

May 8, 2011

Egyptian Desperate Housewife: Joseph's Theology of the Cross

Genesis 39

Genesis 39:1-10 ¹Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. ²YHWH was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master. ³His master saw that YHWH was with him and that YHWH caused all that he did to succeed in his hands. ⁴So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. ⁵From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had YHWH blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of YHWH was on all that he had, in house and field. ⁶So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything but the food he ate.

Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. ⁷And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me." ⁸But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. ⁹He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" ¹⁰And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.

- 1 "Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard"- some evidence he might be a eunuch
 - 2 "YHWH was with Joseph"- God's presence is always by grace, and here brings blessings
 - 3-6 What other relationship in Genesis went similarly to this Joseph – Potiphar relationship?
"anything but the food he ate"- Egyptians do not eat with foreigners (43:32)
"Joseph was handsome in form and appearance"- same exact phrase describing his mother (29:17)
 - 7 "Lie with me"- she's not asking, that's an order!
- Luther: Through the working of the Holy Spirit [Joseph] listened to and retained the teaching of his father with the greatest faithfulness and diligence. Accordingly, there shines in him the most ardent faith when in his early, blooming you he is assailed not only by the worst misfortunes but also by the greatest allurements of pleasure. Yet he cannot be subdued or overcome. Young people should set this example before themselves" (AE 7:54).*
- 8 Joseph is caught between a rock and a hard place – dishonor his master or deny his master's wife
 - 9 "sin against God"- his motivation progresses from serving neighbor to serving God
 - 10 This temptation continued and his faithfulness was tested. He persevered by avoiding her.

Genesis 39:11-23 ¹¹But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, ¹²she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house. ¹³And as soon as she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled out of the house, ¹⁴she called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to laugh at us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. ¹⁵And as soon as he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried out, he left his garment beside me and fled and got out of the house." ¹⁶Then she laid up his garment by her until his master came home, ¹⁷and she told him the same story, saying, "The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, came in to me to laugh at me. ¹⁸But as soon as I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment beside me and fled out of the house."

¹⁹As soon as his master heard the words that his wife spoke to him, "This is the way your servant treated me," his anger was kindled. ²⁰And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where

the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison. ²¹But YHWH was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. ²²And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. ²³The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because YHWH was with him. And whatever he did, YHWH made it succeed.

- 12 "lie with me"- again, she's not asking. She is ordering him to sin
"he left his garment in her hand and fled"- the appropriate response to every temptation

The Sixth Petition.

And lead us not into temptation.

What does this mean?--Answer.

God, indeed, tempts no one; but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us, nor seduce us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice; and though we be assailed by them, that still we may finally overcome and gain the victory.

LARGE CATECHISM- Lord's Prayer, 106- This, then, is leading us not into temptation, to wit, when He gives us power and strength to resist, the temptation, however, not being taken away or removed. For while we live in the flesh and have the devil about us, no one can escape temptation and allurements; and it cannot be otherwise than that we must endure trials, yea, be engulfed in them; but we pray for this, that we may not fall and be drowned in them.

13-15 Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned! She is humiliated and angered, so she concocts a lie

14 "He has brought"- she blames her husband

17 "came in to me to laugh at me."- the Hebrew is LOADED with double meanings

20 "put him into the prison"- Joseph was spared execution and no trial was involved

21 "YHWH was with Joseph & showed him steadfast love"- God's faithfulness even in the pits of life

How does Joseph's fluctuating success and failure fit into our Christ-centered understanding of the Theology of the Cross and the Theology of Glory?

The Lord's Prayer



THE ORIGINAL DESPERATE HOUSEWIFE

Joseph's refusal of Potiphar's wife and her lusty attempts to make him her 'boy-toy' left her with nothing but his garment and her lies to tell. **Genesis 39:7-20**