

W030116a – 05/20/26
Genesis 37, 39-41
“The Life of Joseph- Part One”

Introduction

- Tonight we will continue our study of the Old Testament and the Book of Genesis, remember

The word Genesis means “beginnings”

- And truly so many things in scripture have their beginning in the book of Genesis
 - The universe, life in general
 - Man, marriage
 - Sin and evil, Language, government, nations
 - And specifically, we will see the nation of Israel
- In fact, understanding what this book is about is the beginning is really a good way to divide up our look at this book

Outline for the Book of Genesis

#1 – The Beginning of All Nations – Genesis 1-11

The Creation – Genesis 1-2

The Fall – Genesis 3-5

The Flood – Genesis 6-9

The Tables of Nations – Genesis 10-11

#2 – The Beginning of the Jewish Nation – Genesis 12-50

Abraham – Genesis 12-23

Isaac – Genesis 24-27

Jacob – Genesis 28-36

Joseph – Genesis 37-50

- And tonight we move on to the final section of the book of Genesis and that is one son of Jacob’s, his son Joseph

It is amazing to realize that 1/4 of the book of Genesis is devoted to the life of Joseph and what makes that so amazing is the entire creation story is two chapters, the flood was 3 chapters, Joseph gets 14 chapters, but it shows you how important this man was

And tonight as we begin this study of the life of Joseph we will see...

Three Amazing Levels to the Life of Joseph

#1 – The story of history

- This dramatic story tells the history of how the Jews end up in Egypt, and it is very interesting

#2 – The story of God’s providential hand

- the whole time it is so easy to see God working behind the scenes, making this happen

#3 – The picture of Jesus

- Joseph and the things that happen to him in these chapters are such a picture Jesus
 - in fact, there are more than 300 pictures in the text – we will not dwell on all of them, but I encourage you to scan over the rest of the book and just see Jesus
 - personally, I think this is why so many chapters are devoted to the life of Joseph
- Creation is cool, I love learning about the flood and the tower of Babel, but the hero of the Bible is who friends?
 - Jesus!!!!
- I challenge you that it is because Joseph is a picture of Jesus and it is Him that God wants you and I to be captivated with more than anything else

On the Mount of Transfiguration, you remember Peter, James and John were there with Jesus and they see Him transfigured with Moses and Elijah

- And good ole Peter – he says, “It is good for us to be here, let’s make 3 booths, one for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah”
 - And God speaks from heaven saying, “This is my beloved Son, hear Him!!!”
 - It is not about Moses, it’s not about Elijah, it’s about Jesus

Anyway, tonight we are going to see the first part of Joseph's life and we can summarize this by thinking of that old Western starring Clint Eastwood... The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Movie Poster

- We are going to take it in a little different order as we begin to start to move through the life of Joseph

Genesis 37, 39-41

#1 – The Ugly – Genesis 37

#2 – The Bad – Genesis 39-40

#3 – The Good – Genesis 41

- We are going to look at this one at a time

Genesis 37, 39-41

#1 – The Ugly – Genesis 37

- Chapter 37 is really an ugly look at how sin can create division in families

Joseph is favored by his father

- It came about from the fact that Joseph's mother, Rachel was Jacob's favorite wife – it was her he wanted to marry in the first place

And this favoritism comes out again as Jacob gives his son a coat, a coat your Bible calls, “a coat of many colors”

- Now as I have shared with you before, as a great Bible scholar, I have worked hard to uncover some ancient photos of what we are reading about

Only here at Calvary Vista on Wednesday Nights have I been able to show you

- Baby pictures of Esau
 - Wedding photos of Esau
 - And we have one more tonight and that is Joseph in his coat of many colors – was it this one or this one?

Picture of the Coat of many colors 01 and 02 (one slide)

- No wonder his brothers didn't like him, this is crazy stuff

Okay so that is not a picture of Joseph in his coat of many colors

- in fact, Joseph's coat may not have been colorful at all - your margin might have a note that says, that a more accurate translation would be "long sleeved"

If you understand the culture of those days, those who were placed in position of authority were given coats with long sleeves, or big sleeves

- They did it so they could keep documents and other important information on them, much like today's briefcase or backpack

In contrast the workers would wear sleeveless coats to give them more mobility while working in the field

- So you see what Jacob does by giving this coat to Joseph is he elevates him above his older brothers

Adding to this was these dreams that Joseph has

- The first one is 12 sheaves of wheat and 11 were bowing down to Joseph's sheave
 - And Joseph is so excited about this he tells his brothers

You know there is no sin recorded in Joseph's life, now I'm sure he did sin, because the Bible says, "all have sinned" – it is not that he didn't sin, it is just the Bible choose not to record it

- But it does show that Joseph here is a little young and naïve
 - He thinks it is great God is telling him that his brothers will bow down to him one day, and he doesn't see why his brothers don't like his dream?

