

Intro: We live in a day when people are **desperately longing for heroes**; people of honesty and integrity. **Joseph is such a person!** He becomes a model, and an example of what God can do in a person's life if they will trust Him in every situation. In this next section, we see **5 circumstances which mark the beginning of Joseph... Living Out His Dreams!**

READ

I. JOSEPH WAS THE DELIGHT OF JACOB (1-4)

A. Jacob's STORY (1-2a) – Jacob's record began back in **(25:26)**. He, along with **Abraham** and **Isaac** continued to live as *foreigners in the land of Canaan*, purchasing only small portions. Their lives are recorded, and they are known for believing God's promises. **(Heb 11:9,13)** tells us that *"these died in faith", not having received the promises, but having seen them all far off* (a spiritual lesson for you and I)

Now the actual story of Joseph begins...

B. Joseph's SITUATION (2b-4) – **Fact:** The story of Joseph covers $\frac{1}{4}$ of the book of Genesis. He becomes one of the greatest men of the O.T. of which **no sin is mentioned!** – He became **Jacob's chosen son** because Reuben defiled his father's bed and lost favor. At this point, **Joseph was just a teenager** learning to shepherd the flock with his brothers. **Three Facts** are mentioned about his situation:

1. He was an Informant (2) – Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher, and Joseph were all close in age. – Joseph's brought news of his brothers evil doing, to Jacob. **He was greatly accountable to his Father**, a leader and informant, which Jacob loved! – Overall, the Life of Joseph is characterized by his righteousness and moral purity. However, this chapter alerts us to one of his problems... **Spiritual Pride**. A certain piousness about him which his **brothers would come to hate.** – In **Romans**, Paul says, *"...to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith"* (**Rom 12:3**)

2. He was Loved (3) – Favored for a number of reasons: **For one**, he was the son of his beloved wife, Rachel. **Secondly**, he evidently possessed certain leadership capabilities over his brothers as co-shepherds. – **Thirdly**, Joseph was a "wise son of Jacob's old age." – **A Coat of Many Colors was a given to Joseph as symbol of his authority and favored position in the family.** Jacob's selection of Joseph reeked of favoritism, which **contributed to his son's contention towards Joseph...**

3. He was Hated (4) – And **"Envied"** by his brothers **(4,5,10)**. Their harsh feelings meant that it was difficult for his brothers to interact with Joseph, becoming **contentious** or even **hostile** in talk. – Talk about **"Sibling Rivalry!"** (*Are you currently at ends with your siblings? (cf. 1 John 4:20) Make it right!*)

P/A - Jacob LOVED Joseph, "HE DELIGHTED IN HIM." But it caused problems because the brothers were envious of Joseph. For the record... **HATE** is: Intense or Passionate dislike... while **ENVY** is a feeling of discontented or resentful longing, aroused by someone else's possessions, qualities, or luck. What does envy produce? **(tt. Jam 3:13-14)** *Jacob's Delight in Joseph was just the beginning of Living the Dream*

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II. JOSEPH DREAMS OF PROMINENCE (5-11) – Joseph's character is well known for his **dreams** and **interpretation of dreams**. **What is the significance of Dreams?** **DREAMS** (*halôm*) happen in several different settings. A dream may depict God's protection of his people or His promises to them. For example, God used dreams to promise **Solomon** great wisdom and insight in **(1 Kings 3:5–14)**, and to warn **Laban** not to harm Jacob in **(Gen 31:24)**. – **Solomon tells us that a dream can also be the result of too much activity or cares in life (Eccl 5:3).** (*Was this the case with Joseph, or was his from God?*)

- God may speak through dreams, but **it doesn't give us a guidebook for dream interpretation!**
- **DREAMS** are also strongly associated with Visions and Prophecies utilized to communicate information **about the future** or **to offer direction**. As we see here, **Joseph has Two Dreams** which foretell of his family one day submitting to him...

