

# Destin Church of Christ

March 19, 2023

## Lesson 3: Joseph: “From Slave to Deputy Pharaoh”

Timeless Truth: Though man fails, God’s plan prevails.

Genesis 37; 39; 41 – 48; 50

Timeline: 2200-1800 B.C.

In two dreams God revealed to Joseph that he would one day rule over his family, but God’s plan seemed doomed to fail when Joseph’s brothers sold him into Egyptian slavery. But with the Lord’s favor, Joseph rose to a position of power in Potiphar’s house. Man’s evil failures would not foil God’s plan.

The story of Joseph is a powerful illustration of God’s control over human history and God’s divine plan would succeed. God called Abraham’s family to be the conduit through whom He would bless all nations. While the ultimate fulfillment would come in Christ, God used Joseph to reveal Himself as the gracious God of all.

### Lesson Breakdown:

- Family Troubles (Genesis 37)
- Into Egypt (Genesis 37, 39)
- True Dreams (Genesis 41)
- A Dream Fulfilled (Genesis 42-48)

### Plot Points:

- Through the story of Joseph and his brothers, we discover that God’s good plans are always brought to pass.
- God remains faithful to his covenant promises, saving his chosen people from famine and using Joseph to save all of Egypt.

As you watch the video for Session 3, notice some of the main points.

- ✓ Joseph was his dad’s favorite.
- ✓ In the darkest times of Joseph’s life we read that “the LORD was with Joseph.”
- ✓ God showed Joseph kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden.
- ✓ The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered.
- ✓ Joseph to his brothers: “It was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.”
- ✓ Let God mold you during the difficult seasons to equip you for the assignment ahead.

## UNDERSTAND THE STORY:

1. Why did Joseph's brothers want to get rid of him? (pg. 30) (Genesis 37:8)
2. What advice would you have given Joseph about how to handle his coat and his dreams?
3. Here is a list of the possible positive effects of Joseph's being sold into slavery.
  - To enable him to overcome a prideful attitude and learn humility (Proverbs 15:33)
  - To teach him how to serve (Genesis 39:4, 22-23, 40:4; Matthew 20:26-28; and Mark 9:33-35.)
  - To train him to be faithful (Genesis 39:2-6; Matthew 25:21.)
  - To test him in moral purity (Genesis 39:7-20; Matthew 5:11-12.)
  - To prepare him to comfort others (Genesis 50:21; 2 Corinthians 1:3-5.)
  - To prepare him to lead his brothers to repentance (Proverbs 16:6.)
  - To teach him patience (Genesis 40:1-14, 23; I Peter 5:10.)
  - To enable him to see God accomplish His purposes and fulfill His promises (Genesis 37:5-11, 41:32, 42:1-5, 45:4-7, 50:20.)
  - To teach him how jealousy can cause suffering (Genesis 37:3-4, 17-36.)
  - To save many lives (Genesis 50:20)
  - To let him experience the blessing of God's favor (Genesis 39:2-6, 21-23.)
  - To place him in a position to tell Pharaoh of God's power (Genesis 41:15-16, 25, 28, 32-33, 38-44.)
  - (There are many more.)
4. How does Genesis 39:6 describe Joseph? (pg. 31)
5. What did Potiphar's wife falsely accuse Joseph of doing? (pg. 32) (Genesis 39:14-18)
6. Have you ever been falsely accused?
  - a) What did you do?
  - b) How did you handle it?
  - c) If you could go back in time, what do you wish you could do differently?
  - When his master heard the story his wife told him, Joseph was thrown into prison. (pg. 32) (Genesis 39:20)
  - God gifted him with the unusual ability to discern the meaning of dreams. (pg. 32) (Genesis 40:8)
  - Joseph interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh's baker and wine taster. (pg. 32) (Genesis 40:12-13, 18-19)