And so because of the dreams Joseph has and the way his father treats him, this both creates great division between Joseph and his brothers

- Now a quick word on this to you who are parents before we move on

Jacob shows favoritism to one of his children over the others

- And the result is pain, for all involved

And Jacob should have known better

- He should have known because his own father favored his brother over him and he knew personally all the problems that caused
 - So you think Jacob would have learned from his own childhood, but that is not always the case

And I just mention this because I know none of you desire to favor one of your children over another

- But sometimes in elevating godly characteristics in one child, trying to teach the others, we can sometimes unwittingly do the same thing

So how should we handle the differences in our children? Well, consider the way God handles His children

- I am always blown away by Hebrews 11
 - Hebrews 11 has been called the hall of faith, and truly these were great men and women of God
- However, if you read it carefully you will notice, Hebrews 11 doesn't tell the whole story

It doesn't tell about how Abraham messed things up because of his lack of faith

- It doesn't mention Moses not wanting to speak to Pharaoh
 - Or Jacob leaving Bethel
 - Or anything bad about Samson or David

Now while things were happening, God was certainly correcting His kids, certainly allowing them to experience consequences

- as we should as parents as well
 - But what I see here in Hebrews 11, is God also looks for the good that his kids do, looks for the highlights of their lives and majors on them and points the good things out in each of them

And so too as parents, of course it is part of our job to correct what needs to be corrected, don't misunderstand me

- But another part is to discover the highlights and lift them up especially if you have multiple kids

And part of the wonder of being a parent is discovering and encouraging those things in each of our children or people we are involved with

- Jacob did not – He favored one of his sons, and by it caused grief for them all

So back to the story, Joseph's brothers are watching their dad's flocks just north of Shechem

- Now why are they there????

Because Dad had been there, Dad had spent 8 years living in Shechem, this ungodly city – and even though now he is doing well, the boys were affected

- It reminds me of what happened to Lot earlier in this book
 - How Abraham also left Bethel and headed for Egypt

And God called him out, and he repented, and was fine in the end...

- But his nephew Lot, well when given a choice of where he wanted to go when he and Abraham divided – He choose the plains of Sodom – why? – they reminded him of Egypt
 - Abraham got Lot out of Egypt but he could not get Egypt out of Lot
 - And the same thing is happening here with Jacob's sons
- They are back in Shechem and Joseph is sent to them
 - And they want to kill him
- Ruben tries to intercede for his brother, because maybe you remember, maybe you don't want to, but he is not in good with his dad, for sleeping his stepmom, so maybe he is hoping to get back in good with dad, for Ruben's plan is to come back later and set Joseph free

But the brothers who throw Joseph into this pit, then sit down for lunch, that is cold hearted (think about that!)

- But then they see a tribe of Ishmaelites and Midianites on their way to Egypt
 - Dotham, the city this story takes place in was on the trade route from Syria to Egypt
- And so the brothers realize they can make some money off their brother and they sell him for 20 pieces of silver, they get 2 silver coins a piece, pretty cheap price for their brother's life

To cover themselves, they rip apart Joseph's robe, cover it in goat's blood and let their father make his own conclusions

- It is ironic I need to point out that the brothers deceive their dad by killing a goat

The same way Jacob deceived his father into believing he was Esau

- It is funny how sin, when not dealt with comes around to you again
 - And it is sad when it is the form of your kids
- does anyone else here not want to be a parent – God help us to lead by His Spirit – so much is at stake!!!

Things are bad for Joe

- things unfortunately will get worse
 - well skip over chapter 38, we dealt with that last week, it shows the lineage of Jesus Christ, Jesus had some dysfunctional forefathers just like you and me – but we skip to chapter 39...