A. His FIRST Dream (7-8) – *Involves Sheaves!* The first mention of Joseph's dreams **did not go well** when told to his brothers (5-6). **They hated him even more!** – Joseph's dream obviously positioned him above his brothers... *whose sheaves "bowed down" to his sheaf!* – Upon the telling of the dream, they **needed no interpretation** because his brothers clearly understood it's meaning. So, they responded, *"shall you indeed reign over us?"* This provided them 2 additional reasons to hate Joseph, his Dreams and Words!

B. His SECOND Dream (9-10) – *Involves Celestial Elements:* The Sun, the Moon, and in particular, Eleven Stars (9). – In (Rev 12:1), the sun, moon, and stars referred to **symbolize the tribes of Israel**. – That passage speaks of Jesus coming from the nation of Israel. But there it mentions **Twelve Stars!**

C. His Family's RESPONSE (10-11) – As he told this dream, his father was included with his brothers (10), and he **became offended at such a dream**, so he rebuked him, saying *"Shall your family bow down to the Earth before you?"* – *The entire family perceived that Joseph's subconscious mind desired preeminence among his family members.* – While the brothers envied him, we're told that Jacob pondered the matter.

P/A – **God can speak through dreams, but some things are better left unspoken!** – What's missing here is **TACT!** – Joseph's focus on how great his dreams were **"OVERLOOKED" how his dreams would sound in the ears of others**. These dreams were for his own pondering, and he was **not wise by telling his dreams**. (*Sometimes we need to hold the things God in our hearts, before telling others*). – Ironically, the **"Telling of the Dreams"** was just the start of **LIVING THE DREAM!** – It set off a **chain of events** which would greatly impact his entire family, **THEN** and in the **DISTANT FUTURE!**

Now, we learn how...

III. JOSEPH'S LIFE IS DECIDED (12-28) – By certain circumstances and certain brothers.

It began with a...

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A. Worried Father (12-14) – For some reason, ten of Joseph's brothers went to Shechem to feed the flock, **over 50 miles away (Why so far away?)** Hebron had plenty of field, especially since Esau was gone! After several days passed, **Jacob grew concerned for them**, so he sent Joseph to bring back word if all is well. (*They weren't his favorites, but they were still his sons! – "Please" check on them!*)

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B. Welfare Check (15-17) – Joseph was alone and traveled faster. Upon arrival at Shechem, he **WANDERED looking for his brothers?** A certain man asked Joseph, **What are you seeking?** – As Joseph replied, the man informed him that they went **DOTHAN** probably seeking water for the flocks. – **DOTHAN (lit. two cisterns)** was another **15 miles NW**, so Joseph found them there. – I see **Two Fascinating Typologies in this scenario:**

- **The brothers Typify the Nation of Israel who Wandered Far from their Father's house (Jer. 2:13) "For My people have committed two evils. **They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water"** (*There is no other source of water or pasture*)**
- **Secondly, Joseph is a Type of Christ, who was sent by His Father to Israel, who rejected Him! (**John 1:10-11**) He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.**

What happens next is a... **READ**

C. Wicked Plan (18-20) – When the brothers saw Joseph approaching from afar, *they quickly plotted against him* in order to “**Murder Him**” and “**Cast Him into a Pit.**” – *Their hatred for Joseph had boiled for some time, but his appearing provided them opportunity to DISPOSE of him and his Dreams for good!* – They even nicknamed him as “**The Dreamer,**” declaring, “*we shall see what will become of his dreams.*” And oh, they sure would one day! (45:3-8)

- It’s shocking to see that they would do such a thing to their brother. **But this is the nature of Sin!** – **CAIN murdered his brother for the same reasons!** When God questioned Cain (4:9), he answered “*I don’t know, am I my brother’s keeper.*” – Joseph was only doing what his father asked...**he was his brother’s keeper**, on a welfare mission...but they would not it! (*Hatred still exists!*)

But some brothers had... **READ**

D. Well-Intentions (21-22) – Now we see most likely “*the conscience of Ruben,*” who argues to *Shed no blood! Ruben intended to help Joseph escape back to his father*, possibly to gain favor with him for his sin with Bilhah.

