



THRU the BIBLE

Dreams to Destiny

Volume 6 - Genesis 37 to 42



Meet Share Grow

Meet Together, Share Together & Encourage ONE ANOTHER



Coming Together
Once a Week



How to use this Scripture Engagement



Pray to Begin

Before you start each lesson, ask the Lord to use it to grow you up in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



Read the Bible passage

Invite God to open your eyes and deepen your understanding of His Word as you read the passage.



Study the Scripture Engagement Guide

Go through the Scripture Engagement study provided to reflect on the meaning, context, and personal application of the passage you've read.



Reflect on the Scripture Engagement Questions

After every teaching, consider the Scripture Engagement questions listed for personal reflection and application and for your small group discussions.



Listen to Dr. J. Vernon McGee's Teaching

If you'd like to hear the complete audio teaching on the passage, visit ttb.bible or scan the QR code on the last page to download the THRU the BIBLE app in your own language.



Use our recommended **pause and resume icon**. This will guide you to move through the content thoughtfully and at your own rhythm.

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Joseph's Christ-like Experiences

Begin with prayer

Read: Genesis 37

Listen: THRU the BIBLE: [Genesis 37](#)

Dear God,

Guard us from acting in the energy of the flesh. When we are wronged, help us to trust Your justice rather than seize our own revenge. Give us the courage to lead with wisdom and the faith to leave vengeance in Your hands.

Amen



Joseph's Story



Genesis 37

In Genesis 1-11, we covered 2,000 years of history.

In Genesis 12-36, we covered the stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Now, for the remaining 14 chapters of Genesis, we focus on one person, Joseph. More chapters are devoted to Joseph than to the accounts of Creation, the Fall, the Flood, or the patriarchs.

Why should Joseph be given such prominence in Scripture?

Here are some reasons to consider:

- 1. Joseph's life was a good and honorable life** (see *Philippians 4:8*). God wants us to have whatever is good, virtuous, and great before us, and Joseph's life is a fine example of that.
- 2. No one in Scripture was more like Jesus Christ in his person and experiences than Joseph.** We'll discover at least 30 parallels.
- 3. From Jacob's family line came the Messiah, Jesus Christ.** Jacob is living in Canaan as Joseph's story begins.



“When we sow corn, we reap corn.
When we sow tares, we reap tares.
We get exactly what we sow.”

”

Family Conflict

Jacob moved his family south of Bethlehem to Hebron (where Abraham had lived). This is the place of fellowship and communion with God.

We've made no secret that most of Jacob's sons were in trouble (with the exception of Joseph and Benjamin). These brothers took a long time to learn the lessons God wanted to teach them.

Our story picks up on a day when Joseph was 17, a teenager, the youngest of the brothers, tending the flocks. Benjamin, still very young, was at home. That night, Joseph brought his father a bad report about the other boys. Of course, nobody likes a complainer.

More than that, nobody likes the favored child. Now, Israel (Jacob) loved Joseph more than any of his other sons. To show it, he made him a coat of many colors. Jacob should have learned a lesson in his own home. Parents playing favorites never lead to anything good. His own father had favoured his older brother, and Jacob knew what it was like to be pushed aside. But here, he does the same thing.

A "coat of many colors" is the same as saying it was a coat with long sleeves. This would be a major fashion upgrade from the typical fabric drape of that time. Putting sleeves in the coat would make that person look greater than the others. It was a sign he wouldn't do hard labor and that he was favored.

Naturally, the brothers hated Joseph for being their father's favorite. They couldn't even speak nicely to him. Sin was a family tradition for Jacob's tribe.

Sin ruins lives, and sin ruins families; sin ruins communities, and it ruins nations. This is the problem with our families, cities, and nations today. There is just one cause: God calls it sin.

Joseph was the object of discrimination, his father discriminated in his love for him, and the brothers discriminated in their hatred against him. Joseph and Benjamin likely got more teaching time and personal attention than the other ten boys. These seemed to be the only two boys in whom Jacob was interested. A sad commentary on this unfair dad.

Joseph's Dream

Why would Joseph bring a bad report about his brothers when he already knew they hated him? Likely, he was naive about how wicked we can all get.

Joseph was also naive about how his dreams would reopen old wounds in his brothers' hearts. He said, "Listen to this dream I had about us."

"There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf.' And his brothers said to him, 'Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us? 'So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.'" *Genesis 37:7-8*

Can you imagine how they sneered, "Him? Rule over us?" The dream only made them hate him more. But then Joseph had another dream. "This time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me" (v. 9). This time, the brothers knew he was talking about themselves, the sons of Israel (the eleven stars).

This same image appears in Revelation 12, where a woman is described as clothed with the sun, the moon is under her feet, and she has a crown of 12 stars upon her head, which refers to the nation of Israel.

We are seeing the nation of Israel at its beginning here. Genesis is like a bud, and the flower opens up as we go through the Scriptures. Here is a bud that won't open until we get into the book of Revelation.

Old Jacob understood it exactly, and he asked, "Does this mean that your father, your mother, and your brothers are going to bow down to you?"

All Joseph could answer was, "That was the dream." His brothers paid no attention to it, but Jacob remembered it.

The Brother's Plot

Jacob and his family lived in Hebron, about 20 miles south of Jerusalem. The brothers (except Joseph and Benjamin) were grazing the family's sheep miles from home. Jacob sends Joseph to go check on them and see if they need anything. So Joseph traveled to Shechem, where they were supposed to be.

This was rugged terrain, and Joseph couldn't find them. He heard from a local that they had moved the flocks to Dothan, a long way, even farther north, so he set out to join them.

Even when he was still far off, his brothers saw him coming in his coat of many colors. They sneered, **"Look, here comes the dreamer."** They really hated him. Then their ideas started churning. "We should kill him. Or we should throw him in a pit and say some wild animal got him." Here they are, probably 100 miles from home, and they agreed, "Let's get rid of him now, and we'll see what will become of his dreams!"

Reuben, the firstborn, had better judgment than the others. He said, "We can't kill him." Who knows, if Reuben hadn't spoken up, they could have killed Joseph then and there. It was Reuben's idea to throw Joseph into a pit. "Don't shed his blood, and that way he'll be out of our lives." (Reuben intended to rescue Joseph out of the pit and take him home to his father.)

The first thing they did was strip Joseph of that hated coat. Then they threw him into an empty pit. And then they had lunch. As they ate, they saw a caravan of traders from Gilead, descendants of Ishmael, heading down to Egypt.

It was Judah's idea that instead of killing their brother and getting his blood on their hands, they should just sell him to the traders. "He is our brother, our flesh and blood, after all." And that plan satisfied the brothers. They just wanted to get rid of him. They didn't care how.

They knew the traders would take him to Egypt and would sell him there as a slave. Slavery in most places was a living death, and they knew they would certainly never hear from him again.

