

The LORD was with Joseph and He prospered

39: 1-6a

DIG: How did ADONAI show that He was with Joseph? Why does 39:1, 2 and 5 mention that Potiphar was an Egyptian? How much did Potiphar trust Joseph? Why? What four ways did Joseph foreshadow the life of Christ?

REFLECT: Do you have the favor of the Lord in your life? If not, how can you get it? With all the tragedy in your life, do you believe that God is behind the scenes planning for your welfare? When you go to work, who are you working for? What are people saying about you at work? In your neighborhood? Place of worship?

While Judah's situation was deteriorating in Canaan, Joseph (Hebrew: Yosef) had been taken down to Egypt and sold to Potiphar. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there (39:1). So Joseph becomes a servant. What a contrast from being the most favored son in his father's house to the humiliation of slavery in Egypt. **28. But this was nothing compared to the self-humiliation of the Lord Jesus.** For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but being in very nature God, came to serve and made Himself nothing, giving His life as a ransom for many by taking on the very nature of a Servant (Mark 10:45 and Philippians 2:6-7a).

This fine looking seventeen year old would have been a prize on the slave market. Potiphar, who was the chief executioner for Pharaoh, literally *the chief of the butchers*, bought him immediately. Like Jacob's relationship with Laban, it didn't take Potiphar too long to figure out that ADONAI was with Yosef. Therefore, because of Joseph, the favor of the LORD came to Potiphar's household. The way Joseph met adversity revealed not only his character, but also his faith in God. He didn't mope; the young slave filled his position to the very best of his power and abilities. However, he wasn't successful because of his own power or abilities; he was successful because he had the favor of the LORD.

The favor of the LORD soon became evident, for in some way or another his master observed that ADONAI was with him and was prospering him. Not that Potiphar had any spiritual insight into the ways of God, but being in some way a spiritual or religious man, he became convinced that Yosef's powers must come from a divine source. It is not unusual that unbelieving employers recognize that earnest believers make the best employees. Honesty, integrity, faithfulness, and sobriety are genuine assets to any employer. Such are the fruits of faith and obedience in God. Rabbi Sha'ul encourages us in this regard when he says: **Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men (Colossians 3:23).**

ADONAI was with Joseph and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master for seven to nine years. His master saw that ADONAI was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did (39:2-3). **29. In like manner, Jesus prospered in everything He did.** God the Father said: My Servant will be raised and highly exalted, and the will of ADONAI will prosper in His hand (Isaiah 52:13 and 53:10c). Potiphar was an Egyptian pagan. So he didn't really understand that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was blessing Yosef. He didn't know who was behind it, but he believed it was some kind of deity. He believed his eyes, and he saw that Joseph had success in everything he did.

Yosef prospered in the LORD. His prosperity, however, was not in riches or security. Circumstances can never by themselves produce or guarantee prosperity. The prosperous person is the one who lives a life of faith, while we wait for the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).

As a result, Potiphar was well pleased with Joseph, and Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned (39:4). **30. Joseph was entirely different from any other servant that Potiphar had. ADONAI was with him, prospering him, and he served his master faithfully. So it was with the One whom Joseph foreshadowed. The Lord Jesus was entirely different from any other servant ADONAI ever had. God the Father would say: This is My Son, whom I love. With Him I am well pleased (Matthew 3:17). And Yeshua served faithfully and said: I do exactly what My Father has commanded Me (John 14:31).**

If there were one thing that we could pray for that would bring us every blessing, it would be the favor of the LORD (39:4). The favor of the LORD is better than riches; it is the golden key to the gates of heaven. There are many ways this is expressed in the Bible: they found favor in His eyes, or ADONAI was with him, or the favor of God, or the blessing of the LORD was with him, or ADONAI looked with favor upon him. The favor of the LORD is a supernatural force. The blessing of God can make mountains move and make the seas divide or be calmed. The favor of the LORD will hold the sun in its orbit. When ADONAI looks upon you with favor, the demons tremble when you walk into the room.