- When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream None of the magicians and wise men of Egypt could interpret them for him. (pg. 32) (Genesis 41:1-8).
  - The chief wine taster remembered Joseph, so Pharaoh sent for Joseph. (Genesis 41:14)
  - Giving credit to God for this gift of interpretation, told Pharaoh that the dreams foretold seven years of bumper crops to be followed by seven years of famine. (pg. 33) (Genesis 41:25-32)
  - Joseph recommended that a wise man be put in charge of storing food and preparing for the coming famine. (pg. 33) (Genesis 41:33)
7. Did Pharaoh and his officials think it was a good plan or a bad idea? (pg. 33) (Genesis 41:37)
8. What position of authority was Joseph given by Pharaoh? (pgs. 33-34)
- A. Made second in command in all of Egypt. (Genesis 41:43)
  - B. Put in charge of the collection of grain. (Genesis 41:48)
  - C. Put in charge of the distribution of food. (Genesis 41:55-57)
9. How many years was it between the time when Joseph was sold off as a slave and being reunited with his brothers?
- During the famine, Joseph's older brothers came to Egypt to buy food, but they did not recognize Joseph. (pg. 34) (Genesis 42:8)
10. Joseph recognized his brothers and accused them of what? (pg. 35) (Genesis 42:9)
- After a series of twists that included his brothers bowing before him—in fulfillment of Joseph's dream of long ago—Joseph revealed himself to his brothers. (pg. 39)
  - They were shocked, yet soon glad to be reunited. (pg. 39)
  - Joseph sent word for the entire family to join them in Egypt until after the famine. (pg. 40) (Genesis 45:16+)
11. Jacob was hesitant about going, so what was God's promise to him? (pg. 40) (Genesis 46:3-4)
- Joseph settled his father and his brothers in Egypt and gave them property in the best part of the land. (pg. 40) (Genesis 47:11-12)
  - Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years. He died at the age of 147 years. (pg. 41) (Genesis 47:28)
  - When their father, Jacob, died, Joseph's brothers feared that Joseph would take revenge against them for their prior treatment of him. (pg. 41) (Genesis 50:15)

- They came to Joseph and begged for his forgiveness, appealing to a request their father had made before he died (pg. 41) (Genesis 50:16–17)
- Joseph wept when he heard their appeal, because revenge was the last thing on his mind. (pg. 41) (Genesis 50:17)
- His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. “We are your slaves,” they said. (pg. 42) (Genesis 50:18)
- But Joseph told them to not be afraid of him. He told them that what they intended as harm, God intended for good. (pg. 42) (Genesis 50:19–20).

12. What does that statement tell you about God? (Genesis 50:19–20).

13. What strikes you about Joseph’s attitude toward his brothers and the way he treats them?

14. What is the similarity in how Joseph treated his brothers and how Esau treated Jacob? (Genesis 33)

- Joseph tells his brothers that he would continue to take care of them and their children. (pg. 42) (Genesis 50:21)
- Joseph stayed in Egypt, along with all his father’s family. (pg. 42) (Genesis 50:22)
- Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. (pg. 42) (Genesis 50:22, 26)

15. From a human standpoint (the Lower Story), Joseph was in the worst place: abandoned by family, sold into slavery, cast into prison (Genesis 39:20 – 23; (pgs. 29 – 32). From a divine perspective (Upper Story), he was in the best place. How did Joseph’s understanding of what God was doing to save Israel in the Upper Story help him deal with what his brothers did in the Lower Story?

16. What do we learn about God from the years of trials Joseph faced?

In the story of Joseph and his brothers, we see the themes of forgiveness, the father-son bond, sibling rivalry, brotherly love, God’s sovereignty, and God’s greater good in times of suffering. Just like Joseph, we are called to forgive those who have offended us and see life’s experiences as part of God’s plan to help us serve others.

All of us naturally avoid times of struggle, pain, and hardship, but these moments in life might just be the tool God uses to accomplish his will in and through us. We must allow the story of Joseph to help us understand how God can work through difficult circumstances to bring about good.

Next week ... we’ll look at the miraculous way the Lord delivered the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt. Take time this week to read Lesson 4 of *The Story*.