So the brothers got Joseph out of the pit and sold him for 20 pieces of silver. And Joseph was on his way to Egypt.

Then Reuben, who apparently wasn't with them for the sale, went back to the pit and found it empty. He cried out and tore his clothes.

The brothers devised a good story to tell their father. They took Joseph's coat, killed a goat, and dipped the coat in its blood. They took the coat to Jacob and said, "Is this Joseph's coat?" They pretended they didn't recognize it and asked their father if he did. Jacob knew it was Joseph's coat, and he came to the natural conclusion that he had been mauled to death by a wild animal, just as the brothers had schemed.

Let's pause and take another look at this. The brothers killed a goat and used its blood on the coat. Sound familiar? Remember that when Rebekah and Jacob deceived old Isaac, they took the skin of a goat and put it on Jacob's hands and arms? Now Jacob's sons use the goat's blood to deceive Jacob. **Now that he is a father, he is deceived in the same way he deceived his own father years before.**

Jacob's grief for his boy was inconsolable. His children tried to comfort him, but he refused all consolation. Yes, he certainly loved this boy, but it also revealed that Jacob hadn't learned to walk by faith yet. He will learn (*as we read in Hebrews 11:21*), but he's still on his way.

Meanwhile, in Egypt, Joseph was sold as a slave to Potiphar, the captain of the guard in the palace.



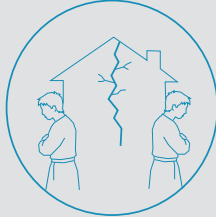
God's Eternal Truths

Relevant to us from Genesis 37

1

Sin is a Destructive Force:

Sin ruins lives, families, communities, and nations. The jealousy, hatred, and deception among Jacob's sons demonstrate that unchecked sin always leads to devastation.



2

The Principle of Sowing and Reaping:

God's truth dictates that our actions have consequences. Jacob's history of deception caught up with him when he was deceived in the exact identical way he had once deceived his own father.



3

God's Sovereign Preservation:

Even when humanity acts out of pure malice, God is orchestrating protection. God used the tragedy of Joseph's enslavement to move His people to Egypt, preserving their lives and separating them from the wicked influence of the Canaanites.



Reflection Questions

Question 1

Favoritism and Family: Jacob's blatant favoritism toward Joseph fuelled a murderous jealousy among his sons. Where might you be showing unfair favoritism or allowing discrimination to breed division in your own home, workplace, or church?

Question 2

Sowing and Reaping: Jacob was deceived with a goat's blood, perfectly mirroring how he used a goat to deceive Isaac. Are there areas in your life where you are currently experiencing the difficult harvest of seeds you planted in the past?

Question 3

God's Hidden Protection: God allowed Joseph to be sold into a "living death" as a slave to ultimately save his family from Canaanite corruption and famine. How might God be using a currently painful or confusing circumstance in your life to protect you from unseen spiritual dangers?



Judah's Story

Begin with prayer

Read: Genesis 38

Listen: THRU the BIBLE: [Genesis 38](#)

Dear God,

Thank You for using broken, sinful people to carry Your purposes forward. May Your mercy humble us and draw us to repentance

Amen.



Judah: The line chosen by God



Genesis 38

After you have read this next story about Judah, you may wish that it had been left out of the Bible. **Its only value is that it gives us background on the tribe of Judah, out of which the Lord Jesus Christ was born.**

This story in Genesis 38 deals with Judah's sin and shame. Jacob's sons all had their problems, but they **tell the story of a dad who spent too much time accumulating a fortune rather than teaching his children.** He was so different from his grandfather. God said of Abraham: "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him" (*Genesis 18:19*).

Well, Jacob didn't do that. **He didn't have much time for his sons, which is tragic, because each one got involved in something sinful.**

Judah's Sinful Influence

This story of Judah gives us another reason for including it in God's Word. In the next chapter, we go down to Egypt with Joseph. **God sent Joseph ahead to prepare the way for his extended family. Not only would this preserve their lives during the famine in Canaan, but it would also get them out from under the influence of the wicked Canaanites.**

If Jacob and his family continued on in Canaan, they would have likely dropped down to their sinful level. We follow Judah around for several years and watch his life unravel. Judah left his brothers and went to stay with a man in a Canaanite city, Adullam. While there, he married a Canaanite woman named Shua. She got pregnant and had a son named Er. Then she had another son named Onan and a third named Shelah.

When it came time for his first son to marry, Judah found him a wife named Tamar. **But Judah's firstborn was so wicked that God Himself killed him.**

Now, just look at this family, it's loaded with sin.



Judah's Wages of Sin

As was the custom, Judah told Onan to sleep with his brother's widow so she could have a child in her husband's line. But Onan didn't want to share the inheritance, so he wouldn't produce a child for his brother.

God was so offended by what Onan did that He also took his life.

So Judah told his daughter-in-law, Tamar, **"Live as a widow at home with your father until my son Shelah grows up."** So Tamar went to live with her father until the younger son was ready for marriage. Time passed, and no word from Judah. (He was worried that Shelah would also end up dead, just like his brothers.) Eventually, Tamar realized that Judah was not going to give Shelah to her as her husband. **So she took off her widow's clothes, dressed like a harlot with a heavy veil, and sat in a place where she knew Judah would pass by.**

When Judah walked by, she propositioned him. (He didn't recognize her as his daughter-in-law; he thought she was a prostitute.) Tamar saw this as an opportunity to take advantage of him, and she did. He promised her a goat from his flock in exchange for her services. She asked him for a pledge (a deposit) to ensure he sends payment. **She asked to hold on to his signet ring, his bracelets, and his staff. He gave them to her, and the deal was sealed. She got pregnant by her father-in-law.**

Tamar then went home, put away her veil, and changed back into her widow's clothes. **Judah sent the goat to her previous location and wanted his possessions back - but they couldn't find "the harlot" anywhere.**

Judah's Hypocrisy

Three months later, Judah is told that his daughter-in-law played the harlot, and was pregnant. Judah is enraged and demands that she be burned. That's Judah, with the old double standard.

God's people were acting just like Canaanites, which is why He would later take Israel out of Canaan and keep them detached in Egypt. He would separate them and isolate them in Goshen to get them away from this terrible influence. The charge against Judah was really a double one. His sin was terrible in itself, but it was against his own daughter-in-law. This is the way the Canaanites lived.

