

Potiphar's Wife

“Oh and by the way, God struck Potiphar's wife with boils on her tongue and hands for lying and deceitfully grabbing the cloak of Joseph?”

NUGGET – OK so you're right, there is no such verse anywhere in scripture. It seems to us as though, that might be a fitting punishment, perhaps even adding "...***and she died when her husband had her stoned to death for her betrayal.***" That would add to our sense of justice that she receives what she earned for the way she treated Joseph.

Now if you read the section about Joseph and Potiphar's wife you'll see that there is no such sentiment expressed or even hinted at. ([Gen 39](#)) In this account Joseph has been sold by his brothers to Ishmaelite traders who then sold him to Potiphar in Egypt. While in Potiphar's service his wife seeks to lay with Joseph, as he is a handsome and strong young man.

Joseph resists her time and time again, but she persists and she eventually decides that since he will not give in, then she will punish him. Her scheme involves both quick thinking and outright lying. She:

- Takes advantage of Joseph being in the house alone with her
- And lying both to her servants and her husband.

Out of all this comes Joseph being put in jail. He is there through no fault of his own, much like how he was sold into slavery in the first place. In fact he is put in jail because he *is* faithful to God's word and God's will (Gen 39:9). Joseph will not give in to Potiphar's wife's continued attempts to lure him into her bed and so she seeks revenge. And gets it.

The point for us is that evil in this world sometimes goes unpunished as far as we can see. It would be a nice ending to the story if there were a verse 24 in Gen 39 that expressed something of what I made up at the top of the page. But there isn't. We don't get to see retribution served on Potiphar's wife. But that injustice we see can lead us to the cross and repentance if we will let it. After all who of us is not without evil?

We know that in the cross of Christ all wrongs are punished, all evil is destroyed and all justice is accomplished. Regardless of what evil is done in this world we sometimes don't get to see it made right. Was she ever caught in her lie? Did she ever suffer for it? We don't know. We do know that the will of God will not be overcome by evil.

It was God's will that Joseph rise from this prison to lead Egypt and save his family so that the lineage of Jesus Christ would proceed according to God's will. For us it would be nice to see her evil punished but that simply doesn't always happen in this life. Rather we turn to the cross and we see there God's justice and righteousness carried out on all evil, not just the wrongs we perceive. We have seen that God's will *will* be done in spite of evil. Jesus dying on the cross was unjust and came about through people doing unjust things to Him, but *that* is what God used to bring us salvation.

APPLICATION –

1. When have you seen evil 'win'?
2. How are we to cope with injustice?

PRAY – give thanks to God for His justice and righteousness expressed in the cross of Christ and His resurrection.

Peace in Christ, Pastor Tom Rhodes



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*Going Deeper together. We meet in the **Fellowship Hall** during the Education Hour for discussion and prayer with all those who're able to come. If you're not able to make it Sunday, please feel free to e-mail me with your comments or questions so that we can have the benefit of sharing them together.*

GOING DEEPER

What came of Potiphar's wife's lie was that Joseph was able to rescue his family from famine – but it was a long hard road to get there. The point for us that God can use even such wickedness to bring about something good that could not be foreseen. Where have you seen this played out in your own life – where something bad, God turned to be a benefit for you?

Looking now at verses 8-10. Sometimes the bad in our life happens because we give in to temptation and we end up doing the evil we truly don't want to see. What insight into temptation is seen in these verses especially verse 10?

Verses 11-15 seem like they could come from today's headlines – there are so many cases we hear of 'he said, she said' that we become jaded to them don't we? Only here it's just 'she said'. What do we learn of Joseph here? What also do we learn of Potiphar's wife? And given what we've read the last few weeks of Rachael and Leah and Rebecca how is the similar and how is it different?

We think Joseph did the right thing running away and leaving his cloak in order to get away. But in verses 16-19 we see the vengeance of Potiphar's wife played out by using what he left behind. What in this part of the story seems most unfair or unjust to you and why? Also what lesson regarding sin and its maliciousness comes through for you?

I know we're talking of Potiphar's wife, but the final verses today are on what happened to Joseph as a result of her actions. We see how God uses such terrible things to bring about His will. How do you think Joseph might have perceived things – 1 as he was going through them. And 2 how do you think this episode in his life may have affected his future decision-making?

Where else in scripture do you hear of those who practice evil prospering and what do those things bring to bear on this episode?

This is a pretty cut and dried microcosm of good vs. evil where the doing the right thing seems obvious. Here's a trick question - How might Joseph have justified sinning with her? (By asking and answering this question we are faced with how we cope with temptation and evil and gain insight into we deal with temptation don't we?)

Yes even Potiphar's wife's evil is paid for by the blood of Christ. But that would be true only if there was repentance on her part and a turning to God for forgiveness. Remember that we are called by repentance to both turn from our sin and at the same time trust that God forgives us for Jesus sake. In all this we are reminded to keep our eyes focused there, on the cross and resurrection of Jesus. Peace in Christ, PR.