

## Study Three

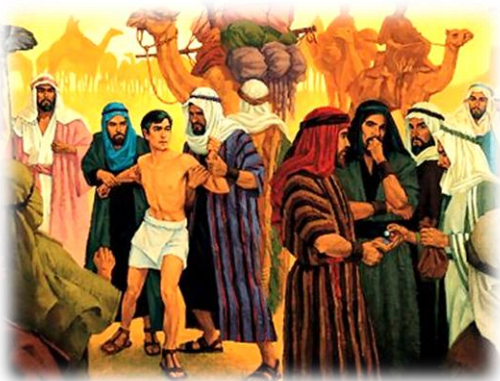
# THE STORY

Joseph: Genesis 37-50  
From Slave to Deputy Pharaoh

Timeless Truth: **Though man continually fails, God's Word continually prevails.**

God's autobiography, the Bible, continues with Abraham's great-grandson, Joseph. Joseph's history does not get off to a very good start...then he gets flushed into a spiritual sewer. Against this putrid backdrop of hatred and wickedness, God's Plan wades into sin's mess. The Lord stoops down to save people drowning in their stinky sin-sewage. With strong eternal hands, He holds onto and holds up His believers. God is faithful. God's Word cannot be pushed aside by man's evil purposes and acts.

Back to God's history: Joseph was the 11<sup>th</sup> of 12 boys. According to the culture of his day, he would get next to nothing in the way of blessing or position through normal family seniority. Yet Joseph was dad's *favorite*. And dad let *everyone* in the family know it. Israel/Jacob gave his son, **favorite-Joseph**, a special gift. He showcased his favoritism.



This dad-gift, together with God-given dreams to **favorite-Joseph** about his 10 older brothers one day bowing down to him, led to an impossible case of sibling rivalry.

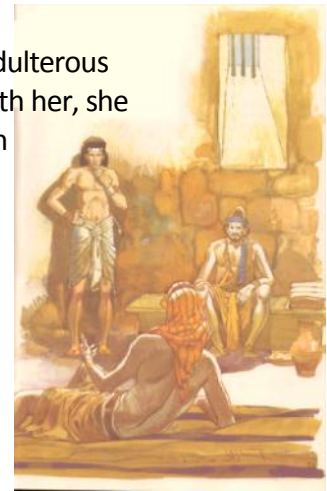
At first, the 10 brothers plot out the death of now **hated-Joseph**. (Hmmm. Remember Joseph's uncle Esau and his dad Jacob/Israel? Hmmm. Remember brothers Cain and Abel...) The boys did not seem to learn or remember their Bible history lessons well. But at least Joseph's brothers do not follow through with their murder-plot. Instead, it

turns out they sold **hated-Joseph** into slavery by way of slave-traders who just "happened" to be passing by at the time on their way to Egypt.



The slave-path to Egypt freed the brothers from their young family headache. Now **slave-Joseph** "just happened" to be snapped up by Potiphar, a high Egyptian official. BUT God blessed Potiphar because of **slave-Joseph**, for whom God had plans. God moved Potiphar to be pleased with **slave-Joseph** for his faithfulness. Joseph then "just happened" to become manager of Potiphar's household.

It turned out Potiphar’s wife was also pleased with Joseph, but for different, adulterous reasons. After rejecting her extramarital advances and refusing to have sex with her, she accused **slave-Joseph** of assault and attempted rape. **Slave-Joseph** got a prison sentence in exchange for his godly stand for purity and uprightness.



But even in prison, the “circumstances” start to sound like a familiar echo. **Prisoner-Joseph**, the slave convict, was seen to have good character. He was promoted to prison-manager. Then **prison-manager-Joseph** “happened” to give God’s dream- interpretation for two of Pharaoh’s court officials. Those officials “happened” to be sent to do a political time-out in the same **prisoner-manager-Joseph** Joseph managed.



**Slave-prisoner-manager-Joseph’s** “dream-revealing” skills eventually reached Pharaoh’s ears. Mighty Pharaoh summoned **slave-prisoner-manager-Joseph** to unravel his own tormenting dreams. Pleased as punch with what he heard, the Lord gave mighty Pharaoh a grand idea. So it “just so happened” Pharaoh elevated the favorite son, hated-brother, slave-castaway, attempted rapist convict, prison-manager-Joseph to....  
....wait for it....yes, that’s right:...

**DEPUTY-PHARAOH-JOSEPH.**

God had warned in a dream: hard times for Egypt were on the way. God gave the interpretation of that dream through His servant, Joseph. So **DEPUTY-PHARAOH-JOSEPH** got busy. He created a plan to gather, inventory and store food nationwide. His plan would sustain Egypt during a coming worldwide famine. And not JUST Egypt, but many peoples in the Far East.



