

## Q2 L11 - Joseph, Master of Dreams - 2022-06-11

Luccas Rodor: Hi, friends, welcome to our Sabbath School Study Hour here in the Greater Sacramento Area in California here at the Granite Bay Hilltop Adventist Church. It's so good that we're here with you. Thank you so much for investing this time with us and allowing yourself to be used by God to learn here with us.

We have a really interesting study in today's lesson. We're going to be studying lesson number 11, which has a title, "Joseph, Master of Dreams." But before we dive into this study this week, I'd like to invite you to take advantage of our free offer here today. The title is "The Power of a Positive No," and it has a lot to do with how to face temptation, how to say no to the temptations around us. If you would like to receive this free offer, you can call 866-788-3966. You could ask for the study number 159, and we'll be able to send that to you.

If you're in the continental North America, then you could text SH084 to the number 40544, and you can have a digital download. Also, if you're living outside continental North America, and you would still like to take advantage of this free offer, you can go to [study.aftv.org/SH084](http://study.aftv.org/SH084), and you could also acquire a digital download through there. I would really invite you to take advantage of this. It's going to do a lot of good for your spiritual life, for your fight against temptation, your fight against the enemy.

Before we get started today and before we dive deep into the lesson, I'd like to invite you to say a word of prayer here with me. "Dear Lord God, thank You so much for your love. Thank You so much for Your grace. Thank You so much for allowing us to study and learn more about You. Right now, as we learn about Joseph's life, I would like to ask You, Lord, to open our minds, open our hearts. Give us a deeper understanding of Your character, of who You are. I thank You for this privilege that we have, Lord, of coming together around the world, opening the same Bible and studying the same story, and learning more about the same God. Please be with us today. Be with those that are watching from around the world, from home, those who are here with us today. I ask You these things in Jesus's name, amen."

As I said before, this week's lesson is extremely interesting. This is one of my favorite Bible stories of all times. As a little child, I remember learning about this story, learning about the character here, and there's many beautiful life lessons that you can learn coming from the story of Joseph.

Now, we've been studying the stories of different patriarchs, different stories from the book of Genesis, and when we arrive at the story of Joseph, this is towards the end already of Genesis. We really have not only the story itself, but the entire details, all the nuances, the cultural innuendos, everything that we've learned so far about the beginning of the world and these first, you know, couple thousand years. And when we arrive in Joseph's story, as we've seen before with Abraham's story, with Isaac and Jacob's story, the author who is--we believe to be Moses, that was writing furiously, he really slows down, and he's very descriptive when it comes to the stories of these first patriarchs.

Joseph's story includes an extraordinary amount of details that reveal God's plan and reveal God's character. It talks more about who God is than the actual character that we're studying about. Now, the very descriptive narrative that is found here in chapter 37 through the chapter 50, that covers the stories and the events that happen during the life of Joseph, begin covering his dreams, begin covering the stories of how his dreams affect his life with his family.

Now, what's interesting is that the coverage of Joseph's story in these chapters, they're longer. The narrative here is a bigger block than the narrative of any other patriarch, of any other man or story that we find here in the book of Genesis. He appears among the rest of Jacob's sons, but truly in Genesis he's portrayed as important as Abraham, as Isaac, and as Jacob. He's extremely important in the following in the story, because the story of Jacob--sorry--the story of Joseph is a crossroads in the story of Genesis.

Here we connect what happened to this family all the way from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It's connected to how this family truly becomes a nation. And Abraham and Isaac and in Jacob we see a

family that wanders, a family that moves around. But with Joseph, you start seeing what happens to them, the progression of the story of redemption and what happens to the children of Israel. At this point, Jacob had been renamed Israel, we know that. At this point, they already have a family structure, but they're not yet really a nation. That happens throughout the development of the story that comes through Joseph when the family has to go up into Egypt.

Then we're going to be studying this not only today, but in next week's lesson, as well. Now, there are two theological lessons that are emphasized here that are extremely important in understanding what's going on. First of all is the truth that God, unlike humans, He always fulfills His promises. If you remember, with Abraham, we went through the whole story where Abraham, he repeatedly attempted to--he repeatedly attempted to fulfill God's promises for God. He tried to help God help him. You see that happening when he goes into Egypt, where he feels that it's necessary for him to masquerade as Sarah's brother and not her husband, the half-truth, right? We see that happening with the whole story with Ishmael, right, where not only Abraham, but his wife, they feel this need to help God fulfill His promise. So, that is the pattern not only with these people--because after all, they're people, right, they're human beings that are fallible, that are weak, and that sometimes make mistakes, just like you and just like me.