Look at some people in Scripture of whom it says they were favored of God. **Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD (6:8).** When he built the ark, he saved his family from a great Flood that was coming upon the earth. Noah obeyed ADONAI, preached one message for one hundred and twenty years and he found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

When **Joseph** went to Potiphar's house, ADONAI was with him; when he went into prison, the LORD was with him. When he was interpreting the dreams of Pharaoh God was with him.

The angel Gabriel told the Virgin **Mary**: You have found favor with God (Luke 1:30). The society in which you live says you should be stoned to death, but you have found favor with God; you are going to give birth in a cave and your Son will lie in a cow's trough, but you have found favor with God. You will have to escape into Egypt to save His life, and He will live a sinless life only to be crucified on a cross, but you have found favor with God.

Likewise, **David** had great success in everything he did because ADONAI was with him (First Samuel 18:14). Saul chased him for ten years from cave to cave trying to kill him but you have found favor with God.

The Bible says that **Jesus** found favor with God and man (Luke 2:52). Dear reader, you have been ransomed by the blood of Christ and are highly favored by God the Father. Don't look at your car, don't look at your house, don't look at your job, don't look at your clothes, and don't look at your bank account. You are a child of the King and highly favored of God.

When you're in the pit, where is the favor of God? When you're falsely accused, where is the favor of God? When you're in prison, where is the favor of God? When your heart is broken, where is the favor of God? When your children are in trouble, where is the favor of God? When your spouse cheats on you, where is the favor of God? When you've lost everything you have, where is the favor of God? You must remember, it's not what you're going through, it's what you're going to that's going to make the difference in your life. The Bible says that when the Christ the King comes back, the meek will inherit the earth (Psalm 37:11 and Matthew 5:5). That means he is going to give it to us. We're not going to have to work for it; we're not going to have to fight for it, the King is going to give it to us because we are highly favored of God.⁵⁹⁴

From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, ADONAI blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. Here again we see the outworking of God's Covenant with Abraham: I will bless those who bless you (12:3). The blessing of ADONAI was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field (39:5). **31. So, too, the Father put Yeshua in charge of all the interests of the Godhead; the manifestation of the Divine character, the glorifying of God's name, and the vindication of His throne.**

It is interesting that three times, in 39:1, 2 and 5, Potiphar is specifically called an Egyptian. Since Joseph was in Egypt, this would seem unnecessary, even repetitious, except for the fact that Pharaoh and most of the rulers of Egypt were themselves not Egyptians. This would be the case since the Hyksos ruled Egypt at that time.

The Hyksos' (chiefs of foreign lands) were Semitic invaders of Egypt, Bedouins from the Arabian Desert, who ruled from about 1720 to 1580 BC. They introduced a number of technological innovations from Asia, like the horse-drawn chariot, the battering ram and the composite bow. The period of their rule was a time of peace and prosperity in **Egypt**. They had their own gods but did not impose them on the **Egyptians**. They maintained ancient **Egyptian** as the official language of the government and allowed many **Egyptians** such as **Potiphar** to serve in the high levels of the government. But they were unable to stem the tide of **Egyptian** nationalism.

When they were finally overthrown, **a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt (Exodus 1:8)**. He would have been one of the native **Egyptian** Pharaohs who, as part of the Hyksos purge, absolutely refused to allow the Jews to live in **the choice region of Goshen (45:10)**. He said: **We must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our Asian enemies, fight against us and leave the country (Exodus 1:10)**.

At any rate, **Potiphar left in Joseph's care everything he had; he did not even check on Joseph because he trusted him that much. He literally didn't know anything about his own affairs. With Yosef in charge the household and the property ran so smoothly that he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate (39:6a)**. It wasn't that he didn't trust **Joseph** serving him his food, but the **Egyptian** custom was that **they** did not eat with foreigners, nor allow foreigners to share the personal **food** they were eating. We will see this come into play in **43:32**.

However **Joseph** was not merely destined to be a successful **attendant**. Apparently **Potiphar's leaving everything in Yosef's care** included his wife. This would spell trouble. But as he continued to live in obedience, **the favor of the LORD** would continue to be with him.