

**LESSON 11**  
**“How Can I Do This Great Wickedness”**  
**Genesis 34; 37-39**

**OVERVIEW:**

Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers. Joseph refuses to “sin against God.” Shechem, Reuben, and Judah commit serious moral sins. These chapters show the contrast between the moral characters of Joseph and Judah.

The story of Joseph is important to the Latter-day Saints since most of us are literal descendants of Joseph through Ephraim. (Nearly every member of the Church is undoubtedly a literal blood descendant of Jacob. Theodore M. Burton, *God’s Greatest Gift*, p. 120. At the present time most of those who are receiving the Gospel are of the tribe of Ephraim [son of Joseph]. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 5:70)

Genesis 37-50, except for chapter 38, cover the life of Joseph.

**SCRIPTURES:**

THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES CALLED  
GENESIS  
CHAPTER 34

*Shechem defiles Dinah—Hivites seek to arrange marriage with Jacob’s family—Many, being circumcised, are slain by Simeon and Levi—Jacob reproves them.*

1 AND Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.

2 And when Shechem the son of <sup>a</sup>Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her.

3 And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel.

4 And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife.

5 And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter: now his sons were with his cattle in the field: and Jacob held his peace until they were come.

6 ¶ And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him.

7 And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard *it*: and the men were grieved, and they were very <sup>a</sup>wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob’s daughter; which thing ought not to be done.

8 And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife.

9 And make ye marriages with us, *and* give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you.

10 And ye shall dwell with us: and the <sup>a</sup>land shall be before you; dwell and <sup>b</sup>trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein.

11 And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give.

12 Ask me <sup>a</sup>never so much dowry and gift (or ever so high a dowry), and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife.

13 And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister:

14 <sup>a</sup>And they said unto them, (Septuagint: And Simeon and Levi, brothers of Dinah, sons of Leah, said...) We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is <sup>b</sup>uncircumcised; for that *were* a reproach unto us:

15 But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we *be*, that every male of you be <sup>a</sup>circumcised;

16 Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people.

17 But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone.

18 And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son.

19 And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he *was* more honourable than all the house of his father.

20 ¶ And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the <sup>a</sup>gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying,

21 These men *are* peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, *it is* large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters.

22 Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they *are* circumcised.

23 *Shall* not their cattle and their substance and every beast of theirs *be* ours? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us.

24 And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.

25 ¶ And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, <sup>a</sup>Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males. (Is this justifiable homicide?)

26 And they <sup>a</sup>slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out.

27 The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister.

28 They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which *was* in the city, and that which *was* in the field,

29 And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that *was* in the house.

30 And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I *being* few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.

31 And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?

Chapter 35 recounts Jacob's visit to Bethel, the death and burial of Rachel, the sons of Jacob and the death and burial of Isaac.

Chapter 36 gives the descendants of Esau.

## CHAPTER 37

*Jacob loves and favors Joseph, who is hated by his brothers—Joseph dreams that his parents and brothers make obeisance to him—His brothers sell him into Egypt.*

1 AND Jacob dwelt in the land <sup>a</sup>wherein his father was a <sup>b</sup>stranger, (Heb of his father's sojournings) in the land of Canaan.

2 ~~These are~~ (This is the history of) the <sup>a</sup>generations (genealogical lines) of Jacob. <sup>b</sup>Joseph, (According to The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, the name Joseph means "to add" or "may God add," as adding to one's life through a posterity. 1 The Egyptian name given to Joseph was Zaphnath-paaneah (see Genesis 41:45), which experts say could mean "God speaks" or "God reveals." 2 Unger's Bible Dictionary interprets that name to mean "sustainer of life." 3 Others have felt the name Joseph is an adaptation of the name Asaph, meaning "to gather." What we know about Joseph fits all of these interpretations very well. Robert Matthews, Thy People Shall Be My People and Thy God My God: The 22d Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, Chapter 1.) *being* seventeen years old, (The record does not mention whether he held the Melchizedek Priesthood, but President Joseph Fielding Smith said: "He must have had the priesthood before he was sold... for he exercised it in the land of Egypt. Answers to Gospel Questions, 2:9 George A. Horton, Jr., Studies in Scripture, 3:67) was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad *was* with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.