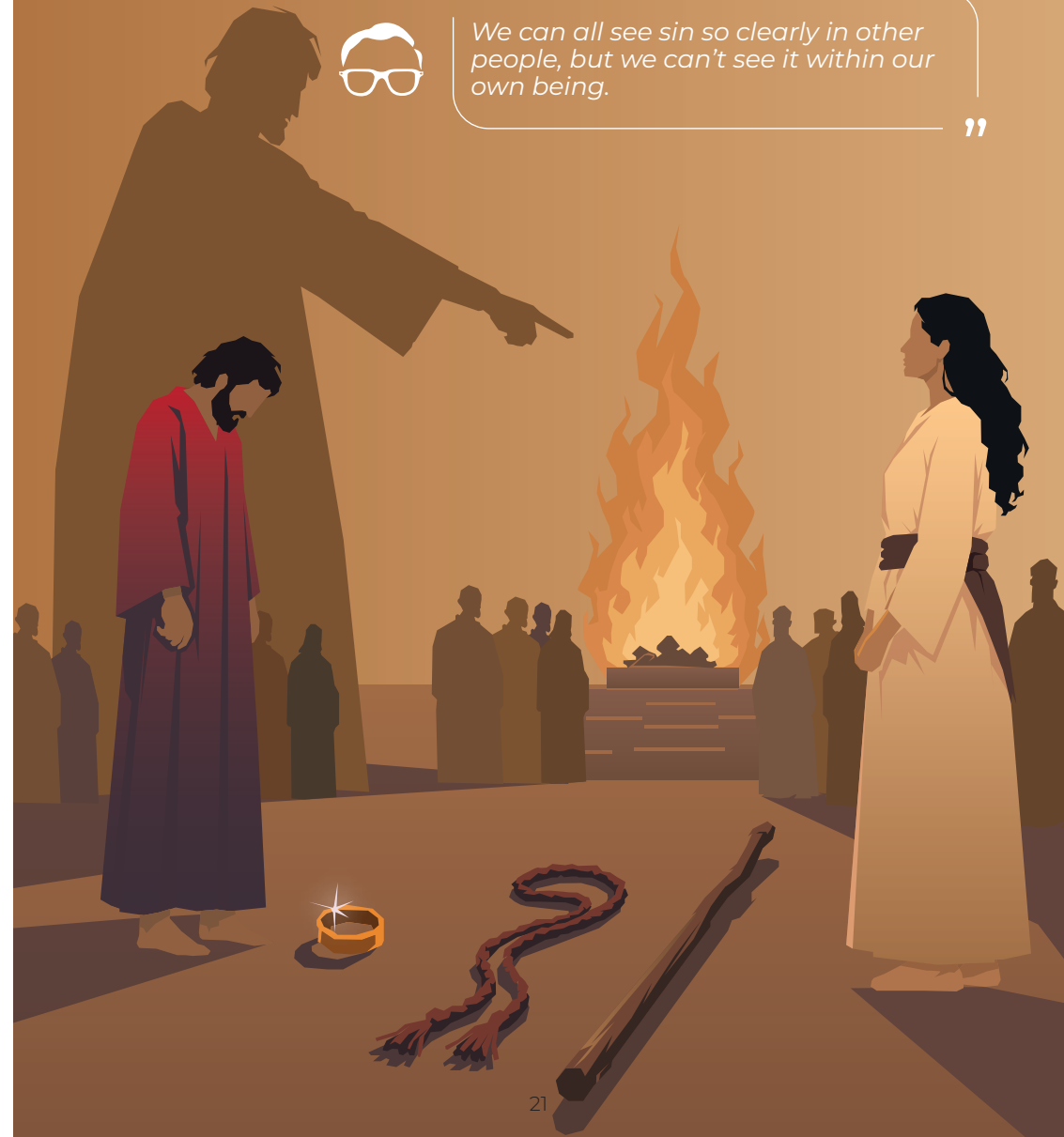
We think that we are in a sex revolution today, but the Bible shows that the heathen have always had sexual freedom. And now, the entire Canaanite line is no more. **God did away with them for good. This was repulsive even to Judah, but we can see how he had adopted some of the customs of the Canaanites.** Well, Judah had certainly lowered himself to their level, and look at the results.

“



We can all see sin so clearly in other people, but we can't see it within our own being.

”



God's Mercy Because of Christ's Righteousness

"Now it came to pass, at the time for giving birth, that behold, twins were in her womb. And so it was, when she was giving birth, that the one put out his hand; and the midwife took a scarlet thread and bound it on his hand, saying, 'This one came out first.' Then it happened, as he drew back his hand, that his brother came out unexpectedly, and she said, 'How did you break through? This breach be upon you!' Therefore, his name was called Perez. Afterward, his brother came out, who had the scarlet thread on his hand. And his name was called Zerah." *Genesis 38:27-30*

Remember those names - Judah, Tamar, Perez, Zerah.

If we look at the genealogy of the Lord Jesus in *Matthew 1:2-3*, we read, "Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar."

Then, as we follow through the genealogy, read verse 16, "And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ."

It is an amazing thing that the Lord Jesus Christ should come through the line of Judah and Tamar. **He came into the human family through a sinful line. But, was born as a 'HOLY ONE'.**

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God." *Luke 1:34-35*

"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." *2 Corinthians 5:21.*



*When He came into the human family,
He came in a sinful line - reminding us that
no one is beyond God's reach or redemption.*



God's Eternal Truths

Relevant to us from *Genesis 38*

God Works Through Broken People:

The Lord does not require a perfect lineage to accomplish His will. God sustained the Messianic line through Judah and Tamar, demonstrating His boundless mercy despite profound human sin and hypocrisy.



Reflection Questions

Question 1

On Hypocrisy: Judah was incensed and ready to burn Tamar for prostitution, completely blind to the fact that he was the guilty participant.

In what ways do you hold a “double standard,” harshly judging the sins of others while excusing your own?

Question 2

The Sinless Savior was NOT from a Sinless Line: Though Jesus entered humanity through this deeply flawed and sinful family line, He was entirely untouched by its curse. As *Luke 1:34-35* declares, the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary so that the “Holy One” would be born the Son of God. Because of this, Jesus who knew no sin could become sin for us, allowing us to become the righteousness of God (*2 Corinthians 5:21*).

How does this truth bring you hope regarding your own messy background or past failures?



Not Forgotten

Begin with prayer

Read: Genesis 39

Listen: THRU the BIBLE: [Genesis 39](#)

Dear God,

Grant us the courage to flee temptation and remain faithful in suffering. Remind us that Your presence never leaves us, even in the pit.

Amen.



Joseph - Patriarch



Genesis 39

Joseph was the Old Testament illustration of *Romans 8:28*, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

No one else in the Old Testament illustrated the purpose and providence of God more clearly than Joseph. God's hand was on his life, and His guidance is evident from our perspective. From Joseph's perspective, everything seemed to go wrong, and the world often appeared dark. However, we can see that every event in Joseph's life was a step toward bringing good for the glory of God.

Interestingly, Joseph was the only patriarch in Genesis whom God didn't appear to personally. God appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but not to Joseph. In this way, we can relate to Joseph. God hasn't appeared directly to anyone today, yet we can still know that He is guiding us.

