

## JOSEPH

### "The Man with a Divine Purpose"



**Joseph was one of the most important characters in the Bible. He is included in the Hebrews 11 Faith Hall-of-Fame (Hebrews 11:22). Joseph's story can be found in Genesis chapters 30, 37, and 39-50.**

#### **Background/Summary:**

Chuck Swindoll breaks down Joseph's life into three distinct segments:

#### ***Birth to Seventeen Years (Genesis 30:24 – 37:2)***

During this time Joseph's family was in transition—everything was unsettled, on the move. A low level antagonism was brewing as his family clashed and argued in jealousy and hatred.

#### ***Seventeen to Thirty Years (Genesis 37:2 – 41:46)***

This second segment occurs as Joseph reaches young manhood. It seems as though his life becomes out of control. Enslavement, unfair accusation, and imprisonment assault him.

#### ***Thirty Years to Death (Genesis 41:46 – 50:26)***

Joseph's last eighty years are years of prosperity and reward under God's blessing. He had classic opportunity to get even with his brothers, to ruin them forever, but he refused. Instead he blessed, protected, and forgave.

(From Bible.org): Joseph had a lot of things going his way in life at first. He was handsome. He was the first son born to Jacob through Rachel, and therefore, he was his father's favorite son. He had great dreams that made him feel good about himself. But then one day his entire life changed. Can you imagine how it must have felt to know your brothers hated you so much that they would sell you out of their lives? He was forced to leave the comfortable life he had known, full of love from his parents, and go forth into the unknown. How frightening that must have

been for a boy of 17. Yet, God had His hand on Joseph. **God had a divine purpose for this young man.** Joseph didn't know why God had chosen this path for his life until the very end, yet he never seemed to waver. God was always in control. Joseph kept his eyes on God, and He used Joseph greatly. What an encouragement to us. Let God use you where you are. Let Him use you in the hard times, as well as the good times.

(From biblestudytools.com): The Bible Story of Joseph, from the Book of Genesis, is one of **heroic redemption and forgiveness.** Joseph was the most loved son of his father, Israel, given the famous robe of many colors. When Joseph reported having dreams of his brothers, and even the stars and moon, bowing before him, their jealousy of Joseph grew into action. The brothers sold him into slavery to a traveling caravan of Ishmaelites who took him to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard.

In Egypt, the Lord's presence with Joseph enables him to find favor with Potiphar and the keeper of the prison. With God's help, Joseph interprets the dreams of two prisoners, predicting that one of them will be reinstated but the other put to death. Joseph then interprets the dreams of the Pharaoh, which anticipate seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. Pharaoh recognizes Joseph's God-given ability and prompts his promotion to the chief administrator of Egypt.

Shortage of food in Canaan forces Jacob to send his sons to buy grains from the Egyptians. Benjamin, Joseph's younger brother remains at home as Jacob fears of losing him, as he did Joseph. When Joseph finally encounters his brothers again, he deliberately conceals his identity. He accuses them of being spies and tells them to return with Benjamin or he will not sell them grain. The ongoing famine forces Jacob to reluctantly send his sons back to Egypt with Benjamin, and they are unexpectedly invited to dine at Joseph's house. Joseph then tests the character of his brothers by placing a silver cup the sack of Benjamin and falsely accusing him of theft. When Judah offers to stay in place of Benjamin, Joseph knows that his character has changed and reveals that he is their brother. Joseph explains they need not feel guilty for betraying him as it was God's plan for him to be in Egypt to preserve his family. He told them to bring their father and his entire household into Egypt to live in the province of Goshen because there were five more years of

famine left. Joseph supplied them Egyptian transport wagons, new garments, silver, and twenty additional donkeys carrying provisions for the journey. Jacob is then joyously reunited with his son Joseph.

### **Selected Highlights from Life of Joseph:**

**Genesis ch. 37:** Joseph (age 17), the favorite of Jacob's 12 sons, gets a special robe from Jacob. The brothers are jealous and hate Joseph, and sell him to some Midianite merchants, who in turn sell him to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard.

Lessons learned?

**Genesis ch. 39:** Joseph rebuffs Potiphar's wife advances which angers her. Joseph is unfairly accused and thrown in prison.

Lessons learned?

**Genesis ch. 40:** Joseph interprets dreams of two fellow prisoners – the chief cupbearer, and the baker for the king of Egypt (Pharaoh).

Lessons learned?

**Genesis ch. 41:** Pharaoh has dreams, eventually interpreted by Joseph. A grateful Pharaoh makes Joseph second in command in the entire country (at age 30).

Lessons learned?

**Genesis ch. 42-44:** Joseph's brothers make multiple trips to Egypt to buy food during the great famine. They see Joseph, but he does not reveal himself.

Lessons learned?

**Genesis ch. 45:** Joseph makes himself known to his brothers.

Lessons learned?

**Genesis ch. 46-49:** Jacob goes to Egypt and sees Joseph, moves there and dies there. During the severe famine, people are saved due to Joseph's planning and preparation.

Lessons learned?

**Genesis ch. 50:** Joseph and his brothers live in Egypt. Joseph dies a hero at age 110.

Lessons learned?