

Joseph: Daydream Believer Episode 6

Joseph is his father Jacob's fair-haired boy, the first of two sons by his father's favorite wife, Rachel. He reveals to his dad and his ten, envious half-brothers his dreams that one day they'll bow to him. The technicolor robe which Joe's doting Dad gives him is the straw that breaks the camel's back.

These grandsons of Isaac and great-grandsons of Abraham sell the 17-year-old "daddy's boy" to bedouin traders, descendants of Abraham's son Ishmael, the first Arab. The brothers lie to their father, saying Joe was killed by a wild beast. Amazingly, God promised Jacob that his mixed-up family would one day produce the Messiah (Matthew 1:1-2).

The Ishmaelite merchants peddle Joseph to Potiphar, Pharaoh's secret service chief, where he's promoted from slave to running Potiphar's household. Mrs. P has eyes for the young Hebrew but is spurned in a display of Joseph's integrity, landing him in prison, yet another crisis.

With his God-sent gift of decrypting dreams, Joseph is summoned to unscramble two of Pharaoh's visions. Joe warns that Egypt will have seven years of huge harvests, then seven of crippling famine, and is instantly promoted to Governor (or Viceroy), Egypt's #2 in command.

In the drought's second year Jacob sends his sons from Canaan to Egypt to buy food. They fail to recognize Gov. Joseph who orders them to bring him their youngest sibling, Benjamin. The boys convince their reluctant Dad to let Ben return to Egypt with them where they're shocked to learn Joseph's true identity.

Haunted by guilt and regret for twenty years, they're stunned when Joe forgives them and adds the kicker that despite their selling him into slavery, it was really *God* who *took* him to Egypt to save Jewry from starvation. Regardless of the injustices he suffers, God keeps prospering Joseph and those around him (Romans 8:28).

DISCUSS: Describe a setback that became, or could become, a real positive in your life.

Dream On

Let's read Genesis 46:1-8, 26-34.

Like the early West's wagon trains, the patriarch Jacob's caravan heads to Egypt with his clan of 67, their flocks and worldly goods. Add Joseph and his two sons, and you have a grand total of 70 Jews in all the world. 215 years later they'd number 180,000 (Exodus 1:5-7). Although greeted lavishly by Egypt's top two leaders now, their heirs will escape slavery through the Red Sea four centuries later.

En route, Jacob and his pack of camels stop at Beersheba, a favorite family oasis in Israel's Negev Desert. God comes to him in a vision, recapping His pledge that Abraham's offspring would become a "great nation" while in Egypt. God vows to be with them and take them to a New Jersey-sized land He'd set aside for them (Genesis 21:33, 26:25).

Imperially attired aboard his royal chariot, the Guv embraces his father twenty-two long years after Joseph's brothers had maliciously sold him into slavery. Jacob sobs at seeing his son alive, as Joe's dreams of being elevated over his family poignantly come to fruition.

God is executing His master plan to put His people in Egypt where they'd prosper, then fall into bondage. After their Exodus forty years of wilderness wandering would cause them to question God's ways.

DISCUSS: Describe how an estrangement in your life could be reconciled.

Shear Delight

Let's read Genesis 47:1-12.

Joseph takes five of his brothers to meet his boss who asks about their occupation. They sputter, "We're shepherds." Ignoring Egypt's disdain for shepherds, the monarch generously responds to their request for grazing land, giving them lush meadows in the fertile Nile delta near the Canaan border where they were left alone by the Egyptians.

DISCUSS: What are you struggling with now, and what might be God's purpose in it?

No Mutiny, Just Bounty

Let's read Genesis 47:13-31.

Having spent all their money on grain, now facing death, the populace begs for government aid. Gov. Joe becomes Trader Joe, swapping grain for the people's livestock. When they have no more critters to barter, they sell their bodies and land to Joseph and become civil "servants." A later pharaoh will torment the Jews, and God will unleash plagues on Egypt. As God had told Abraham, "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse" (Genesis 12:3).

Jacob's life ends at age 147. His favorite son has matured from a dreaming, spoiled teen to top gun of the world's super power, playing a major role in God's plan to prepare a homeland for His people, the Jews. When they resided in Caanan, Joe's brothers ignored God by intermarrying with idol-worshippers (Genesis 38). To extricate them from this corrupt culture, God *mercifully* engineers a famine to draw them to Egypt where they prosper for a time. But first God grooms a man to love, lead, protect and provide for them. That man is our G.I. Joe who relies solely on God, not on his own clout or on Pharaoh.

Let's read Psalm 105:16-45.

God can use adversity to speed the process of transforming believers to reflect the nature of Christ Himself (Romans 8:29). We learn how to give and receive forgiveness and bring about restoration. We can surrender our lives to the Lord, confident that He'll never abandon us. As Graham Cooke suggests, "Forsake whining about your life; embrace cooperating with God. God is making your pit into a well."

God preserved the Jews so that our Savior, Jesus Christ, could visit earth to totally, permanently pardon your sins. Let's take a quiet moment to thank Him for that. If you haven't accepted His love by inviting Jesus into your life, now's the time. Amen.

His Deal

March 8 & 22, 2016

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