In one of the most powerful moments in Joseph's story, when his brothers thought he would turn against them because of what they had done years earlier, Joseph clearly knew that God was with Him. He said, "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive" (*Genesis 50:20*).

We learn a valuable lesson from Joseph. If we are God's children and acting within His will, we can be sure that nothing happens to us without His permission. God works all things together for good for those who love Him. Even our misfortunes, heartbreaks, and sufferings are for our good and His glory. If we could see through the events of our lives to His ultimate purposes, we would choose these things ourselves, or at least understand them.

God has built a hedge around every child of God, and nothing can penetrate it without His permission. Even Satan recognizes this, as he made clear in his contest for Job's heart (see *Job 1:10*).

Now, let's follow this young man, Joseph, and see what is going to happen to him in Egypt.



On The Slave Block

At 17, Joseph would have been highly valuable on the slave market. He was purchased by Potiphar, **a captain of the guard in the military.** He was a **prominent official** in Pharaoh's army.

Even as a slave, the Lord was with Joseph, and He made him prosper. When Joseph arrived at Potiphar's house, blessings quickly followed. Everything Joseph did thrived. Potiphar entrusted Joseph with his entire household and all its details, knowing Joseph would handle all responsibilities for him. He believed in Joseph's integrity and trusted him. Since Potiphar was focused on pleasing Pharaoh, he allowed Joseph to manage his personal affairs.

We wish it was "and they lived happily ever after," but this is reality, not a fairy tale, and trouble soon followed Joseph.

Tempted, Then Framed

Potiphar had given Joseph complete control of his house, and he was busy. Also in the house was Potiphar's wife, and she was busy scheming. **Joseph was a handsome young man, and it's very possible that Potiphar was much older than his wife, as was common at the time. Joseph was in front of her every day, and eventually she tried to seduce him.**

Joseph's response is worth examining. First, he refused purely out of loyalty to Potiphar. "Look, my master ... has committed all that he has to my hand. There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (*Genesis 39:8-9*)

Even in this temptation, this young man served God. Egypt was a land of idolatry, yet Joseph maintained a testimony for the living and true God and upheld a high moral standard, including a high view of marriage.

But the woman didn't give up. Every day, she tempted Joseph to sleep with her, yet Joseph didn't give in. **Soon, she builds up a boiling resentment against Joseph for his "rejection," and she's going to get her revenge.**

One day, as Joseph went about his business, she caught him alone and grabbed his clothes. He managed to get away from her, but she pulled off his cloak. **Seeing that she had a weapon to use, she shouted and accused him of attempted rape.**

She also accused her husband of bringing "this Hebrew slave" in to mock her. Potiphar had no choice but to defend his wife, though maybe he suspected something of her all along. Maybe he knew Joseph was being set up. Still, the easiest option was to remove Joseph and forget the whole matter.

Prison

Joseph's life had taken some serious turns. Once he was his father's favorite son, but his brothers betrayed him and sold him into slavery. He was faring well in his new role when he was unjustly accused of sexual assault by his boss's wife. Unable to defend himself, he was immediately thrown into prison. He clearly didn't stand a chance of freeing himself.

But even now, *Genesis 39:21* says, "But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy..."

First, the Lord granted Joseph favor with the prison guards. They liked him and came to trust him. **It was God who gave Joseph this favor. God was with him and was guiding him.** All of these experiences were moving toward fulfilling God's purpose in this young man's life. Joseph recognized this, and it lifted his spirit and gave him hope. His difficult circumstances didn't defeat him. **He saw God's hand on his life and refused to be discouraged.** Was it God's will that Joseph was in prison? It's almost essential that he be there.



Joseph and Jesus

Unlike any other figure in the Old Testament, Joseph's life highlights many details that are fulfilled in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's explore these comparisons:

Joseph

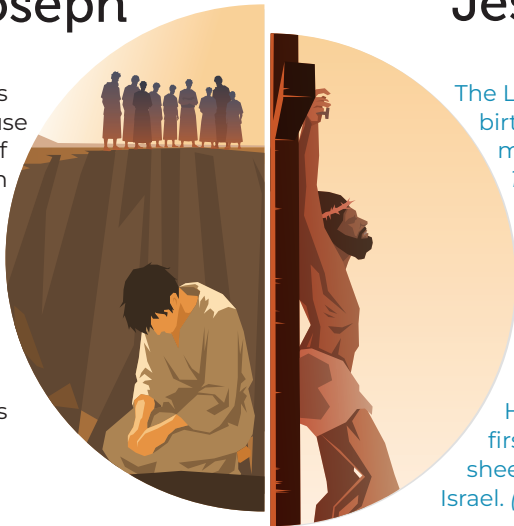
Joseph's birth was miraculous because it was the result of God's intervention as an answer to prayer.

Joseph was sent by his father to his brothers.

Joseph was loved by his father.

Joseph was hated by his brothers without reason.

Joseph had the coat of many colours, which set him apart.



Jesus

The Lord Jesus' virgin birth is definitely miraculous! (Luke 1:27)

Jesus was sent to His brothers; He first came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matthew 15:24)

The Lord Jesus was loved by His Father, who declared, "This is My beloved Son." (Matthew 3:17)

This is what the Lord Jesus says about Himself: "They hated Me without a cause." (John 15:23-25)

Christ was set apart in that He was "separate from sinners." (Hebrews 7:26)

Joseph was sold by his own brothers for 20 pieces of silver

Joseph announced that he was to rule over his brothers, and they ridiculed Joseph's message.

Joseph was thrown into the pit, which was meant to be a place of death for him.

Joseph was raised up out of that pit.

Joseph obeyed his father when he was sent to find his brothers.

Joseph was mocked by his brothers. When they saw him approaching, they said, "Look, this dreamer is coming" (Genesis 37:19)

The brothers refused to receive Joseph, and they plotted to kill him.

The Lord Jesus was sold by one of His own brethren, Judas, for 30 pieces of silver. (Matthew 26:15)

The Lord Jesus presented Himself as the Messiah. They also ridiculed Jesus. In fact, nailed to His cross were the words: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. (Matthew 27:37)

The Lord Jesus was crucified. (Luke 23:33)

The Lord Jesus was raised from the dead on the third day. (Acts 10:40)

The Lord Jesus obeyed His Father so that He could say He always did the things that pleased His Father. (John 6:38-39)

The Lord Jesus was also mocked by His brothers. While He was on the cross, they said, "If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross." (Matthew 27:42)

The brethren of the Lord Jesus, the Jews, also refused to receive Him. We are told they conspired to execute the Lord Jesus. "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him." (John 1:11)

Joseph's coat, dripping with blood, was returned to his father.

After Joseph was sold into Egypt, he was out of sight for many years.

Joseph was tempted by the world, the flesh, and the devil, and he resisted.

Joseph became the saviour of the world during this period, in a physical sense, he saved them from starvation.

