

# Joseph in Egypt

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We left Joseph on the way down into Egypt, where he was carried by the Ishmaelites, to whom his brothers sold him. Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officers, the captain of the guard, bought him of the Ishmaelites, and he was taken into the house of his new master. [I could find no previous stories of Joseph in Elder Waggoner's children's stories]

We may be sure that Joseph was very sad at being separated from his father without a word of farewell, and with no opportunity to send him any message, even to let him know that he was still alive.

But he did not waste his time in mourning; he remembered that "God was with him," and this gave him hope and courage to do the new duties that now came to him in Potiphar's house. He did his work so well and faithfully that Potiphar "made him overseer over all his house, and all that he had he put into his hand."

It might have seemed to Joseph that he was now on the way to the high position that his dreams had led him to expect. But even here he had enemies, and Satan was working to try to hinder God's purpose.

His enemy in Potiphar's house was his master's own wife, a wicked woman who hated Joseph because of his faithfulness to God. She told lies to her husband about Joseph, which made Potiphar so angry that he put him in the prison where the king's prisoners were bound.

This was another bitter trial for Joseph. Writing about it long after, the psalmist said: "His feet they hurt with fetters; he was laid in irons." [Psalm 105:18] But he still remembered that it was God who was trying him, and that His hand would work out His own will in spite of everything.

So again, instead of being wrapped up in his own sorrows, he looked about him for something to do, and did with his might all that his hand found. The result of this was that the keeper of the prison soon put as much trust in him as Potiphar had done, and left everything in his charge. "Whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it."

Joseph had the charge of all the prisoners, and among them were the chief butler and chief baker of Pharaoh's household. When Joseph went into their cell one morning, he noticed that both of these men looked very unhappy. His own troubles had made him kind and sympathetic, and he asked them kindly, "Why look ye so sadly to-day?"

They told him: "We have dreamed a dream, but there is no interpreter of it." Joseph then asked them to tell him their dreams, and he explained to them the meaning. Read the dreams and the interpretation in the 40th chapter of Genesis. The chief butler was to be restored to the king's favour, and to his place as cupbearer, but the baker was to be

hanged. Joseph asked the butler to remember him when it should be well with him, and to speak to Pharaoh about him, so that he might be brought up out of the prison. But when the dreams came to pass just as Joseph had foretold, "yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him," until something happened which brought Joseph again to his mind.

For two full years after the butler left, Joseph was forgotten and left in the prison; but at the end of that time Pharaoh himself dreamed two strange dreams in one night which greatly troubled and perplexed him, and none of the magicians or wise men of Egypt could tell the king the meaning of his dreams.

Then the chief butler remembered Joseph, and he was brought out of the prison in haste to interpret Pharaoh's dreams. He showed the king that it was God who had sent him these dreams to warn him of a time of famine that was coming over the whole world. (See Genesis 41.)

Before the seven years of famine there were to be seven years of great plenty. So Joseph advised Pharaoh to appoint someone to gather up a great store of food during the seven plenteous years, and keep it for the years of famine.

Pharaoh could not think of anyone so well suited for this work as Joseph himself, to whom God had given the wisdom to interpret his dreams, and to give him such good advice. So he made Joseph the Chief Ruler of the land of Egypt, like himself in everything except that he did not sit on the throne. "And he made him to ride in the second chariot that he had, and they cried before him, bow the knee."

Now you see to what Joseph's hard and trying experiences, when he was sent down into Egypt, and again when he was cast into prison, were really leading him,—to be made the governor of Egypt. The work of his brothers and Potiphar's wife against him only helped him on to the place God had appointed for him.

Besides this, his work in Potiphar's house and in the prison, where everything had been left in his charge, was the best preparation that he could have had for the important and responsible position to which God had now brought him. Joseph had been faithful in doing the little duties that came to him day by day, and now he could be trusted with great responsibilities.

Remember that God has a plan for the life of each one of His children, for you just as much as He had for Joseph. And all the little duties and trials, and experiences that each day brings are to fit you for your part in His plan, and to bring you to the place that He has appointed for you.

Another time we will tell you more about Joseph's brothers, and how they came to see him in Egypt.