3 Now Israel loved <sup>a</sup>Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* the son of his old age: and he made him a <sup>b</sup>coat of *many* <sup>c</sup>colours. (The Septuagint word indicates many colours, but the Heb. Term may indicate simply a long coat with sleeves.) (The Hebrew word denotes a long coat with sleeves...i.e. an upper coat reaching to the wrists and ankles, such as noblemen and kings' daughters wore. (Keil and Delitzsh, Commentary, 1:1:335. One scholar suggested that it was a tunic reaching to the palms of the hands and soles of the feet; the long tunic with sleeves worn by young men and maidens of the better class; in the case of Joseph, supposed by Bush... to have been the badge of the birthright which had been forfeited by Reuben and transferred to Joseph. (Wilson, Old Testament Word Studies, p. 82.) If indeed this coat signaled that Joseph held the birthright, which may have been in question among the brothers because there were four firstborn sons in Jacob's family, this fact would explain the intense hostility and jealousy the coat provoked among the other sons of Jacob. Jacob's eleventh son was Joseph; as the eldest son of Jacob and Rachel, Joseph received the birthright when Reuben, eldest son of Jacob and Leah, lost it through unrighteousness (1 Chronicles 5:1-2) Lesson Manual. See the end of Lesson 10 for a description of the birthright custom.)

4 And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

5 ¶ And Joseph dreamed a <sup>a</sup>dream, and he told *it* his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:

7 For, behold, we *were* binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made <sup>a</sup>obeisance to my sheaf.

8 And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

9 ¶ And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.

10 And he told *it* to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What *is* this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to <sup>a</sup>bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

11 And his brethren <sup>a</sup>envied him; but his father observed the saying. (Jacob would remember the dream later in his life.)

12 ¶ And his brethren went to feed their father's <sup>a</sup>flock in Shechem. (About 40 miles away)

13 And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed *the flock* in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here *am I*.

14 And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

15 ¶ And a certain man found him, and, behold, *he was* wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou?

16 And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed *their flocks*.

17 And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan. (Another 12 miles away.)

18 And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they <sup>a</sup>conspired against him to slay him.

19 And they said one to another, Behold, this <sup>a</sup>dreamer (Heb master of dreams) cometh.

20 Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

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

22 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. (It was Reuben's intent to rescue Joseph out of the pit and return him home.)

23 ¶ And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his <sup>a</sup>coat, *his* coat of *many* colours that *was* on him;

24 And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit *was* empty, *there was* no water in it. (A Greek writer has left us a graphic account of such wells and cisterns. He describes them as regularly built and plastered, narrow at the mouth, but widening as they descend, till at the bottom they attain a width sometimes of one hundred feet. We know that when dry, or covered with only mud at the bottom, they served as hiding-places, and even as temporary prisons. (Jeremiah 38:6; Isaiah 24:22) Alfred Edersheim, Bible History Old Testament, Chapter 19)

25 And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry *it* down to Egypt.

26 And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit *is it* if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? (Reuben was not present when this deal was made.)

27 Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he *is* our brother *and* our flesh. And his brethren <sup>a</sup>were content (Heb hearkened).

28 Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the <sup>a</sup>Ishmeelites for twenty *pieces* of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt. (The price received for Joseph, twenty pieces of silver, is the same price specified later in the Mosaic law for a slave between the ages of five and twenty. Typically, the price for a slave was thirty pieces of silver. Exodus 21:32. Old Testament Student Manual, p. 93. Was it necessary for Joseph to be sold into Egypt for Joseph's sake? With brothers that would commit adultery or kill people, leaving may have been necessary. May we not say that it was needful for the sake of Joseph himself that he should be removed from his present circumstances to where that which was holy and divine in him would grow, and all of self be uprooted? But such results are only obtained by one kind of training - that of affliction. Alfred Edersheim, Bible History Old Testament, Chapter 19. )

29 ¶ And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph *was* not in the pit; and he rent his clothes.

30 And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child *is* <sup>a</sup>not; and I, whither shall I go?

31 And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood;

32 And they sent the coat of *many* colours, and they brought *it* to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it *be* thy son's coat or no.