Joseph was hated by his brothers, and they delivered him to the Gentiles. He couldn't defend himself, and he was unjustly accused.

Joseph had to suffer, although Potiphar probably knew he was innocent. Potiphar did not want to stand in shame before Pharaoh.

Joseph found favour in the sight of the jailer.

They took the coat of the Lord Jesus and gambled for it. *(Matthew 27:35)*

Christ ascended into heaven. He told His disciples that they would not see Him again until His return. *(John 16:16)*

The Lord Jesus was tempted by the world, the flesh, and the devil, and He won the victory. *(Luke 4:1-2)*

The Lord Jesus Christ in every sense is the Savior of the whole world. *(John 4:42)*

The Lord Jesus was also delivered by His own to the religious rulers, who in turn delivered Him to the Gentiles. He was innocent. *(Matthew 27:17-26)*

Pilate didn't believe the accusation that was brought against the Lord Jesus. He found Him innocent, yet he scourged Him. Pilate did not lose his face before Caesar. *(Luke 23:4)*

In the case of Jesus, the Roman centurion said of Him, "Certainly this was a righteous Man." *(Luke 23:47)*

Joseph was numbered with the transgressors. He was a blessing to the butler, and he brought judgment for the baker.

Joseph stood before Pharaoh when he was 30 years old.

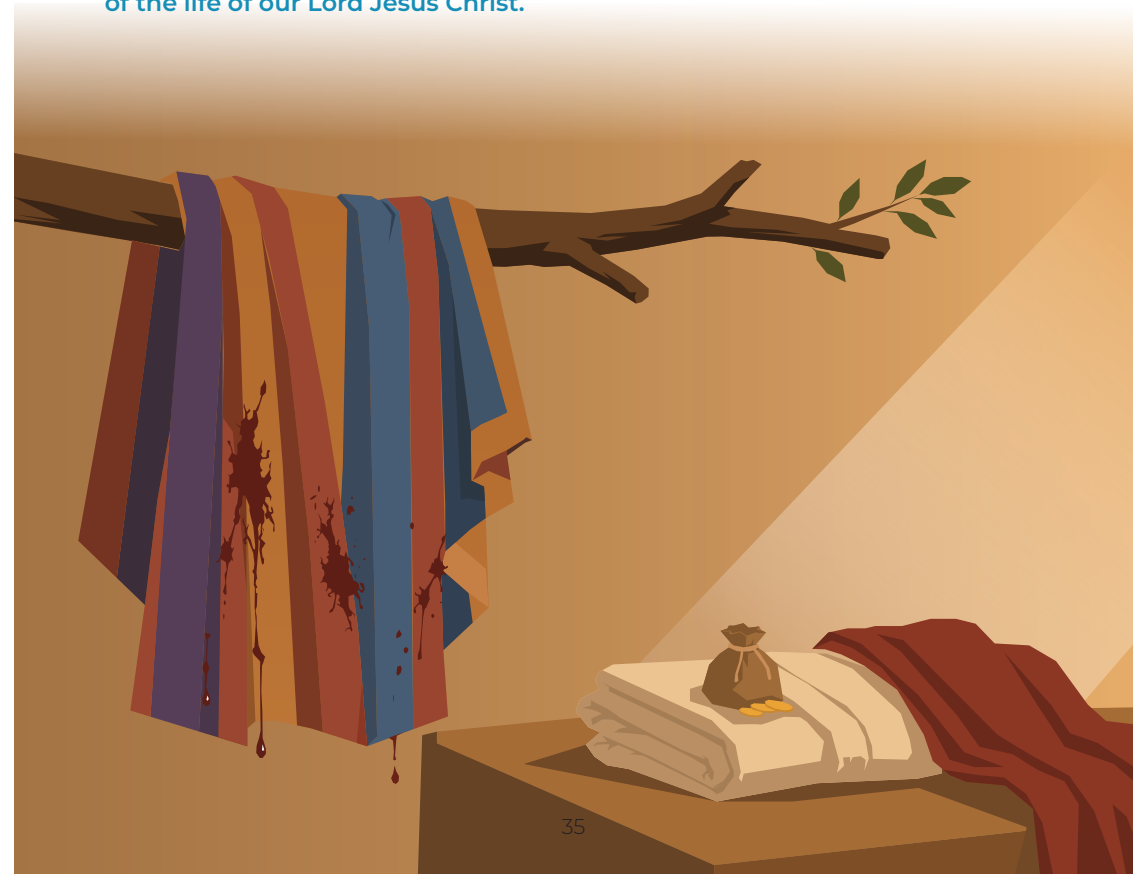
Joseph is the one who had the bread during the famine.

The Lord Jesus was crucified between two thieves. One was judged, and the other was blessed. *(Luke 23:39-43)*

The Lord Jesus began His ministry when He was 30. *(Luke 3:23)*

Jesus Christ said, "I am the bread of life." *(John 6:35)*

Without a doubt, there was something special about this man, Joseph. But as special as he was, nothing can compare to the beauty and majesty of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ.



God's Eternal Truths

Relevant to us from Genesis 39

1

God is with His People in every Circumstance:

The Lord was with Joseph in Potiphar's house and in prison. God's presence was not removed by slavery, temptation, false accusation, or confinement. For believers today, God's nearness is not determined by outward comfort but by His covenant faithfulness. (*Genesis 39:2-3, 21-23; Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 28:20*)



2

Faithfulness to God must govern our Moral Choices:

Joseph refused Potiphar's wife because adultery was "great wickedness" and "sin against God." Even when no human authority seems to be watching, God calls His people to holiness, loyalty, and purity in body and heart. (*Genesis 39:7-9; Psalm 51:4; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20*)



3

Obedience to God may involve Unjust Suffering, but God still uses it for His Purpose:

Joseph did right and suffered for it. Yet the prison was not proof that God had abandoned him; it was part of God's path for Joseph's future calling. (*Genesis 39:19-23; 1 Peter 2:19-20; Romans 8:28*)



Reflection Questions

Question 1

God's Presence: In what situations do you tend to doubt God's presence - especially when life feels unfair, painful, or uncertain? Are you measuring God's nearness by your circumstances or by His promises? This week, how can you consciously acknowledge God's presence in your daily situations?

Question 2

Moral Faithfulness: Are there areas in your life where you are tempted to compromise because no one is watching? Do you view sin primarily as wrongdoing against people, or as an offence against God? What specific step can you take to guard your heart and maintain purity?

Question 3

Unjust Suffering: Have you ever done what is right and still experienced unfair treatment? Do you believe God is still at work in seasons that feel confusing or unjust? How can you choose to remain faithful in your current difficult situation?



Back In Prison

Begin with prayer

Read: Genesis 40

Listen: THRU the BIBLE: [Genesis 40](#)

Dear God,

When we feel forgotten and overlooked, anchor us in the truth that You have not forgotten us. Teach us to give You all the glory.

