

Joseph in Egypt (Genesis 39 and 40)

Joseph was a long way from home and a long way from his family, but God was still looking after him. Let's see what happened.

The journey to Egypt was very long. How do you think Joseph felt? He must have felt very lonely and frightened. He didn't know what would happen next. Where would he be living? What job would he have to do? Would he ever see his family or his home again? He didn't know but he did know that God was with him. After a long, long journey they reached Egypt and Joseph was taken into the market place. Then he knew what was going to happen to him; he was going to be sold as a slave.

Joseph stood in the market with the merchant who had taken him there and a man came to look at him. It was a man called Potiphar – he was an important man who worked for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Potiphar took a good look at Joseph and decided to buy him as a slave. He took Joseph home and gave him work to do around his house. Even though he was a long way from home and bad things had happened to Joseph, God was still looking after him. God made sure that everything that Joseph did he did really well so that Potiphar was really pleased. Joseph was very busy working at Potiphar's house. Potiphar was so pleased with Joseph's work that he put him in charge of his whole household; what an important job.

Things were going really well for Joseph. But not for long, because things soon went really wrong. Potiphar had a wife who was not nice. She went to her husband and told lies about Joseph and got him into real trouble. Potiphar believed his wife's lies and he got really angry with Joseph and called some guards who threw him into prison. It was so unfair.

Joseph was really lonely in prison, but even in prison God was looking after Joseph. God made sure that everything Joseph did in prison he did really well. The prison guards watched what Joseph was doing and they were so pleased with Joseph that they put him in charge of the other prisoners. One of the other prisoners was Pharaoh's wine server. His job had been to serve wine to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

One morning, the wine server looked very worried. Joseph said, "What's the matter?" The wine server said, "I had a really strange dream last night and I don't know what it means". Joseph said, "Tell me your dream and God will tell me what it means".

So the wine server began telling his dream to Joseph who listened. I dreamed that there was a grape vine growing in front of me. It had three branches on it. Grapes grew very quickly; they were huge and delicious, really juicy. I picked the grapes and squeezed the juice into Pharaoh's cup. Then I gave the juice to Pharaoh. I am really worried because I don't know what my dream means".

Joseph replied, "This is what your dream means. The three branches mean three days. In three days' time, Pharaoh will let you out of prison. He will give you back your job; you will look after his wine and serve it to him, just as you did before. When you get out, please tell Pharaoh about me".

"Of course I'll tell him about you," said the wine server, "if what you say comes true".

Sure enough, three days later Pharaoh sent a messenger to the prison and the wine server was released. The wine server left prison and went back to life in the palace, working for Pharaoh.

Back in prison Joseph was waiting and hoping. Joseph waited but still no-one came for him because the wine server had forgotten all about him.

But God had not forgotten Joseph. Although it seemed as if everything had gone wrong for Joseph, God was still looking after him.