33 And he knew it, and said, *It is* my son's <sup>a</sup>coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt <sup>b</sup>rent in pieces. (Hugh Nibley: Alma 46:23: He is talking here about the shirt of Joseph and the two things. This is what he says: "And when Joseph made himself known to his brethren, he asked them about his father. 'What happened to our father, Jacob?'" He was in Egypt and he was the important man. The brethren had been brought before him, and he said, "What happened to my father after I left?" They

said, "He lost his eyesight from weeping." Then Joseph gave them the garment. He had the good half of the garment with him. That's the part that clung to him and he still wore. Joseph handed them the garment, which is called the *qamis*. Our word chemise comes from that. "And this garment was the garment of the Garden of Eden. It had the weave and the pattern of the *janna*." That is the Garden of Eden. It is usually rendered just as paradise, before man fell. "It had in it the breath of the garden." This is important. They believed that garments retained their odor. A person would come to you and say, "You come from Cordoba; let me smell the air of your garments that I may enjoy Cordoba." The idea is that the air is more important than water. They always talk about the air of a place before they talk about the water-I guess because they didn't have any water. They had varieties of air. "So that it never rotted." It used the word decayed. He saw the part that never decayed. The half he had was the part that "never rotted, never decayed, and its threads never deteriorated. That was its true state." It kept its true state. There were two parts. "The remnant of the coat of Joseph which was preserved and had not decayed, whereas the other half shall perish even as the remnant of this garment." It was decayed and rotten. We'll hear about that one in a minute here. "Joseph gave that garment to them [this is important here:], and this was a garment that had belonged to Abraham." The idea of a garment of many colors is an invention. If you look in your Bible every time it mentions many colors the word colors (even in the commentary) is in italics because it is put in there by modern editors. It's found in no ancient source. It's not a garment of many colors at all. A garment of certain marks is the term that's used here. We'll see what it is in a second. "This garment had belonged to Abraham, and it already had a long history." Its history was lengthy because it went back to the Garden of Eden, you see. That's the garment; it's the only one. Just as we treat the story of Cain and Abel, we trivialize this. We say, "Joseph was the youngest kid, so his father favored him and gave him a pretty garment of many colors." There is no mention in any ancient source of a garment of many colors. That's an invention of modern editors trying to explain it. But here it was the garment he gave him. It was the garment of the priesthood. No wonder they were jealous of him, they being the elder brothers and he the younger in the patriarchal line coming down from Abraham. This garment had belonged to Abraham and had come down to Joseph instead of to the other brethren. You always get lost among these little tiny things here. "And he said to them, 'Go with this very garment and place it upon the face of my father, and his sight will return to him.'" It's a miraculous garment. "And then come back to me and bring all the family with you." So they did. This is when the Israelites went into Egypt. They brought Jacob back with them, and the whole family came back to Egypt. Remember the story of Joseph and his brethren. "And when they had turned their faces toward Canaan and finally arrived there, their father, Jacob, said to them, 'Behold, I detect in this garment the odor'" *Riha* is smell or odor. It's the same word as *ruakh* and the English word reek. *Reeky* is smoke; it's *Rauch* in German. They used to call *Edinburgh Auld Reekie*, because it was a smoky city; they burned coal there. It's the same word we use. The Hebrew word *ruakh* is the Spirit, the Holy Ghost. The same word in Arabic is *riha*. It's always feminine. It also means wind. In the Dead Sea Scrolls it has led to lots of controversy because when it talks about the *rih*, does it mean spirit or wind? For example, in the story of Abraham in Egypt, an evil spirit has come. Or is it an evil wind? The Jewish scholars don't like "evil spirit," so they change it to "evil wind." It can be read "evil wind" all right, but it obviously means (and they admit it) an evil spirit came upon Pharaoh. Here we have "I detect, I perceive, I note." (He's blind, you see.) "The odor, the spirit, the smell of Joseph, if you do not think me out of my head from old age and a bit barmy." It talks about the spirit that is in it, the east wind that has brought it, etc. And this is a very important thing: "When they placed it upon the face of Jacob, he smelled also the smell of the Garden of Eden. For behold there is not in all the earth another garment that has that smell in it." This is a unique thing; this is the garment. "For there is not in any other garment on earth of the winds of the garden of Eden, unless it is in this one garment." So you can see why the brethren were so jealous; it was the garment of the priesthood. The commentator says he recognized that it was Joseph's garment by feeling it first because it had three marks in it. What they translate as "coat of many colors" is first *ketonet*. Our word cotton is related to that. *Ketonet* is a cotton shirt. The Hebrew is *ketonet passim*. That