Amen



Joseph's Life in Prison



Genesis 40

Why was it the will of God that Joseph be in prison at this time?

We're about to find out. Around this time, the butler to the king of Egypt and his baker had done something that landed them in the same prison where Joseph was. Remember this was Pharaoh's prison. **This was not a coincidence.**

Joseph was already in a good position, even here in the prison. **Because God gave him favor, everywhere he went, Joseph's ability was recognized** (see *Proverbs 18:16*). God was moving in his life with a very definite purpose.

Joseph got to know the baker and the butler because the guard gave him the responsibility to take care of them while in prison. That's how Joseph came to know that both the butler and the baker had a dream one night, but they were sad because no one could tell them what their dreams meant.

Purpose of Dreams in the Old Testament

Joseph offered, "Don't interpretations come from God? Tell me the dreams." He says that God, not humans, knows the meaning of dreams. But by asking them to tell him their dreams, he implies that God will help him understand their meaning.

Even in this, Joseph gives God all the glory. We learn a valuable lesson from this young man. **Anything we do for the Lord should be done for God's praise.** We're not blessed as much as the Lord would like to bless us because **when He gives us something wonderful, we take it for granted and don't give God the glory.** Joseph models the right response.

God used dreams in the Old Testament in a unique way, because the whole canon of Scripture wasn't complete. **We don't need dreams the same way today because God speaks to us through His Spirit and through His Word.**

But in that day, God used dreams and symbols that were familiar to them to teach them something about Himself and His purposes.



God's Interpretation of Dreams & The Outcome

The butler told his dream about a vine and branches to Joseph. He was familiar with the symbols of serving wine to Pharaoh. God gave Joseph the ability to interpret his dream and promised the butler that he would be restored in three days.

Then he asked the butler a favor. Would he put in a good word for him with Pharaoh? Would he help him get out of prison? Joseph told him a bit of his story and asked, **"Please don't forget me."** The record doesn't say, but the butler probably promised he would speak to Pharaoh on Joseph's behalf.

Next, Joseph heard the baker's dream that was full of practical symbols of his profession - baskets of food and feeding birds. Joseph's explanation brought bad news. He said that in three days, the baker would be taken out and hanged, and the birds would eat his flesh.

Three days later, it was the Pharaoh's birthday, and he threw a party for all his servants. On that day, he restored the butler and hanged the baker, just as Joseph had said.

The butler was freed from prison, but he forgot all about Joseph. **The one small hope Joseph had, that the butler would remember him to Pharaoh, was lost.**

God's Purpose in Letting Joseph be in Prison

God wanted to leave Joseph in the prison for a purpose. If Joseph had been released from prison then, he likely would have returned to Israel. But now, when the time comes for Joseph to interpret Pharaoh's dream, they won't have any problem finding him.

In spite of the discouragement, **Joseph believed God was moving in his life.** Joseph was faithful in every relationship of his life. He was faithful to Potiphar. In prison he was faithful to the keeper of the prison. He was faithful to God, always giving Him the glory. He would soon be faithful to Pharaoh, and he would be faithful to his own brothers. **Joseph's faith in God made him faithful.**

Joseph's faith in God allowed him to have an optimistic outlook on life, even under all his trials. His faith made him sympathetic and kind toward everyone, including this baker and butler, and someday he would be kind to his brothers.

His faith also made Joseph humble. He gave God the glory for all his achievements. He believed in God, as his great-grandfather Abraham had believed Him, **and this faith produced blessing in his life.**

So we leave Joseph, forgotten in prison. **But God hasn't forgotten him, and He is at work in his life.**



If you are His child, He is permitting things to happen to you for your own good.

”



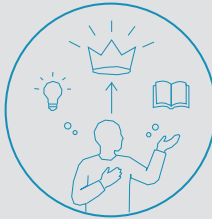
God's Eternal Truths

Relevant to us from Genesis 40

1

All wisdom, interpretation, and useful service come from God and must return to His glory:

Joseph would not take credit for interpreting dreams. He openly confessed that the answer belonged to God. Whatever gifts, insight, or success the Lord gives us are to be received humbly and used so that God, not self, is honored. (Genesis 40:8; Daniel 2:28; James 1:17; 1 Peter 4:10-11)



2

Human beings may forget us, but God never forgets His servants:

The butler forgot Joseph, but God did not. Delays, silence, and disappointment do not cancel God's purposes. When people fail us, God is still faithfully at work. (Genesis 40:14, 23; Isaiah 49:15-16; Psalm 105:17-19)



3

Faith in God produces faithfulness and kindness in every relationship :

Joseph's faith made him trustworthy in responsibility and compassionate toward others, even in suffering. True faith produces consistency, integrity, and kindness, even when no one is watching. (Genesis 39:4-6, 21-22; Genesis 40:6-7; Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:23-24)



Reflection Questions

Question 1

Giving God Glory: When you succeed or are recognized, do you tend to take credit, or do you acknowledge God as the source? How can you intentionally give God glory in your work, conversations, or achievements this week?

Question 2

Being Forgotten: Have you felt forgotten, overlooked, or disappointed by others? How has that affected your trust in God? How can you remain faithful and hopeful while waiting for God's timing?

Question 3

Faithful Character: Are you consistent in your character across different environments - whether seen or unseen? In your current relationships, how can you intentionally show faithfulness, integrity, and kindness this week?



Dreams and Surprises

Begin with prayer

Read: Genesis 41

Listen: THRU the BIBLE: [Genesis 41](#)

Dear God,

Develop in us faithful character in the hidden seasons, so that when You open doors, we are ready. All promotion comes from You alone.

Amen.



Genesis 41

Two years is a long time to wait. That's how long Joseph sat in prison, hoping to be released. But he was a foreigner, kidnapped from his homeland, sold into slavery, and unfairly imprisoned with no one to defend him. And he was forgotten. But not by God. All this was happening to Joseph for God's purpose in his life and in God's bigger picture of redemption. Wouldn't it be great if we could recognize God's hand in our lives? It would give us a totally different outlook on life.

Joseph's story is one that shows poverty to riches. Truth is better than fiction, after all, and that's the case in this thrilling episode from Joseph's life.

God was developing Joseph's character and patience through these days of adversity. (See Romans 5:3)

Pharaoh Has A Dream

Two years after the butler's release from prison, his master, the Pharaoh, had a dream. This was his dream: He saw seven healthy cows grazing in a meadow on the banks of the Nile. Then, seven scrawny, gaunt cows swallowed the seven fat cows. Pharaoh woke up from the dream, wondered if that dream meant something, but then went back to sleep. Again, he had a second, similar dream: Seven healthy ears of grain grew out of a stalk, followed by seven scorched ears that swallowed the first seven. Pharaoh again woke up and realized this, too, was a dream, but he knows it's important and symbolic. He was upset by these two dreams and called together all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. He told them his dreams, but no one could explain their meaning. As it happens, the butler was in the room listening, and he remembered Joseph had explained his dream when he was with him in prison. So the butler spoke up and said, "I know a guy"

The butler explained his backstory to Pharaoh, but also mentioned that this young man was a Hebrew and servant to the captain of the guard, but he correctly explained both his dream and the baker's dream. Pharaoh conceded, "We've tried everybody else, let's give this young man a chance to explain my dreams. I have the feeling they are significant."



