

37—MY MASTER TRUSTS ME

(Genesis 39)

Jehovah poured out bounteous blessings on Joseph in Egypt. Everything he did seemed to improve his position. The traders had sold him to Potiphar, captain of the guard and an officer of the king, and Joseph proved to be a faithful servant. He was completely loyal to his master and honest to the nth degree. Potiphar saw that Jehovah was with Joseph and caused him to prosper in all he did, and, before much time had passed, he came to trust Joseph so completely that he made him overseer of his house and all of his property.

God blessed Potiphar's property because of Joseph and he became a wealthy man. So complete was his trust that he no longer kept track of what he owned or what dealings Joseph had with it. Joseph was the ideal servant, faithful in every way. He was not only trustworthy, but he was also skillful in his management of Potiphar's goods. He had also grown into a strong and handsome young man.

Joseph had complete freedom in Potiphar's house and was able to come and go as he pleased. There was not anything or any place off limits to him. As time passed, however, a problem developed. Potiphar's wife was attracted to this handsome young Hebrew and tried repeatedly to tempt him to have an intimate relationship with her. But Joseph always refused.

"My master trusts me," Joseph told the woman. "He knows none of my doings with his house and his property because of that trust. There is no one in Potiphar's house greater than I am, and he has kept

nothing from me except for you—because you are his wife. How then could I do this great wickedness and sin against both my master and my God?"

Potiphar's wife was not satisfied with Joseph's answer. His refusal only made her want him more, and she continued day after day, seeking to tempt Joseph to lie with her.

One day when Joseph went into the house to conduct his business, the woman tried once again to tempt him. Because none of the men of the house were present, she thought she could surely convince him. Taking hold of Joseph's coat, she said, "Come now, Joseph, and lie with me. You and I are the only ones here, and no one else will ever know."

Joseph resisted the woman's advances without hesitation. He did not waiver for a moment but fled from the house. Unfortunately, however, his coat remained behind in the woman's hands.

Rejected by Joseph, Potiphar's wife sought bitter revenge. She called loudly for the men of the house to come quickly. "Look!" she cried. "Our master has brought in a Hebrew to mock us. He came in to lie with me, but my screams frightened him away. He fled when I screamed—but see, he has left his coat."

The woman kept Joseph's coat with her until Potiphar returned, then she rehearsed for him the same lying tale she had told the other men. Joseph's righteousness and his loyalty to Potiphar counted for nothing when the woman told her twisted tale. Potiphar believed his wife—for he had only Joseph's word against hers. In his anger, Potiphar cast Joseph into the prison where the king's prisoners were held captive.

Things looked very bad for Joseph. From all outward appearances; his loyalty and righteousness had turned to his disadvantage.