything about it. That's okay. So she tries to make an enemy of him to the servants. And then when Potiphar comes home, she spake unto him.

And second, according to these words, the Hebrews 7, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me. And it came to pass as I lifted up my voice and cried that he met his garment with me and fled out.

It came to pass when his master heard the words of his wife which he spake unto him, saying, The Athens manor did this enemy. His wrath was kindled. And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were buried.

And he was there in prison. You might think, oh, that's terrible. Potiphar was really angry. Yes, Potiphar was really angry. But exactly what form did that anger take?

[28 : 50] Now remember, Joseph was a slave. Slaves do not have rats. If somebody chose to kill their own slave, that's their own money they're losing. All the use of investment, all the trust that he has placed in him, if he had put him to death or beaten him to death on the spot, then, you know, that's Potiphar's problem.

You lost all the money you invested in that slave. You lost the steward of your household. That's fine. Okay, that's your problem. Nobody's going to give you a hard time for killing a slave.

Remember, Moses was in trouble when he killed the Egyptian.

But he wouldn't have been in trouble if he killed a fellow Hebrew. Killed a slave. Now, if Potiphar killed his own slave, nobody's going to take him to task for it. But he doesn't kill him. Why doesn't he kill him? Why doesn't he treat him worse than he does? I would suggest to you that Potiphar probably has an inkling either of what his wife is like, and perhaps she has been prone to do this in the past, or perhaps his wrath is really motivated by jealousy, that she has cast an eye on Joseph, that she has begun to take a fancy to Joseph rather than to her own husband, or that he knows the reality that all the years Joseph has been there, has there ever been any word against him?

Has there ever been any instance of wrongdoing, of theft, of any kind of misbehavior, or misdemeanor, or any kind?

[30 : 22] He's probably thinking, can I actually see this happen? Do I really believe that Joseph tried to rape my wife? And if so, why would he look now, after all these years?

Why would he just do it? He would be aware, that his wife was beginning either to talk a wee bit more about Joseph, or beginning to follow him with her eyes, or whatever. He's not blind.

Whoever blind sometimes men can be, he would be aware something was going on. And I would suggest to you, that given that Joseph's punishment could have been fatal, could have been so much more savage than it was, putting him into the state prison, or the captain of the guard's own prison, where Pharaoh's prisons were kept, he is being put, not as some have suggested, in the lowest dungeon of all, and how terrible, or the worst place, Potiphar could put him.

This is not a prison for common criminals. This is a prison for the upper class, if you like, of the prisoners of Pharaoh. Prison was, in those times, or those kind of prisons, were simply a place of detention.

They weren't a punishment in themselves. A person was meant to be put there, until such time as they were brought out, to answer their charges, or sentence was finally passed.

[31 : 44] It might be 10 days, it might be 10 years. And the prison keeper, the jailer, would have quite a lot of leeway, in the control of his prisoners.

As long as, when the master said, bring out that prisoner, from the dungeon, or from the cell, or whatever, as long as he can produce him, that's fine. They're not about to say, my goodness, he's looking awfully well fed, you've been spoiling these guys.

No, they're not going to say that. And they're not going to say, he's been a bit bruised, and badly treated. What are you doing for him in there? They don't care. As long as the jailer, can produce the prisoner, what he's called for, then he's done his job.

He has kept him in war, he produces it when he's asked for. Other than that, he has more or less, completely weight, over what happens, under his jurisdiction. This is not, the worst, of the worst, that could have happened to Joseph.

And I would suggest to you, that whatever else, Potiphar may be, he is not a fool. And I would likewise, suggest that he must have known, something, was amiss here.

[32 : 50] Because as punishments go, this could have been, so much, more severe. He is put, into the prison, a place where the king's, prisoners were bound.

And he was there in the prison. Now don't get me wrong, I'm not suggesting it was great fun, to be in a prison, especially when you're innocent. He may have pled his innocence, he may have said, I didn't do anything, to your wife, I didn't lay a hand with her.

