

# Joseph

Joseph was the eleventh son of Jacob, his first by Rachel, [**Genesis 30:22-24**] and Jacob's favourite son, [**Genesis 37:3**].

**As a young boy, Joseph was over-confident. His natural self-assurance, increased by being Jacob's favourite son, but far more by knowing that God's designs for his life set him apart from his brothers and caused them to find him unbearable to live with.**

**Genesis 37:5-11** [New King James] *"Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. So he said to them, 'Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: 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. Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, 'Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me.' So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, 'What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?' And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind."*

**This personal relationship with the Creator God as He revealed to Joseph how He was going to use him, allowed him to survive and prosper where most others would have given in and failed.**

**Add quiet wisdom to this confidence caused Joseph to win the hearts of all he met outside the family at first, but finally the brothers who had treated him so shamefully.**

**Genesis 39:1-5** [New King James] *"Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand. So Joseph found favour in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field."*

**Joseph was hard-working and faithful to Potiphar his master so that with God's blessing he rose to become the overseer of all Potiphar's household.**

**With God's help, any situation can be used for good, even when others intend it to be harmful to you, [**Romans 8:28**].**

Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph, who resisted this temptation by saying it was a sin against the true Creator God whom he worshipped, [**Genesis 39:7-20**].

Although Joseph had done what was right in God's eyes, he still ended up in prison.

Yet this did **not** stop what the Creator God intended to do through Joseph, even if it was testing Joseph's faith in God.

**Hebrews 13:5-6** [New King James] *"Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'"*

When we are constantly seeking to obey our Creator God, He has promised that He will never leave us without His help.

**This was true with Joseph, [Genesis 39:21], again Joseph found favour in the eyes of those who had authority over him, [Genesis 39:22-23].**

The way the Creator God works out circumstances to further His plan for the lives of those who are faithful to Him is amazing.

Again Joseph was given a vision into the future of two very important people in the Pharaoh's household, [Genesis 40:1-23].

**Still Joseph's faith and patience was tested for two more years, [Genesis 41:1].**

**But now God had placed Joseph with the man he was going to use to introduce Joseph to the Pharaoh.**

**Genesis 41:1-8** [New King James] *“Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river. Suddenly there came up out of the river seven cows, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. Then behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the river, ugly and gaunt, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the river. And the ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine looking and fat cows. So Pharaoh awoke. He slept and dreamed a second time; and suddenly seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, plump and good. Then behold, seven thin heads, blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. And the seven thin heads devoured the seven plump and full heads. So Pharaoh awoke, and indeed, it was a dream. Now it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh.”*

The normal Egyptian soothsayers had **no** understanding of what these dreams meant.

**Genesis 41:9-14** [New King James] *“Then the chief butler spoke to Pharaoh, saying: ‘I remember my faults this day. When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, both me and the chief baker, we each had a dream in one night, he and I. Each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his own dream. Now there was a young Hebrew man with us there, a servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him, and he interpreted our dreams for us; to each man he interpreted according to his own dream. And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him.’ Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh.”*

**Joseph was now just where the Creator God wanted him to be to in the end bring Israel out of slavery in Egypt.** Up to this time Joseph was the only one who was in slavery but he would be the one who would start the process of release from Egypt, a type of slavery to sin, for His people.

**Notice every time the subject of dreams came up Joseph focussed the people involved on the Creator God, never using this talent to make himself look good, [Genesis 41:15-16].**

God through Joseph interpreted the Pharaoh's dreams, [Genesis 41:17-32].

Joseph then in his God-given wisdom gave the Pharaoh the answer to what would soon be a devastating problem for all Egypt as well as all the surrounding nations, including where Jacob and his family lived, [Genesis 41:33-36].

**Pharaoh recognised that Joseph was a man through whom God was working, yet it was very unlikely that Pharaoh meant the true Creator God, for the Egyptians worshipped many gods, [Genesis 41:37-45].**

God then gave Joseph great organising skills to fulfil a vast job to prepare for the coming famine, [Genesis 41:46-57].

Joseph was 30 years old when he became governor of Egypt. He was 17 when he was sold into slavery by his brothers. Thus he must have spent 11 years as an Egyptian slave and two years in prison.

**Jacob was especially fond of Benjamin because he was Joseph's only full brother and as far as he knew at that time, the only surviving son of his beloved wife Rachel.** Benjamin was Jacob's youngest son and a child of his old age, [Genesis 42:1-3].

Joseph could have revealed his identity to his brothers at once, but had to know if his brothers were still as treacherous, or had they changed over the years.

In his wisdom Joseph decided to put his brothers through a few tests to find out if they had changed, [Genesis 42:6-15].

Joseph also remembered the dreams he had about his brothers bowing down to him [Genesis 37:6-9]. Those dreams were coming true.

**Sometimes it is best for us to follow Joseph's response and keep quiet, even when we would like to have the last word.**

Joseph was also testing his brothers to make sure that they had not been cruel to Benjamin as they had been to him.

Benjamin was his only full brother and it was natural that he wanted to see him face to face, [Genesis 42:9-20].

The brothers considered that they were being punished for what they had done to Joseph, [Genesis 42:21-23].

The brothers returned to Egypt with double the money for the grain and additional gifts that would not have been common in Egypt, [Genesis 43:11-12].

**Genesis 43:26-30** [New King James] *“And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed down before him to the earth. Then he asked them about their well-being, and said, ‘Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?’ And they answered, ‘Your servant our father is in good health; he is still alive.’ And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves. Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, ‘Is this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?’ And he said, ‘God be gracious to you, my son.’ Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought somewhere to weep. And he went into his chamber and wept there.”*

**Joseph, on the sight of his brother Benjamin, could not control his emotions.**

Joseph again tested his brothers, [Genesis 44:1-34].

Finally Joseph could not stifle his emotions and had to reveal his true identity, [Genesis 45:1-7].

**Joseph then made the situation easier for his brothers who had changed since they sold him into slavery, by saying it was part of God's plan for the whole family, [Genesis 45:8-10].**

Although Joseph was rejected by his brothers and shamefully used, he graciously forgave them and shared his prosperity.

**Joseph in a small way was reflecting the Creator God's attitude towards us when we repent, He forgives and then blesses us.**

**Joseph's firm belief that the Creator God was with him and concerned for his welfare, gave him the strength and positive approach to all the trials he faced in life.**

We also can made the same positive attitude towards our future life as we follow God's lead and submit to His will for our life.