But we see that also here, that this story emphasizes that God is the one that fulfills His promises. It's not really about humans. It's not about people, even though here we find the stories of good people, of righteous, faithful people that find it important to obey God and to be faithful to Him, but this story is about God. The main character is the Lord God that fulfills His promises to the human counterparts.

If you remember--and I'd like to quote here Revelation chapter 3, verse 7, the doors that God opens, no one can shut, and the doors that God shuts, no one can open. God is the God of multiple opportunities. God is the God that has multiple ways of doing so many things that we just can't even fathom. You know, sometimes we get caught up in our own way of seeing things and our own perspectives, and we end up thinking that either God has to work this way, or this way, or this way. There are no other ways. There's this, there's this, and there's this.

Friends, God is ambidextrous. God can operate with both hands. He's not limited to just a few different opportunities, a few speckled ways of doing things. God has a perspective that we can't even imagine, and that's something that not only us, but we see here with these men--you know, with Abraham, with Isaac, with Jacob, and with the women involved in the stories--you know, with Rebekah, with Rachel, with Sarah, with Tamar, that we're going to talk a little bit about this week. This is something that these people learned throughout their lives, as God dealt, and lived, and dealt with them--or dealt with them--we see that they also, over time, progressively learned that God is the God that has uncountable, multiple opportunities and multiple options.

So, that's the first thing that we have to understand here in this story. That's the first theological reality about God's nature that we have to understand. The second is that evil, adversity, the setbacks of life and of history do not have the last word, because many times we're tempted to believe that. We're tempted to believe that everything is happening around us, everything that is happening around us, that is what has the final word in our life. The events, the circumstances, the chaos, the setbacks that we have in life, that there's no coming back from these things.

Friends, the God of the Bible, He is the God of the last word. Doesn't the book of Revelation call Him the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last? Those are the first--Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, Omega is the last. What that means is that God--among other things--because you know that the descriptions of God in the Bible, they also can be understood in many ways, but one of the understandings, one of the interpretations of what that means is that God has the first word, and God has the last word, always. He covers through and through. There is no other way with God. And so this reality is that I don't have to become anxious or worried. The Bible says that multiple times also. Don't be anxious. Don't be worried, because God is always in control. In His eternal providences, the Lord of Hosts is capable of transforming the absurd events of life, as we see in Joseph's story, He is capable of

transforming the craziest, most absurd situations of life into building blocks of His purposes.

Now, Joseph enters the biblical narrative as Jacob's favorite son, the object of his improper affections, and that, of course, as any sibling that has to go through this understands, that, of course, attracts the hostility, and the hatred, and the jealousy of his brothers. And this is what unleashes the plot of this entire story. Joseph is ridiculed as the dreamer, which is translated as the master of dreams. That's literally what they called him, the master of dreams, here comes the master of dreams. That's what we see in the Sabbath School lesson--sorry, in the Sabbath School memory verse, which is Genesis 37, verse 19, where it says, "Then they said to one another, 'Look, this dreamer is coming.'"

No, literally, what they're saying is, "Look, the master dreamer is coming." And, indeed, dreams play a big part of Joseph's story, of Joseph's life. Not only was he given the gift of interpreting these dreams, but moreover, he fulfills the great dream that God had for his life. We see that dreams go through and through Joseph's life and Joseph's story.

Now, on Sunday's lesson, to begin this week's lesson, we have the title, "Family Troubles." And what we find here, the point of the story that we come upon is that we find Jacob, all right, the father of the story, at this point, comfortably establishing the land, right? After everything that had happened up to this point, you know, running away from Esau and going to his Uncle Laban, marrying Rachel, and the whole development of the story, here we find that Jacob is finally established, well established in Canaan. And that's when his problems, at least in this regard, in our context today, that's where the problems begin, because they begin at home within his family.

The story here doesn't really describe many difficulties surrounding Jacob. The problems really come from within his own household. And I think that that's something that many of us can relate to. You know, sometimes in life, everything is working great. You know, everything is good at work, everything is good with friends, you're successful, the doors are opening, but your problems truly are at home, perhaps with a spouse, perhaps with your children, with siblings, and this is what is happening in the life of this family. They're going through a period of crisis.

Joseph, which was the son of his old age, of Jacob's old age, occupies a place of prominence within his father's heart. And so his father unwisely gives him a cloak of many colors, a beautiful cloak, the clothes of kings. This cloak possibly even suggested that Jacob intended to give Joseph the birthright to make him or to give him the blessing of the firstborn.