means it reached down to his wrists and his ankles. The Hebrew actually tells us that it was of adequate length. A garment which is *passim* means a long garment which reaches down to the wrists and to the ankles. It's quite different [from the other story]; there's no mention of color there of any kind. The Vulgate says it was *tunicam polymitam*, which means it was worked very subtly with extra threads. *Polymitan* means "extra thread work, special embroidery, special technique." The Greek is *chitona poikila*. *Poikilos* means "tattooed, embroidered, elaborate work." A derived term of *poikila* is "of various colors, with spots or dots." But it means with marks on something. Here it says he knew it because it had three marks on it. He recognized it from the marks. Of course, they couldn't have been colored marks because he was blind when he felt the marks. He recognized it as belonging to his son Joseph. Now let's see what we left out here. Oh, the garment was rent. There's no tradition anywhere that the garment was rent, except the Arabs again have a famous story: A student was working for a master as an apprentice, and they said to him, "Does your master feed you well? Does he care for you well?" The student says, "Verily, if my master owned a house full of needles and Jacob came to him and begged for the use of a needle for one hour that he might sew up the torn garment of his son Joseph, he would refuse to lend it to him. That's the kind of man I'm working for." The point is that it takes for granted the torn garment that Jacob wanted to sew up, that Joseph's garment was torn in two parts. The one part was spoiled, and one part never rotted. It belonged to Abraham, and it went back to Adam. In the tradition it was the garment of the garden, and it had the marks on it. That's why Jacob recognized it, and that's why the brethren were jealous obviously. It was the greatest favor he could possibly give him. This is a great thing. Here we get something in the Book of Mormon that really "sews things up." Then it goes on to his dialogue with death. It says all this happened on Jacob's death bed. This is a dialogue between Jacob and death, which is a very important incidental. It has to do with another subject. He says, "Let us remember the words of Jacob, before his death, for behold, he saw that a part of the remnant of the coat of Joseph was preserved and had not decayed." It uses the very words here. There was no *saqim*, which means a weakening of fiber, a sickness, a breakdown of any kind. "And he said—Even as this remnant of garment of my son hath been preserved, so shall a remnant of the seed of my son be preserved by the hand of God." He makes this comparison. This is the other source: "The people came running, rending their garments, putting them in a pile and stepping on them." That's Jonathan Smith's article, which was in 1966. The first person to notice the importance of this treading on the garments was in 1966. All these things are here, these old Jewish customs. Teachings of the Book of Mormon, 3:61-63)

34 And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.  
35 And all his <sup>a</sup>sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be <sup>b</sup>comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son <sup>c</sup>mourning. (Jacob is saying that he will see Joseph in the next life.) Thus his father wept for him.

36 And the Midianites <sup>a</sup>sold him into Egypt unto <sup>b</sup>Potiphar, an <sup>c</sup>officer (Heb eunuch (which often designates a royal official)) of Pharaoh's, and <sup>d</sup>captain (chief of the butchers, or the cooks; probably the chief) of the guard. (Chief executioner. Except by an incidental reference to it in the later confession of his brothers (Genesis 42:21), we are not told either of the tears or the entreaties with which Joseph vainly sought to move his brethren, nor of his journey into Egypt. We know that when following in the caravan of his new masters, he must have seen at a distance the heights of his own Hebron, where, all unsuspecting, his father awaited the return of his favorite. To that home he was never again to return. Alfred Edersheim, Bible History Old Testament, Chapter 19)

## CHAPTER 38

*Judah has three sons by a Canaanite woman—Er and Onan slain by the Lord—Tamar, as a harlot, bears twins by Judah.*

1 AND it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name *was* Hirah.

2 And Judah saw there a <sup>a</sup>daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name *was* Shuah; and he took her, and went in ~~unto~~ (and lay with) her.

3 And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name <sup>a</sup>Er.

4 And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name Onan.

5 And she yet again conceived, and bare a son; and called his name Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when she bare him.

6 And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name *was* Tamar.

7 And <sup>a</sup>Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him.

8 And Judah said unto Onan, Go in ~~unto~~ (and marry) thy brother's <sup>a</sup>wife, and marry her, and raise up seed (un)to thy brother.

9 And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in ~~unto~~ (married) his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, (would not lie with her,) lest ~~that~~ he should give (raise up) seed (un)to his brother.

10 And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also.

11 Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter in law, Remain a widow at thy father's house, till Shelah my son be grown: for he said, Lest peradventure he die also, as his brethren *did*. And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

12 ¶ And in process of time the daughter of Shuah Judah's wife died; and Judah was comforted, and went up unto his sheepshearers to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.

13 And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold thy father in law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep.

14 And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a vail, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which *is* by the way to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife.