But he's got his wife's word, on the one hand, and the word of a slave, on the other hand. Even if he believes the slave, he cannot, for the sake of public faith, he cannot put the slave's word, over that of his wife.

He will be a laughing stock. He has to act, on his wife's complaint. She has said this happened, even if he thinks she's a liar, he has to do something.

He has to be seen, to do something. His anger, yes, may be against Joseph, may be against his wife. It doesn't actually say, that he is wrathful, with Joseph.

[33 : 55] When he heard the words, of his wife, that his wrath, was kindled. That's all that we're told. Now, I'm not suggesting, he wasn't also angry, with Joseph, but, this could have been, so much worse.

Potiphar, is not a fool. He is bound, by the conventions, of his time, and circumstance. He has to do something, and what he does here, is not half as bad, as it might have been.

He could have had, Joseph put to death, on the spot. Jealousy, might have been, such a driver, that he could have had, him tortured to death, or beaten to death, or sprung up, or whatever it might be. But he just puts him, in the prison, where the top grade, prisoners go. Pharaoh's, prisoners, are put. But the Lord, was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favour, in the sight, of the keeper, of the prison.

Wouldn't have been fun, being in a prison. I'm not suggesting, that at all. Psalm 105, we read, verse 17, he sent a man, before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant, whose feet, they hurt, with fetters.

[35 : 02] He was laid in iron, until the time, that his word came, the word of the Lord, tried them. Prison would not, have been fun, it would have been, the equivalent of, some of it, would have been, underground, because it's described, when he's finally, brought out of there, as the dungeon.

Chapter 41, verse 14, Pharaoh sent, and called Joseph, they brought him, hastily out of the dungeon. Some of it, is underground. But, as far as all, the prisoners there, are concerned, again he rises, to the top, the Lord gave him, favor in the sight, of the keeper of the prison.

This is strange, isn't it? What is it? Where is, this prison? What is, Portipar's job? He's captain, of the guard. Who is likely, to be, living, and working, in close proximity, to a place, where Pharaoh's, prisoners, are kept?

If not, the captain, of the guard. A place, where the king's, prisoners, were banned. This is either, very near, to Portipar's house, or it is a place, which he often, had caused, to frequent, as the captain, of the guard.

It is highly likely, that the keeper, of the prison, had had business, and dealings, with Joseph, as the steward, of Portipar's house, in the past. They probably, either knew each other, or knew of each other.

[36 : 23] And likewise, he would have known, Joseph's reputation, for integrity, and honesty. And, anybody in that situation, they would put to, and together, and say, well this is the accusation, against him.

Does that sound, like the Joseph I know? Does that really, sound like, what this man, is like? And he would likewise, know Portipar's wife. And it could be, that she was a paragon, of virtue.

But clearly, if she has, these kind of ideas, she's not. She cast her eyes, and she looked at him, day by day, and said, lie with me. It's an open invitation. That kind of thing, is very hard, to hide.

So the likelihood, is the keeper of the prison, would have known, of Joseph, and perhaps, have known Joseph, personally, he gave him favour, in the sight, the Lord gave him favour, in the sight, of the keeper of the prison.

The keeper of the prison, committed to Joseph's hand, all the prisoners, that were in the prison, and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison, looked not to anything, that was under his hand, because the Lord, was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.

[37 : 31] How can you prosper, in a prison? Well, I would imagine, that anyone, who has been, in a prison, would be able, to tell you, that there are, bad things, that can happen, and there are better things.

There are jobs, that you want to get, in the prison, whether it's laundry, or working out, in the prison gardens, or in the prison farm, or whatever it might be. There's good jobs, that you can have, if you're a well behaved prisoner, or there's endless, solitary confinement, and punishment block, or whatever the case may be.

In prison life, as in everywhere, there will be, grades of suffering, grades of privilege, grades of benefit. A prison, is simply, in many ways, another self contained world.

Whatever world, we find ourselves in, whatever situation, we find ourselves in, and as we say, most of us, an awful lot of life, happens to us, and we don't have any control, over where we are found, or what happens to us, or how things fall out, to us in life.