Now, of course, the other brothers, as they saw this favoritism, as they saw what was happening here, they weren't happy. And Jacob was doing this, of course, because of his love for Rachel, for his great love for the wife that he wanted to marry. Now, the intentions of Jacob's favoritism become even more evident to the rest of the sons, because we see their actions. We see how they react to all of this. They feel discriminated against. They feel outcast. They feel wronged. And I'll be honest with you, it makes sense that they would. Who wouldn't feel this way when one parent favors one child over the other? Of course, they would feel this way. And it was so blatant, it was so explicit, it was made so obvious.

Friends, favoritism is a great sin that is displayed in dysfunctional parents that never learned how to be parents, and that dysfunctionality becomes evident in the dynamic of family relationships. In the ways that parents act with their children, in the ways that they treat them, that becomes evident, and that creates a serious dysfunction in the family setting. The hatred of Joseph's brothers for him, seen as the master dreamer, is worsened by the reports that he gives of his brothers to his father.

So, here we see that, you know, Joseph is one of those characters in the Bible that you don't really see him making a whole bunch of different mistakes, right? You have two figures in the Old Testament that are ante-types of Christ in this. The Bible doesn't--of course, these were people that did make mistakes, right, because they still needed Jesus to die for them. They needed a Savior, but the Bible doesn't attribute to them a direct sin, right? You have Joseph and you have Daniel, and the stories of these two men are very similar in many ways. We'll get to that.

But here we see that Joseph, at least in this way, or in this moment, he displayed perhaps immaturity, you know, perhaps a naivety, because here we see that he used to tattle on his brothers. Now, we don't know in what spirit this was done. We don't know in what way it was done. The Bible records the words, but we don't see the emotion, the feelings behind that, because it's written word, and it's more difficult to extract emotion, to extract feeling.

So, we don't know how Joseph did this, but again, to anyone that has younger siblings, maybe even older siblings, you know, that it doesn't feel good to be tattled on, right? It's, no one likes a tattletale, so I know that personally. I used to hate it when my little brother, when Michael used to come along, and he used to tell my parents the wrong things that I was doing. And the funny thing about Michael is that he would tell on himself. So, you know, if we got something from the kitchen, we got maybe a chocolate or a cookie or something from the kitchen, and we--even when we shared it, right, and I would say, "Michael, don't tell mom, don't tell dad." Michael, he just couldn't, he would come and he would say--he would go up to them, and he'd already say, "I'm sorry." And, of course, they would say, "Well, what do you mean you're sorry? Sorry for what?" And then he would spill out the whole story. That--I'd get in trouble. He wouldn't, right? Michael's more innocent. My little brother had Down Syndrome, and so he's a more innocent being. But any sibling that knows what that's like, knows that it's not nice.

Now, in Joseph's story, we have that. That is just one of the different nuances of the story that revealed to us that his brothers were--or why his brothers had that problem with him. He used to give reports on them to his father. And in his favoritism, Jacob becomes guilty of the bad relationship of his sons, of course, because he's instigating it. He's making it very obvious, while one is learning how to read, how to write, one is learning how to, you know, how to take over the family, the other ones are outcasts in the field. They're taking care of the flocks. They're not really involved in the plans.

And so here we see that Jacob, he is instigating this jealousy, this resentment among the sons. But again, Joseph, he doesn't really appear as the wisest and most prudent of the family. He could've been more tactful, perhaps, with his siblings. He could've, you know, maybe given a different kind of report. We don't know. The truth is that we don't really know what these reports were like or what was happening. What we do know is that no one likes when someone tells on them, and that's what Joseph was doing. He was giving reports.

Another element to the story that certainly created some resentment between them is the fact that to Joseph were given these wonderful dreams, these incredible dreams, which he reports to the rest of his family. Now, again, perhaps a wiser, more mature person would know that his brothers already had a hard time with him, and maybe he would, you know, pepper down the dreams, or he would just, you know--I don't know--if he would hide them or if he would keep to himself, at least for that moment, or what the option would be.

But what we see is that Joseph, he goes out, and he just readily reports the dreams. Of course, he was, you know, excited about them. He was fascinated by these dreams. But he goes out, and he reports it to his family, with the implication that he, Joseph, in some way, considered himself to be the object of a great mission from God, which was true. There was nothing wrong with that, that was true. But, of course, that would instigate further jealousy and resentment from his brothers, and that truly becomes a sore spot of hatred for them.

Even if it weren't Joseph's intentions by telling them this dream, it was the result, the resentment, the hatred. It was the result of it. The twofold dream could only be interpreted as prophetic, and we see that Jacob, while he does rebuke Joseph at one moment, saying, you know, "Well, what, you think you're going to be greater than myself and your mother?" And I imagine that Jacob, who himself had witnessed a dream--at least one that we know of--you know, with the ladder event in Bethel--I'm sure that Jacob, he understood that something was happening, that these weren't just regular dreams.

