

LESSON 1

JOSEPH REVEALS HIS DREAMS

Scripture Text: *Genesis 37:1-11*

In this quarterly's lessons, we turn to the Old Testament and consider how God used one who listened to Him to bless many. We will trace five important lines of thought brought out in the life of Joseph.

- (1) God watches over an individual who trusts Him.
- (2) God's promises and predictions are always perfectly fulfilled.
- (3) Joseph is a type of Christ.
- (4) The lives of the brothers show the plan of salvation.
- (5) God works out His purposes.



Good came to Joseph, to Jacob, to the brothers, and Israel, and some shed off on Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

MEMORY VERSE: *"Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?"*

Job 31:4

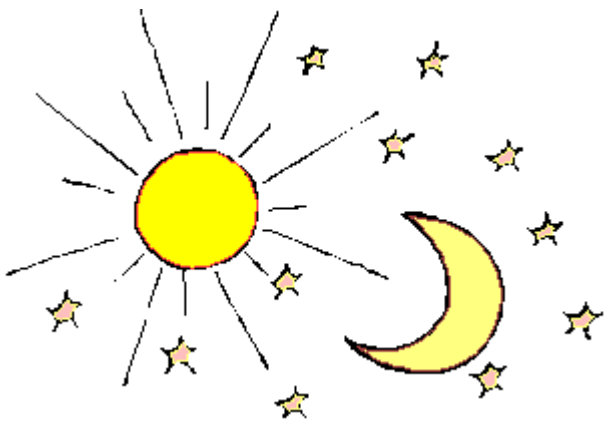
Joseph Dreamed a Dream

Not only is Joseph a type of Christ, but he can be compared to David. David was held in contempt by his brothers. David was chosen to deliver the Israelites from their enemies, the Philistines.

Genesis 37:1-4 Jacob loved Joseph more because he was a son of his old age, and the son of his favorite wife, Rachel. No doubt he was more humble and obedient than his brothers. This, along with the fact that Joseph carried to his father reports of his brothers' evil ways, caused his brothers to hate him. God often uses despised things to confound the mighty (1 Corinthians 1:27-29).

Genesis 37:5-8 Joseph dreamed a dream. We all do, but this was unusual in its *source* and in its *content*. God sent the dream. We know this because it later came true (Deuteronomy 18:21-22). The dream plainly predicted Joseph's supremacy over his brothers. His brothers understood and hated him yet more. Joseph was not trying to exalt himself. God was revealing His secrets to His humble servant. Looking back on these events in history, we see how God used the brothers' hatred and jealousy to take Joseph and then all of Israel to Egypt. This was necessary in order that the later bondage of Israel in Egyptian slavery should provide a type of the bondage of a sinner in sin.

Genesis 37:9-11 God sent another dream to Joseph. This touched his father, Jacob, more closely and drew his rebuke. The brothers, father, and mother, all would be made to bow down before him. His father took mental note of these sayings. Is not this in accordance with the attitude of Mary, the mother of Jesus, when it is spoken of her that she pondered it in her heart when her Son spoke to her of things which she did not understand? Jacob did not understand it, but felt it to be very important in time to come. Things that we do not understand today are our food for tomorrow.



God's Use of Circumstances

God used evil attitudes to bring about His good purposes. This does not mean it is right to hold sinful feelings and do sinful acts. It just shows that God can turn anything to suit His plans. Sin is always sin, and we are held individually accountable for all we do, regardless of the outcome of it. If God can turn a sinful act to His advantage, how much more can He use a righteous one?

Do all dreams come from God? No. Are all dreams a form of prophecy? No, God has given us tests by which we may judge our dreams or those told us. A dream sent by God is a message from Him, hence a form of prophecy.

God-Given Tests

- (1) Does the dream come to pass? (Deuteronomy 18:22).
- (2) Does it lead toward or away from God? Does it agree with the teaching of the Bible? If not, even though it comes to pass, we must not follow it. (Deuteronomy 13:1-5).
- (3) How does the dreamer or prophet live or cause others to live? Is his life a pure, holy, God-filled one, and does he lead others to such a life? If not, he does not have God's message (Jeremiah 23:22).

Read Jeremiah 23:13-14. Yes, God sent dreams in the Old Testament dispensations. He sends them in this New Testament time (Acts 2:17). But dreams coming from God pass these three tests. Most dreams mean nothing.

Jacob and His Family

If they were living in our day, would not the attitude of the father, showing a difference in love, giving the coat of many colors provoke jealousy and envy in the other children? Was it wise for Jacob to show partiality to Joseph? It made Joseph's job more difficult. This was only the beginning of an ultimate end planned for Joseph by God.

JUST A THOUGHT

**"Keep your words soft and sweet—
you may have to eat them."**