From Prison to the Palace

With the directive straight from the palace, Joseph was quickly snatched from his cell, given appropriate court clothes, and he shaved. If you notice in Egyptian artwork, all the men are clean-shaven, with no facial hair. **This is a sign of new life before Joseph; like a resurrection, he was raised up.**

Joseph was brought before Pharaoh and told why he had been summoned. Can he interpret these two dreams? **Right away, Joseph gave God the glory.** He said, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace." (Genesis 41:16)

Pharaoh repeated the dream to Joseph, one dream of two parts. The way the same message was repeated, given to Pharaoh twice, adds to its importance. **God is showing you what He is about to do, Pharaoh.**

Dream's Interpretation is God's Revelation

Here is Joseph's interpretation: The seven healthy cows represent seven years, the same as the seven good ears: the dream is one. The seven thin and ugly cows (and seven empty heads), which came up after them, are seven years of famine. Seven years of great plenty will come for all the land of Egypt and will be followed by seven years of famine. All the land will be depleted by this severe famine.

Joseph repeated the meaning to Pharaoh twice. **"God will soon bring this to pass."** Then Joseph advised Pharaoh how to collect all the surplus during the seven years of plenty and how to store it for survival during the lean years.

Pharaoh Promotes Joseph

Not only did Joseph interpret the dream, but in his enthusiasm and discernment, he suggested what Pharaoh should do. **God was leading him in all of this, of course.** God was giving them notice that there will be a famine so severe that even Egypt will be affected. Because Egypt is an irrigated land, they don't rely on rainfall. The Nile overflows the land every year, bringing not only water, but sediment, which fertilizes the soil.

However, God was warning them that the seven years of famine would impact Egypt, too. As Pharaoh listened to Joseph, what he said made sense. **Who better than Joseph to administer the details? Where did Joseph get this training? Likely from his time in Potiphar's house when he had charge of his estate. Now he will have charge over everything in Egypt.**

Pharaoh was impressed by Joseph, not just for his ability to interpret dreams, but for his godly attitude. No one was wiser than Joseph, and Pharaoh recognized it. The greatest ruler in their corner of the world promoted Joseph to be his second in command.

"You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you." And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." Genesis 41:40-41

What a tremendous transition this was in Joseph's life. From the back of a prison cell to the throne next to Pharaoh. Pharaoh also took off his signet ring and put it on Joseph's hand (equal to having Pharaoh's signature). He gave him a royal wardrobe and a necklace that gave him the same authority as the Pharaoh.

Pharaoh also gave him the "second chariot," which meant that everyone bowed before him as he passed by. With these new privileges, Pharaoh also gave 30-year-old Joseph an Egyptian name, Zaphnath Paaneah, which meant "the revealer of secret things," and a wife named Asenath, who was the daughter of the priest of On.



Joseph is now the Prime Minister!

After these 13 years in Egypt, Joseph is now the prime minister, second only to Pharaoh in the whole country. This begs the question, why was Pharaoh so willing to accept him? **Primarily, of course, the answer is that God was with Joseph.** But there may also be another practical reason.

Many scholars think the Pharaoh at this era in Egyptian history was one of the Hyksos kings, who were not native Egyptians but were Bedouins from the Arabian desert. This nomadic group took over the throne of Egypt for an era. If this is true, Pharaoh was actually closer in nationality to Joseph than to the Egyptians. This racial bond with Pharaoh would have helped him build confidence in Joseph. Hyksos kings found it difficult to find someone loyal and faithful to them in Egypt. **He was faithful to whomever he served, as he will be to this Pharaoh.** The Hyksos kings were later expelled from Egypt, which helps us understand why in *Exodus 1:8* we read that “there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.”

So at 30 years old, Joseph took up his work in Egypt. During these first seven years of plenty, he gathered the abundant produce of the land into storehouses. He stored the grain in cities with a plan for easy distribution. He gathered so much corn that it was “as the sand of the sea,” until he stopped counting, for it was immeasurable. **Under Joseph’s management, Egypt was the breadbasket of the world.**

Joseph’s Two Sons

During those days of plenty, Joseph became a father. He named his first son Manasseh, which loosely means “amnesia,” because it means “**God made me forget.**” He was so involved, doing so much good, that he was not homesick anymore. He now dressed like an Egyptian, talked like an Egyptian, and lived like an Egyptian.

He named his second son Ephraim, meaning “**fruitful.**” **God had made him forget his father’s house and had made him fruitful in the land of Egypt.** Then the seven years of bountiful crops ended, and the famine began.

Joseph is 37 years old. **The famine is worldwide.** Joseph opened all the storehouses, and all the countries came to Egypt to buy corn from Joseph. Including a family from the land of Canaan.



The measure of a great statesman is the man who knows the direction God is going for the next fifty years.

”



God's Eternal Truths

Relevant to us from Genesis 41

1

God is sovereignly at work even when He seems absent:

Thirteen years of silence, yet God was working every single day. The pit, Potiphar's house, and the prison were all steps in a divinely ordered journey. God's sovereignty means He governs all things - including evil done to His people - for ultimate good. (*Romans 8:28; Proverbs 19:21; Isaiah 46:10; Acts 7:9-10*)



2

God honors faithful character, not just favorable circumstances:

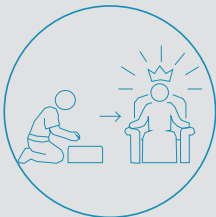
Joseph did not become trustworthy when he was elevated. He was trustworthy as a slave and in prison. God develops character in the furnace so it can be trusted in the palace. God does not look for the most qualified; He looks for the most faithful. (*Luke 16:10; Psalm 75:6-7; Luke 14:11; James 4:10*)



3

Giving God the glory is the posture of the godly:

Three times Joseph deflected credit to God. He lived a God-centered life, not a self-centered one. In every age, in every culture, the man or woman who gives God the glory walks in favor. (*Genesis 41:16, 25, 28; James 4:6*)



Reflection Questions

Question 1

On Prison Seasons: Are you in a season of waiting, suffering, or unfair treatment right now? Do you believe God is actively at work in it? Write down a "prison season" from your past - what did God produce in you during that time that could not have come any other way?

Question 2

On Giving God Glory: When was the last time you said, "It isn't me - it's God"? In your workplace, your family, your ministry? Make it a daily discipline: when something goes well, pause and verbally acknowledge God before receiving any praise.