What no one could know, what no one could ever imagine, especially Jacob and even Joseph at this point, was the enormous price that would be paid by all of them in order to fulfill these dreams, what

they were. Here we transition to Monday's lesson, which is the moment of the attack, the attack on Joseph.

Now, we all know that jealousy is a terrible counselor. The hard thing is noticing how it affects us. You know, sometimes when we're--not sometimes--usually, when we're the ones going through whatever is happening, it becomes difficult for us to have a broader perspective of the unfolding of events. Usually, you know, that's why we ask for counsel--people that are around us, people that can perhaps be more unbiased than us--it's easier to understand and to perceive what's going on.

But it's difficult many times for you to see that you're being jealous, that you're going through feelings of covetousness, right? It affects all of us. And the evils that are involved in how it manifests itself, even the smallest intentions and motivations, many times, does go unnoticed. These are things that happen gradually, especially when it comes to jealousy and to covetousness. These are feelings that come on gradually, and they end up affecting our actions, again, gradually, in a way that sometimes we don't perceive. That's why the best thing is always to ask God to open our eyes and give us actually His eyes, so that we can see our actions, see our words, how we're affecting other people, how we might be hurting other people. It's a constant prayer. "Lord, open my eyes. Help me understand what I'm doing, what I'm seeing, what I'm going through. All me to act with Your will, not my will."

Friends, jealousy and covetousness are the twin brothers of hatred. The perfect storm was upon this family. Sometimes it's very hard to speculate just how far jealousy and hatred take their victims. Here, Jacob's foolishness reveals itself. He had certainly noticed, all right? And look, friends, we're speaking--I know that we're speaking of very dear characters of the Bible: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, people that we look up to, people that are mentioned in the hall of faith in Hebrews chapter 11.

But the thing about the Bible is that the Bible doesn't hold back its punches. The Bible reveals the flaws of its characters. We see that in the life of Abraham, yes, we do. And we see that here in the life of Jacob multiple times. Here is another moment--all you have to do is think a little bit, all right? Look at what the text is saying. The text is telling us that Jacob sends Joseph to give food, to provide food for his sons, certainly wanting a report back from him. What did he think was going to happen? I mean, he knew that his sons held this resentment against Joseph. There's no way to hide that.

You know, friend, you can hide, you can hide for a long time. You can hide something from everyone for a short time, or you can hide something from a few people for a long time. You can hide, but you can't hide forever. So, in this case, it's impossible that Jacob's sons hid their feelings or true feelings for Joseph from their father forever. Again, you can hide from a lot of people for a little bit of time, or you can hide from a little bit of people for a long time, but you can't hide from everyone all the time. That's impossible. And so it's certain that Jacob knew of the feelings that his older sons had for Joseph.

So, what was he expecting was going to happen by sending Joseph to them? What did he have in mind? What did he imagine? Deep down the brothers were jealous of God's divine favor towards their younger brother. Of course, they were. As a result of these horrible feelings, a very twisted, odious plan is spawned in the imagination of these young men. They create a plot to murder their brother. You know, sometimes considering this story, I keep thinking, "How was it possible? How did this happen?" These were young men that knew God. They had witnessed their father being faithful to God. They had noticed the protection of God to their family. How did they become so callous? How did they become so hard? How could they come up with such a horrible crime against their own flesh and blood who was even younger than they? How could they not foresee this immense impact of their actions on their father and on the rest of their family?

But the truth is that hatred is shortsighted. Hatred doesn't consider the long, far-reaching implications of its actions. And here this is what we see that happens to this family. The evil and the cruelty of human heart is shared with the heart of the devil, and here we see that these young men, they were in one way or another possessed. They were being led by the spirit of the devil. Certainly, they weren't being led by God. But even then, in the midst of this chaotic storm that they find themselves in, God's divine

providence is already at work. Remember what we said, that God always has the final word, and that God always fulfills His promises? In a mysterious way--because we know that God, He allows free will. God gives us space for free will. But in a mysterious way, this incredible biblical God, He has this way of working His wonders, His providence through the different events that happen through the history of the world and the history of people on a personal and even individual level.

Ellen White, in the book, "Thoughts from the Mountain of Blessings," page 10, "If received in faith, the trial that seems so bitter and hard to bear, will prove a blessing." And that's what we see happening here. Ephesians chapter 1, verse 11, tells us, and it bears witness that "In Him, also, we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will."

