

**Episode:** Genesis & Job Series No. 12

**Narrator:** Joseph

**Primary Scriptures:** Genesis 39-41

**Story Summary:** Potiphar and his wife; Joseph in jail; Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams

**Location:** Egypt

**Time:** Joseph's birth is probably 1900-1700 BC

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Genesis 39:5-6; 41:16

Try to imagine Joseph's situation. One day, he is the favored son of a very wealthy man, with expectations from God that he will rule over his family. Days later, he is in copper chains being beaten by merciless Ishmaelite slave traders. Slave traders that are distant relatives. Generations before, they had the same great-grandfather: Abraham.

Arriving in Egypt, the slave traders sell Joseph to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials. Since the Lord gave Joseph favor in everything he did, Potiphar had the good business sense to put Joseph in charge of all his affairs. Joseph fulfilled his responsibilities perfectly...until he unwittingly got crosswise with his boss's wife. Joseph was on his way to jail as he learned the meaning of the saying, "hell has no fury like a woman scorned."

In jail, God causes Joseph to correctly interpret the dreams of two of Pharaoh's former officials. Eventually, one of those officials recalls that Joseph can interpret dreams and volunteers him to interpret dreams for Pharaoh.

Pharaoh tells Joseph of his two dreams. Giving God the credit, Joseph interprets the dreams to mean that Egypt will soon have seven years of extraordinary harvests, followed by seven years of severe famine. Pharaoh discerns that Joseph is correct and promotes him to have the authority to act appropriately. At only thirty years of age, Joseph became Number Two in the country.

During the seven years of plenty, Joseph stores up an immense amount of grain. It seems he stored all of the grain that Egypt could produce, and maybe purchased extra from other countries. He stored up so much grain that it could not be counted.

The subsequent famine hit Egypt and many other countries. Joseph took advantage of the situation by acquiring all of the wealth and lands of his country for the account of the Pharaoh.

Joseph must have thought he had reached the pinnacle of life. He was the Number Two man of all Egypt and was completely favored by the Number One. He had a wife and two children, so he had all the family he needed. And then, the rest of his family showed up. The very ones who sold him into slavery.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Genesis 39 is a continuation of the story told in Genesis 37. Joseph was sold by his brothers to slave traders. The traders took him to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, a high official of Pharaoh. Discuss the changes in life Joseph would have experienced in a few weeks as he went from being a wealthy, favored son in his late teens to an unnamed nobody who was treated brutally. How much did Joseph know about God before he was sold into slavery?
2. Once Joseph knew that Potiphar's wife was attracted to him, what could he have done?
3. How did the prison warden come to understand that the Lord was with Joseph in everything? How did he learn about the Lord?
4. What was Joseph's understanding about dreams? How does that compare to your understanding?

### Application Questions:

1. It was certainly not "fair" for Joseph to have been sold into slavery. Name an event in your life that was not fair. How did you react at the time? In retrospect, how do you evaluate that event now?
2. Potiphar was able to observe that the Lord gave success to Joseph. How did Potiphar know that? How do people around you know how the Lord impacts your life? Could your bosses infer that your company is being blessed just because you are an employee there?
3. Joseph was 30 years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh (Genesis 41:46). What skills and knowledge had he accumulated from Potiphar and from jail? Name a situation where you thought your time was being wasted, but you were actually accumulating knowledge or contacts that were critical to your future.
4. Pharaoh asked Joseph to interpret his dream, which he did. Joseph went far beyond Pharaoh's request by offering him a solution to a huge problem. Do you tend to do the minimum at work or overperform? Do you expect to be compensated for overperforming, or is that just part of who you are?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Joseph correctly interpreted the dream of the cupbearer, but the cupbearer did not return the favor. Instead, he forgot Joseph. Have you ever forgotten somebody who helped you or did you a favor? Can you correct that situation now? Will you?
2. Joseph told Pharaoh that God could interpret his dreams. Joseph did not take credit for it. Name a situation when you took credit for something but should have given the credit to God.
3. Pharaoh needed a wise and discerning man to enact a fourteen-year plan. He chose Joseph, a complete stranger, because he had the spirit of God. How did Pharaoh know he had the spirit of God? How do people discern that you have the Spirit of God?