Question 3

On Faithfulness Where You Are: Are you waiting for better conditions before you commit to serving faithfully? Joseph was faithful as a slave, as a prisoner, and as a statesman. What does faithfulness look like in your current role or situation, however small or overlooked?



Joseph's Brothers

Begin with prayer

Read: Genesis 42

Listen: THRU the BIBLE: [Genesis 42](#)

Dear God,

Bring to the surface anything in us that is unconfessed and unresolved. Give us the courage to face it, and grace to find restoration

Amen.



Jacob Sends His Sons to Egypt



Genesis 42

The famine hit Jacob's family hard. They were looking for ways to survive. Jacob heard that Egypt had grain to buy, and so he got his ten sons together and said, "Go to Egypt and buy us some food!"

Jacob had faith, and he coupled it with action. He believed the corn would bring them life, so he acted on his belief. That is the same as saving faith.

How can one believe in Jesus? The Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved ..." (Acts 16:31). You hear something, and you believe it. That is what Jacob did. That is how he brought life to his family. The way we get eternal life is through faith in Christ.

Why did Jacob only send ten sons? Wasn't there one more son? Yes, but Jacob favored Benjamin and couldn't tolerate the risk of losing him. After all this time, Jacob still hadn't learned his lesson about favoritism. What if danger came upon the other ten sons? It was a risk he didn't mind taking. Joseph and Benjamin were Rachel's sons. He had already lost Joseph. Benjamin was his last link to Rachel, the wife he deeply loved. So now he sent out all ten and kept only Benjamin with him.

God was actually working another plan with the famine. He wanted to get Jacob's family out of Canaan, away from the sins of the Canaanites, and bring them to Egypt to settle in the secluded spot of Goshen.



Joseph Recognizes His Brothers

In Egypt, Joseph was busy distributing the food to all the foreigners who came for help. You have to wonder if he kept a special eye out for his brothers among the delegates from all over the world. He knew they would have to come. So he watched.

Then came the day when ten men walked into the room, and all bowed down on their faces in front of Joseph. You have to wonder how he felt. Do you think Joseph remembered his dream from decades before? Ten sheaves of wheat bowing down to his sheaf? Now it was taking place right in front of him.

Joseph recognized his brothers; why didn't they recognize him? First, they thought he was dead. Or at least they never expected to see him again. But Joseph did expect them. Also, more than 20 years have gone by. Joseph was now almost 40, and he was dressed like an Egyptian and spoke and acted like an Egyptian.

Joseph Tests His Brothers

The first thing Joseph said to them was, "Why are you here?" He spoke roughly to them, to test them. He accused them of being spies. "No, we are ten brothers." They confessed that they really are 12 brothers, but one was home with their father, and the other "was not." They considered Joseph dead, but there he was standing in front of them!

Joseph continued the test. For the third time, he accused them of spying. "Prove to me you're not spies." And he put them all in prison for three days to think about it. The truth is, Joseph was working out a plan. He wanted to see his full brother, Benjamin. These men are really his half-brothers. On the third day, Joseph told them, "Do this and live, for I fear God" (*Genesis 42:18*).

He went on to say, "If you're as honest as you say you are, one of your brothers will stay here in jail while the rest of you take the food back to your hungry families. But you have to bring your youngest brother back to me, confirming that you're telling the truth. And not one of you will die." So, the brothers agreed.

Joseph's Testimony To God

Joseph never missed an opportunity to give a testimony for God. Certainly, he was giving one here. He always gave God the glory as the One who was directing his life. The statement "I fear God" should have encouraged the brothers to believe that they would be treated justly at his hand.

The brothers were grown men, some over 50 years old. They're in a tough spot. Something about this scene also brought back the guilt they shared in Joseph's mistreatment, two decades earlier. They said, "Now we're paying for what we did to Joseph. We saw how terrified he was. He begged us for mercy. But we didn't listen to him. Now we're the ones in trouble."

While they talked among themselves, they spoke Hebrew. Joseph understood every word. Up till now, Joseph communicated with them through an interpreter, posing as an Egyptian. They're actually confessing their guilt to Joseph without realizing it. They think that what's happening to them was God's vengeance on them for what they did to Joseph, and they were repenting before God.



Joseph's Tears Uncover His Love

Joseph heard every bit of it and was moved to tears. He would have loved to throw his arms around each one of them and call them “brother.” But he had not revealed himself yet, because he wanted to see Benjamin.

The brothers agreed among themselves that Simeon would stay while the rest returned to Canaan. Joseph was so emotionally charged by all this that he had to excuse himself to weep privately. He then washed his face and came in again as if nothing had happened.

The brothers bought grain, but Joseph commanded that their money be given back to them, hidden in their sacks. He also gave them food and provisions for their trip. On the way home, they opened their sacks and discovered the money. They were terrified! They already felt like this ruler was suspicious of them. They thought this could be a trick. Now he might accuse them of stealing the money. They decided to bring the money back with them when they returned.

What Will Jacob Say?

When the nine brothers returned home and told Jacob, their father, what had happened, Jacob was overwhelmed. “First, I lost Joseph. Now, I’ve lost Simeon. And you want to take Benjamin?”

Poor Jacob. He was not the trickster he used to be, but he’s also not the man of faith he will be. But he was growing. Reuben made his dad a promise to bring Benjamin back alive. But Jacob’s life was wrapped up in his boy, Benjamin. He was the son of his right hand. He was Jacob’s walking stick; Jacob leaned on him. “No, I won’t let Benjamin go down to Egypt.”

Meanwhile, Simeon sat in prison back in Egypt.



Joseph would have said the same thing that Paul wrote: all things work together for good to them that love God.

”



God's Eternal Truths

Relevant to us from *Genesis 42*

1

Sin unconfessed will surface and God orchestrates reckoning:

Twenty-plus years after selling Joseph, the brothers immediately felt the weight of their guilt. God did not let it go. This is not vengeance - it is the gracious discipline of God, bringing men to a place of repentance. (*Galatians 6:7; Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9*)



2

Faith pairs belief with action:

Jacob heard there was grain in Egypt, believed it, and sent his sons. That is saving faith - not passive, but active and obedient. In the same way, true faith in Christ is the soul casting itself on Him, not mere intellectual agreement. (*Acts 16:31*)



Reflection Questions

Question 1

On Unconfessed Sin: Are you carrying guilt from something done to a brother, sister, parent, friend, or colleague that has never truly been confessed or made right? Don't let it go underground for another twenty years. What is one step you can take this week toward confession and restoration?

Question 2

On Acting on Your Faith: Jacob didn't just believe there was grain, he sent his sons. Is there an area of your life where you believe something about God or His Word but have not yet acted on it? What would it look like to move from belief to obedient action this week?



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