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E. Woeful Apprehension (23-25) – Once Joseph arrived, the “*Stripped his Tunic*” from his body, signifying their disgust with Joseph’s Favor, and “*Cast him*” into a “*Waterless Pit*” as they sat to each lunch. – **What was Joseph thinking? This certainly is not what he dreamed of!** Just the beginning of sorrows in his life. (*What do you do when you’re cast into dry pit? Keep digging!*)

- These brothers were seemingly without conscience, as they sat there eating their lunch.
- And by “**CHANCE**” a caravan of traders destined for Egypt approached them.

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F. Win-Win Solution (26-28) – When the Ishmaelites approached, **Judah saw an opportunity to spare Joseph and “bring a profit to all the brothers.” Let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites!** It would free them of Joseph and his dreams FOREVER, they wouldn’t need to shed his blood, and they would all have financial gain! This was best solution for their wavering plans... **nevertheless, it was still wicked!**

- **Without Remorse, they pulled Joseph from the pit only to sell him into slavery for 20 pieces of Silver,** sending him away to Egypt forever
- **This wasn’t a Win-Win for Joseph!** Maybe Joseph thought this was a bad practical joke as they pulled him out of the pit. **Maybe he begged for mercy?** *We don’t know... but what we do know is...*
- **They IGNORED the voice of conviction at the time!** Its later recorded in (Gen 42:21), *they said to one another, “We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore, this distress has come upon us.”*

P/A – Guilt for past sins can be ignored for a time... but will eventually catch up with us... Physically, Emotionally, Mentally, and is so many other ways! **Until we REPENT and CONFESS them before God.** – **Joseph’s Life was Decided in just a few moments!** (*Instead, Shattered Dreams*)

Next, we see that...

IV. JOSEPH’S BROTHERS DECEIVE (29-35) – Selling Joseph into slavery was Wicked, but what they do next is **Absolutely Heartless!** **A hardened heart is capable of the grossest sin!**

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A. Discovery of Reuben (29-30) – When Reuben returned to the pit, **Joseph was gone!** As the firstborn he would be responsible, so he cried out to his brothers. (*They may have let him sweat it!*)

- Reuben's grief during the matter shows that he sincerely desired to rescue Joseph (cf. 42:22)

Not the worst deception of all...

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B. Deceiving Their Father (31-32) – They knew their LIE had to be convincing. So, they used the blood of a kid, and dipped Joseph's tunic it (31). Then they placed it in the hand of a servant to deliver it to Jacob, then followed to reinforced the story by **asking Jacob to Identify the bloodied garment (32)**. – Imagine how Jacob felt? **Now his Life was Shattered!**

- His examination lead to the assumption of Joseph's Death...this is what Deception can do!
- You may recall that **Jacob himself used the Skin of a Kid to deceive his father Isaac to gain advantage over his brother Esau (27:9,16)**. *The law of sowing and reaping strikes again! So Painful!*

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C. Devastating Outcome (33-35) – *Jacob then mourned and refused to be comforted...i.e., Sorrowful Grief over Joseph's death for the next 20 years!*

Finally, we lean of...

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V. JOSEPH'S DESTINY (36) – The Midianites sold Joseph as a slave in Egypt to Potiphar. An advantageous household, which God would use to assure that Joseph was **LIVING THE DREAM!** – God was watching over Joseph and would work everything together for good (**Rom 8:28**).

CONCLUSION: From Joseph's POV, he was NOT Living the Dream, but experienced nightmare-like hardships in his life. – God would go on to **mold and shape Joseph** into the **Mature Leader that He ordained him to be, so that He could save all Israel...** which would eventually give birth to **the Savior of the entire world!**

- As we shall see, Joseph never complained through it all, rather **he trusted in the Living God to work in his circumstances**. I'll close with Boice's comment on Joseph's Character: **"He was loved and hated, favored and abused, tempted and trusted, exalted and abased. Yet at no point in the one-hundred-and-ten-year life of Joseph did he ever seem to get his eyes off God or cease to trust him. Adversity did not harden his character. Prosperity did not ruin him. He was the same in private as in public. He was a truly great man."** – Boice