Genesis 37, 39-41

#1 – The Ugly – Genesis 37

#2 – The Bad – Genesis 39-40 – (hold off on reading)

- Now we spent a good deal of time on Sunday talking about the temptation of Joseph – if you missed last Sunday, I cannot encourage you enough to listen to the study online or on our app

Temptation happens when desire meets opportunity

- And that is what we see in the early verses of chapter 39
 - Joseph is a good-looking young man – His mom was beautiful in form and appearance and that is exactly the way Joseph is described
- You add to that Joseph has been bought by Potiphar who was an officer of Pharaoh

And as we pointed out on Sunday – almost always, the phrase in verse one, “officer” – refers to someone who was a eunuch

- Now eunuchs high up in the Egyptian government even though they could not have normal marital relations were still given a wife for ceremonial reasons
 - You have to take someone to the dinner parties

However, it was normal and not expected but almost like a blind eye was turned to the fact that those ceremonial wives would seek out a household slave to fulfill their needs for intimacy

- And so we see the temptation
 - Joseph is a really handsome young man
- At home Potiphar has a wife that is no doubt beautiful because Potiphar was powerful and yet she was lonely
 - So she throws herself at Joseph

And we see Joseph in the first 12 verses of chapter 39 overcome unbelievable temptation

- And again we looked at those verses in detail last Sunday in a message entitled “overcoming temptation” and if you missed it, we can learn a lot about overcoming issues, no matter what they are, by seeing how Joseph did
 - But when we last left Joseph on Sunday – Potiphar’s wife has grabbed a hold of his garment – Joseph runs away and she is left holding his clothes

And so pick up the story with me in verse 13 of chapter 39, look at it with me – [read Genesis 39:13-23](#))

Potiphar's wife is crying out – He tried to rape me

- And when Potiphar gets home, she tells her husband the same story and it says that Potiphar's anger was aroused but notice it doesn't say at who
 - I personally think Potiphar is upset at his wife – He had gotten to know the character of Joseph and He no doubt knew the character of his wife
 - If he was angry at Joseph he could have had him killed, again attempted rape of a government official's wife was a death sentence in ancient Egypt

The fact Joseph gets put in prison and a prison for the King's prisoners to boot, not the common prison is really telling for what is happening behind the scenes

- Potiphar has to do something because of his wife's accusation of the slave, but he doesn't probably believe her, he likes Joseph, so he puts him in the King's prison
 - Now notice what happens when he is there, chapter 40... - [Read chapter 40](#)

Notice the character of Joseph

- things are pretty ruff in his life, and yet he notices what others are going through, he is looking to serve others
 - and more than that, you can see Joseph has never lost hope that the dreams God gave him will be fulfilled because when these guys have dreams that need to be interpreted, Joseph doesn't say – oh I used to believe dreams, but not anymore
 - No – he still believes God spoke to Him and will someday come through and so Joseph ministers to these fellow prisoners and I love that about this young man

I mean how many of us would be lost in our own bitterness – “God I can't believe how you treat me, my brothers sell me into slavery, I stand for purity in Potiphar's house and I get accused of rape, serving You has no benefit” – I know that would be my temptation to be thinking at this moment

But Joseph is serving God, not complaining, and noticing when others are sad and I think this trait of Joseph is such a key to walking upright with the Lord in our trials

- the temptation is to become so self-focused, so wrapped up in “woe is me”
 - But if you do – you will be devastated by depression

The old adage is **J.O.Y. is – Jesus – Others – You**

- Listen it’s a little corny, but I’m into corn, when its true
 - Jesus – make Him your focus and your priority
 - Then others – we think we will be happy if we are our focus, but that is not true, some of the most miserable people in the world, who have the money to pamper their every desire, and they don’t understand why they are empty
- Jesus, others, then you – it’s not wrong to care about your own needs, just get the order right

Joseph does and notice what happens, he has the opportunity to minister

- we think, why don’t I get to serve the Lord, maybe, just maybe you are so into you, you don’t notice opportunities

You are so bummed out that you are not being elevated, that you are not in a place God can use you

- Joseph has the right priorities, he notices when the Butler and the Baker and the candlestick maker, no just kidding, he notices when the Butler and Baker are sad, and an opportunity for ministry takes place