15 When Judah saw her, he thought her *to be* an harlot; because she had covered her face.

16 And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in ~~unto~~ (and lie with) thee; (for he knew not that she *was* his daughter in law.) And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in ~~unto~~ (and lie with) me?

17 And he said, I will send *thee* a kid from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give *me* a pledge, till thou send *it*?

18 And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy <sup>a</sup>signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that *is* in thine hand. And he gave *it* her, and came in ~~unto~~ (and slept with) her, and she conceived by him.

19 And she arose, and went away, and laid by her vail from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.

20 And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive *his* pledge from the woman's hand: but he found her not.

21 Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where *is* the harlot, that *was* openly by the way side? And they said, There was no harlot in this *place*.

22 And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said, *that* there was no harlot in this *place*.

23 And Judah said, Let her take *it* to her, lest we be shamed: behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her.

24 ¶ And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she *is* with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be <sup>a</sup>burnt.

25 When she *was* brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, By the man, whose these *are*, *am* I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose *are* these, the <sup>a</sup>signet, and bracelets, and staff.

26 And Judah acknowledged *them*, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more.

27 ¶ And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins *were* in her womb.

28 And it came to pass, when she travailed, that *the one* put out *his* hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first.

29 And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, How hast thou broken forth? *this* breach *be* upon thee: therefore his name was called <sup>a</sup>Pharez.

30 And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name was called <sup>a</sup>Zarah.

## CHAPTER 39

*Joseph, prospered by the Lord, becomes ruler of Potiphar's house—He resists the advances of Potiphar's wife, is falsely accused, and cast into prison—Keeper of the prison commits its affairs into Joseph's hands.*

1 AND Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and <sup>a</sup>Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the <sup>b</sup>Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither.

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

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

4 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.

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 <sup>a</sup>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* <sup>a</sup>goodly *person*, and well <sup>b</sup>favoured.

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

8 But he <sup>a</sup>refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master ~~knoweth~~ **knoweth** not what *is* with me in the house, and he hath <sup>c</sup>committed all that he hath to my hand;

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 <sup>a</sup>wickedness, and <sup>b</sup>sin against God? (When ye are exploiting or sinning against your fellow beings, you are only sinning against God. Old Testament Student Manual, p. 95)

10 And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph <sup>a</sup>day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. (The temptation did not occur just once, but many times over a period of time. Joseph is a great example to us of diligently keeping the commandments, no matter what.)

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.

12 And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and <sup>a</sup>fled, and got him out.

13 And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth,

14 That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath 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:

15 And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out.



16 And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home.

17 And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me:

18 And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out.

19 And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled.

20 And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the <sup>a</sup>prison, a place where the king's prisoners *were* bound: and he was there in the prison. (Because Potiphar had great power with the pharaoh and perhaps was even head of the royal executioners, it is remarkable that Joseph was only put into prison and not executed. A slave accused of attempting to rape his master's wife would seem to have deserved the most severe punishment, and yet Joseph was only imprisoned. Could it be that Potiphar, knowing of Joseph's character and his wife's character, suspected the truth and, although he had to take action, chose comparatively lenient punishment? Whatever the case, the hand of the Lord certainly preserved Joseph from what would otherwise have been almost certain death. Old Testament Student Manual, p. 95. We have reason to believe that Potiphar could not in every respect have credited the story of his wife. For the punishment awarded in Egypt to the crime of which she accused him, was far more severe than that which Joseph received. Potiphar consigned him to the king's prison, of which, in his capacity as chief of the body-guard, he was the superintendent. How bitterly it fared there with him at the first, we learn from these words of Psalm 105:17, 18 - "He sent before them a man: Sold for a slave was Joseph, They afflicted with fetters his feet, The iron entered into his soul." Alfred Edersheim, Bible History Old Testament, Chapter 19)

21 ¶ But the <sup>a</sup>LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. (The ability to turn everything into something good appears to be a godly characteristic. Our Heavenly Father always seems able to do this. Everything, no matter how dire, becomes a victory of the Lord. Joseph, although a slave and wholly undeserving of this fate, nevertheless remained faithful to the Lord and continued to live the commandments and made something very good of his degrading circumstances. People like this cannot be defeated. Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., CR, Oct 1972, p. 170)

22 And 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 ~~adōer~~ (overseer) of it.

23 The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing *that was* under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and *that* which he did, the LORD made *it* to <sup>a</sup>prosper.

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