This terrible famine “happened” to be felt back home by Joseph’s family as well. Unaware **brother-Joseph** was even alive, 10 of the remaining brothers made their way to Egypt to buy food. It had been 20 long years since they sold **hated-Joseph** to those passing slave-traders.

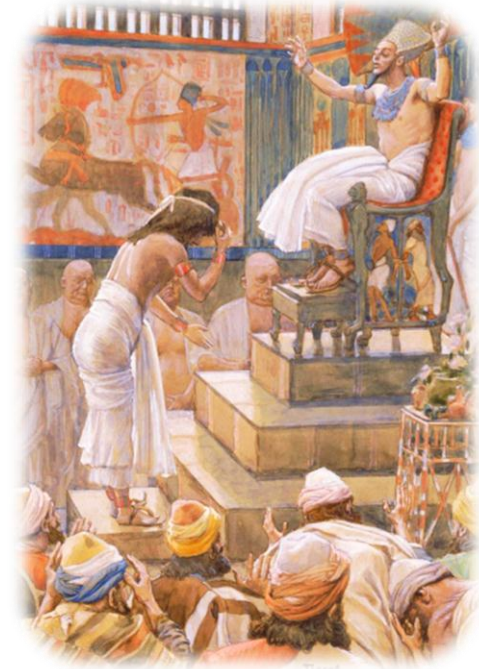
But sure enough, God’s Word to Joseph was right and true: unexpected promise kept, surprise! Surprise! In front of the now great **DEPUTY-PHARAOH-JOSEPH**, there the scoundrels were! in Egypt! bowing facedown before him. God’s Words really do come true. Always. In all ways.

Bottom line: Joseph's entire family was saved. "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to *preserve many people alive*" -Genesis 50:20 God had something vast in mind here, as God always does. Jacob (Mr. Israel), his boys (all 11 of them), and all their extended families and servants were moved, lock-stock-&-barrel, to the safety of Egypt.

There the family of Israel would survive the famine and thrive for decades to come. Humanly speaking, in this way God guarded His people. God was keeping His promise to make Abraham's descendants into a nation. Israel was that nation through whom the world's Messiah would come

Joseph trusted God's Words. He knew the complete big picture of God's gracious, powerful character.

**DEPUTY-PHARAOH-JOSEPH** later calmed his brothers with these words, "*What you intended for evil, **God intended for good** to accomplish what is now being done.*" There you go: a redemption sound-bite for all you politically-minded folks. The Messiah would not come for centuries, yet God's Plan was well underway. Joseph's entire life is a highway sign of God-ways over people-ways.



Godly parents have used Joseph's life to teach and remind their families that sinful plans for evil may arise; evil may even seem to prevail for a spell; it may feel like God's protection is taking way too long to kick in and be effective. **BUT remember, remember, remember:** God's Word promises the Lord works it all out to His bless His people. Beauty from ashes. Authority from slavery. Life from death. Man continually fails, but God's Word continually prevails. Every time. All times. | Always. All ways.

## Study Three Questions

From **SLAVE** to **DEPUTY-PHARAOH**

**Genesis 37-50**

1. What's the best bonus you ever received? Or, if you had siblings, how did you all get along?
2. From a human perspective, Joseph was in a very bad place. From God's perspective, Joseph is in just the right place. How is God's character *seen in events* surrounding Joseph?

How is God's character *seen in His follower*, Joseph?



3. List some ways the true God made use of Joseph's faithfulness in Egypt's idol-land?

4. How does faithfulness to God and God's authority work together?  
How does God's command and control influence your life with Him?

5. How do you typically handle hard times? with faith? with questions? with anger? Explain.

6. How have you experienced God's presence in difficult times?

7. What qualities of Joseph's godly character did God put on display?

8. Do you have a personal story to share of when Jesus brought good out of bad...in other words when something painful in your life was used by Jesus to carry out His plans.



9. 22 years after Joseph is sold as a slave, God reunites him with his brothers. Joseph's faith in the coming Savior brought his brothers a surprise. What happened?

10. What makes it hard for people to forgive?

11. Why are people so quick to blame others for problems?  
Why do believers think that obedience to the LORD should result in safety and comfort in life?

12. Why is attitude *toward God* often negative when "bad" things happen?

13. What does this show about the strength of *your own* sin-nature?

14. Why is it so easy to miss out on seeing God's work in your situation?

15. How does it make you feel that *God is not dependent on you* to fulfill His purposes?

16. **Why** does God choose to use you for His purposes when He does not need you at all?

17. What is a situation in which you need to stick tight to God's command and control?

*Kind Time* – Take some time to encourage one another in prayer.

Next time: Deliverance –Moses- Exodus 1-17