These guys, who were serving the Pharaoh, there was probably an attempt on Pharaoh’s life, and Pharaoh doesn’t know if it is the butler, or the baker, so he throws them both in prison, until they can figure it out

- and these two guys have a dream
 - they are troubled, Joseph notices, asks them, they tell him and he gives glory to God, only God can do this, and then lets God use him

And it was good news for the butler

- the three vines are three days and in three days you are going to be restored back to your place at Pharaoh's side

And Joseph sees the opportunity, "when you are there tell Pharaoh about me – and the butler says "no problem man"

- The baker says, hey that was great, I also had a dream
 - Well - Bad news for the baker
 - Joseph tells him the three baskets are also three days but at the end of three days the Pharaoh is going to hang him and birds are going to eat his dead body – not so good news for this baker
- I mean he had probably made Pharaoh a Caesar Salad and so it was curtains for him!!!! – Pharaoh doesn't like the Caesar of Rome, never mind, I thought it was funny!

But the dreams come to pass

- The butler is restored, the baker is put to death
 - And yet verse 23 – the butler forgot Joseph

And I really believe those years in prison were the most difficult times for Joseph

- You see when he was sold into slavery, he could blame the ugliness of his brothers
 - When he was lied about from Potiphar's wife, well she was a nasty woman
- But now he has been doing the right thing in Egypt
 - And he still gets punished and treated unfairly and ends up in prison and then forgotten there
- Oh Lord you let me interpret these dreams, so the Pharaoh can hear of me – this is what you were doing

But when days turn into a week and weeks turn into month and months into years, chapter 41 verse one will say, "after two years" and that is easy to read, I'm sure for Joseph it was so difficult to go through, so who do you think Joseph began to blame this time?

Personally, I think I would blame the Lord – wouldn't you?

- Lord you don't treat your servants very well
 - I guess purity doesn't pay?
 - You know the enemy was right there feeding that
- And we need to see this

We don't understand what God is doing in our lives, but please hear me, neither did Joseph

- He didn't have the next chapter to read
 - But through the circumstances we see that God is always good even when it appears to us that He is not
 - The same God that was with Joseph and was working in Joseph is the same God that is with you
- And I know at times it doesn't seem that way but that is what Joseph would have said, must to have said

But why would the Lord do this? Why would the Lord treat his servant this way?

- The answer is God was preparing him for something great
 - God was working something into him that could be worked in no other way
 - Psalm 105:18 speaking of what happened to Joseph says in young's literal translation...

“They have afflicted with fetters his feet, until iron entered his soul.” – Psalm 105:18 – Young's Literal Translation

- You see Joseph didn't know what God was doing
 - He didn't have this chapter to read
 - But God was preparing him
- And if God has been working on you for a long time – putting iron in your veins so to speak, then He is going to use it – He doesn't waste lessons – Amen?
 - Look at what happens to Joseph next...

Genesis 37, 39-41

#1 – The Ugly – Genesis 37

#2 – The Bad – Genesis 39-40

#3 – The Good – Genesis 41

- We finally get to the good part – let’s read this chapter and we will make a few comments and be done

Genesis 41:1 says “it came to pass” – just stop right there

- This verse is so comforting to me in trials... things get bad, circumstances are hard - I know God is at work - but it’s hard
 - Precious one, you need to hear tonight, eventually it will come to pass
 - And I don’t want to be embarrassed when it does, whining in the corner, I want God to say, well done, don’t you???

Pharaoh has a dream, and no one can interpret the dream, to which the butler says, “I am having a vague memory, oh no....” There is this guy in prison who interprets dreams

- Oh man – I forgot
 - So they bring Joseph out
 - They shave him, because in that culture the men were clean shaven, on their heads, so cue ball style, so they shave Joseph and bring him before Pharaoh
 - And Pharaoh says, I hear you can interpret dreams?
- And Joseph says, “no, only God can”

Now this is pretty bold

- because remember, Pharaoh thinks he is a god, the people think Pharaoh is a god and yet he cannot interpret the dream
 - but Joseph is pointing out if your god needs to call in an expert because he can’t deal with your problem, that is not a very good god

But the true God will do it Pharaoh

- and God does, he interprets Pharaoh’s dream
 - and then beyond that, Joseph then gives Pharaoh strategic national policy advice, I’m mean this is bold for a slave