We can't control those things, but we can't control, how we respond, in those circumstances. And within that enclosed world, of the prison, the Lord, was with, Joseph, and that which he did, the Lord, made it to prosper.

[38 : 49] Now, obviously, only the Lord, can see into our individual hearts. Only the Lord, knows what it is, that each of us, may be going through. And, figuratively speaking, you may be in a place, where you don't want to be, just now.

Things may be happening to you, that you didn't want to happen. Forces may be acting, in your life, over which you have no control. And you can't do anything, about what happens to you. You can only have some control, over how you respond, in those situations.

And the thing, which we must bear in mind, about all else, throughout this chapter, is that, whether it is, when he is being sold, in the slave market, or whether it is, when he is serving, in Potiphar's house, whether it is, as a lowly slave, whether it is, as a middle-ranking slave, or a steward of the empire house, God was with Joseph, in all of these situations.

God never left him, or pursued him. God enabled him, to resist, that final temptation. God enabled him, to stay faithful, and pure, despite the strength, of the temptation, of the most base, inducement. And the temptation, that must have been immense, for a young, single man, of his condition. The Lord, never left him. The Lord, enabled him, to endure, the false accusation.

[40 : 13] Even in prison, the Lord, was with him there. God does not, promise us, an easy ride, in this life. He does not, promise that, everything will be, sunshine, and sweetness, and light.

He does not, promise that, there will be, no brickbats, or problems, or false accusations. As I think, I have mentioned, in the past, you know, it is one thing, to endure, a false accusation.

I suspect, most of us, have probably had, false accusations, made against us, at some point. I can say for myself, the false accusations, which I know, to be false, trouble me, a lot less, than those things, which I might, have been accused of, which I know, to be true.

Sins of which, we know ourselves guilty. If somebody, were to put their finger, and say, you do this, you're guilty of that, and broadcast it, to the world, that will be, far more destroying, far more damaging.

Let the false accusations, come, of which we know, we are innocent, and we will be able, to withstand them, if the Lord, does not depart from us. God did not leave him, in the slave market.

[41 : 25] God did not leave him, in Potiphar's house. God did not leave him, in all the discharge, of his duty. God enabled him, to be faithful. God enabled him, to withstand temptation, because he was determined, to do so, and God blessed that.

And God did not leave him, even in prison, because he had a purpose, for him there too. Now, so often, in our lives, part of the discouragement, or the soul destroying, element, in many people's lives, is, they look at their life, and they think, what am I doing here?

What is the meaning? What is the purpose, of my life? I cannot see, any reason, why I have been spared, this far, why I am here. What is the Lord doing, putting me here, in my life?

What have I done? What have I ever contributed? What is the point? What is the meaning, of it all? But the Lord, will have a meaning, beyond that, which we can see.

As he has a meaning, and a purpose, in bringing Joseph, into Egypt, in bringing him, even into slavery, in bringing him, even into the prison, all things, over which, he has no control, they are happening, to him, according to the Lord's, and working, of his providence.

[42 : 41] And this, because it is, the Lord's hand, is that, which he will not, forsake him for. Now, if we know, and recognize, there is a purpose, and there is a plan, and that even though, we don't know, why things are happening, as they are, we don't have to understand, because God, understands perfectly, and God knows, exactly what he is doing, with each day, of our lives, and God, does not, make mistakes.

This, I would suggest to you, is the great lesson, of this chapter. It should be, the comfort, to our own souls, that however, and wherever, we find ourselves, the Lord, has purpose, and intention, and meaning, and plan, in all that he does.

And if we know that, we can rest content, in whatever providence, may afflict us. Because if we are, in line with God's plan, and providence, we can trust in him, to bring us through it, and to show us, the meaning, and the purpose, of it all, at the last.

Joseph cannot see it yet. And you may be, in a situation, where you can't see it either. And we don't necessarily, have to see it all. What we have to do, is trust in the Lord, that he will never leave us, because he never has, yet.

Let us pray.