Not only will I tell you what the dream means, but then I am going to give you the way to fix your national crisis

- And even Pharaoh can see, there is something different about this guy
 - and in one moment everything changes for Joseph
- I mean he is probably malnourished, probably beaten on a regular basis, wonders if he will ever see the light of day
 - And in one moment he is second in command of Egypt, the most powerful empire on the planet at that time

This is an actual position we have learned by uncovering ancient documents about ancient Egypt

- The position was called the Vizier
 - And we have learned that he was responsible for far more than handing out food, he was responsible for trade deals, he was responsible for taxation, and he was responsible for all the other palace staff – married to the priestess of ON, the priest of On was the third most powerful person in Egypt at the time, so married his daughter
- Which brings up an interesting thought
 - Have you ever wondered what it was like when Potiphar came home from work that day? – How was your day dear? – oh good, you will never guess who was made the new Vizier in Egypt today, you will never guess who my new boss is? – Who? – well let's just say, I hope your story was straight about you and that former Hebrew slave – former? Did he die – nope, I report to him for work tomorrow morning, says he wants to talk to me about something – do you know what that might be?
- Joseph becomes this Vizier and we actually have written records we have found in Yemen about the princess of the land in this time upset because she is trying to buy off the Vizier of Egypt whom she actually calls Joseph and she is mad because he won't be bought off
 - This is a matter of historical fact, not just a bible story - This really happened to this guy

He wakes up one morning as a forgotten slave and goes to bed that night a hip-hop star – I’m serious, look at the text...

- It’s in the text – verses 42-43
 - He gets a gold chain, and rings
 - He gets a fly ride – chariot, escalade of the day

He even has a posse, going before him saying, “Bow the knee, here come Joseph G”, that is what a posse does – right? - I don’t know, I don’t have a posse

- But Joseph has gone Truly Hollywood story, from the Prison to the Palace, because every good hip hop story starts in prison right? - so with Joseph

13 years of slavery and prison

- and although I am making fun of it, this was real life for him - we don’t have a record of it, but I promise you, there were nights when Joseph looked up into heaven and thought God what are you doing?
 - I want to trust you, but what are you doing?
 - And all those nights of wondering, all those days of faithfulness when it looked like no one cared
- In one day, in one moment, it all made sense

And I mention that to you, because I believe for some of you, this will be your story as well

- years of being faithful in the background
 - going through hard times and tragedy
 - without shaking your first at the heavens
 - with just simple faith, God I know you are for me
- and friends, if you are there, you keep being faithful, don’t you grow weary in well doing
 - because I believe in one moment – things can change

Don’t get bitter

- I love what Joseph names his sons

“Manasseh” means “causing to forget”

He wasn't dwelling on all the wrongs done to him

- He was naming his kid "I have forgotten" all the wrongs done to me
 - And his other son called **"Ephraim" means "I will be doubly blessed"**
- No hint of bitterness, no hint of anger
 - That is what I want for my life

I don't know about you, but I don't want to be embarrassed of the way I acted, I don't want God to find me in some corner having a pity party

- I want God to find me doing what I always have been doing, just serving Him
 - Lord if you want me to serve you in the pit, in the prison – I will obey, blessed be the name of the Lord
 - And if you choose to have me serve in the palace, well, blessed be the name of the Lord

Because I really believe church, to the Lord, He doesn't really care where you get to serve Him, how many people are affected, but what He really cares about is are you being faithful to what He called you to do?

- are you being faithful in that hard marriage?

Are you being faithful in that dead end job?

- Are you being faithful when no one cares, and no one is there to pat you on the back?
 - Because someone does care, and His name is Jesus!
 - And when He comes, when it comes to pass, and it will, it may be tomorrow, it might not be until you see Him in glory, but it will come to pass, and His reward will be with Him, and that is what you will care about
 - We need to take encouragement from this tonight

It is the Lord, it's the Lord, it's the Lord

- the same one you and I worship
 - the one that was directing Joseph's life, is the same one in control of our lives

Rest in Him, Look to Him – for you, your families, your ministries

**My hope is built on nothing less, than Jesus' blood and
righteousness. I dare not trust the sweet frame, but
wholly lean on Jesus' name – On Christ the solid rock I
stand, all other ground is sinking sand, all other ground
is sinking sand**