Friends, even when the path is dark, full of detours, bumps, and potholes, God is never asleep or indifferent to the circumstances that surround us. His paths might seem more mysterious and devoid of reason to us, but that doesn't mean that God is illogical. What that means is that God is beyond our logic. He is beyond our capability and our capacity of reasoning and of understanding things. Dark chapters that might even appear to have no answers, later on understood through hindsight, makes sense in the masterfully woven portrait of who God is.

Friends, God is always in absolute control of all things. While the devil uses trials of life to discourage us, God uses these same trials sometimes to encourage us, to strengthen, and to mature us. The God of the hilltops continues to be God in the valleys. The God of the bright and sunny days continues to be God in the dark and threatening nights of life.

Joseph's story is one of the most eloquent biblical testaments of divine providence, of how God acts and reacts to the situations that his children go through here in this world. Thrown in the pit by his brothers--most of us know this story by heart--intended to murder him. You'll find that in Genesis chapter 37. He is then providentially saved by the intervention of Reuben, his older brother. At 17 years of age, he is sold to merchants that appear again providentially at exactly the right moment. And here in the company of complete strangers, he is taken to Egypt. The sad truth of the story is that he observes for the last time the hills of his childhood life that begin to disappear beyond the horizon, farther and farther away from everything that he knew, farther away from home.

But friends, the story has not ended. From a human perspective, that was the end of Joseph. That was it, to be sent to one of the most brutal countries of the world, one of the most brutal nations of the world, especially for slaves. The life expectancy wasn't long. This, to all purposes, to all effects, humanly speaking, was the last of Joseph, the end of Joseph. But we know that that's not true. We know that this is just the beginning of the story, because any story that has God in its core and its center, that story is a story that will end well. All stories that have God at the core will end well, if not on this side of eternity, on the other.

Tuesday's lesson, it's a very interesting lesson, because it's a small interlude in the broader story of Joseph. Here we have a little pause. Now, while it's chronologically accurate, the story of Tamar that's found in Genesis chapter 38, it appears out of place in the narrative of Joseph, almost like a non sequitur. In the place where it's found, it doesn't make much sense why. Here you have this whole story of Joseph happening, and then this short little description of what happens here with Judah and with Tamar. But even so, here we find the same theme of a malignant act that--a malignant act of injustice that develops into a positive event, connected to the lineage of salvation. The details of this story are peppered with cultural nuances.

So, the story basically goes to secure her genealogy, Tamar, she poses as a prostitute, because she had been married to Judah's firstborn son. He died, then she was married to the second son to preserve the lineage, and then he passed away. And at this point, Judah doesn't want to give his third son to Tamar, which was her right. And so here because he's denying the right that should be hers to preserve the lineage of her family, she poses as a prostitute.

Finally, she confronts Judah, and the story here, friends, it's incredible. Go back to the biblical narrative in Genesis chapter 38. Go read the story, and you'll see how incredible, how smart, how savvy this woman was. When she confronts Judah, who had already played a quite sordid role in Joseph's story, he was a key part of that. Here we see that the fundamental element of the narrative of Tamar versus Judah, it finds itself in the child that she bears, Perez, one of King David's ancestors and ultimately one of the ancestors of the Messiah, of Jesus Christ himself. Tamar appears as one of the most improbable women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus. And the lesson here seems clear.

Just as God has the ability of transforming the somber details of life, of in this case Tamar's life and her story into a blessing by including her in the lineage of the Savior of the world, the lives converge with Joseph's story, who, by miraculous providence, brings salvation to Jacob and to his lineage.

Friends, the whole story of the Bible is the story of how God changes and transforms and uses the most absurd events and even the most unqualified, apparently unqualified people in his divine providence. God is that powerful. I really believe that sometimes the devil, in one situation or another, he thinks that he's ahead, he thinks that he's winning, he thinks that he's won the skirmish, that little battle over there. But in one crazy way, in one way that surprises even the enemy, God is able to transform that moment of weakness, that failure, that apparent failure,

God has the power of transforming that into a victory, into a blessing. And we see that countless times through scripture. We see that here in the story of Tamar, and we see that in the story of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and here in the story of Joseph, as well.

Wednesday's lesson finds Joseph as a slave in Egypt. Here, the narrative shifts back to Joseph, and he's portrayed as this slave. The future could not seem darker, more uncertain. He found himself in a distant land with no hopes, no options, no alternatives, no foreseeable possibility of escape, but Joseph is providentially sold to a man called Potiphar--and you'll find that in Genesis 39, verse 1--who is, again providentially a ranking official of Pharaoh. He is immediately seen as a man of excellence. Everything that he touches succeeds, turns out. He's seen as a man in whom the Spirit of God dwelt, so much so that his master entrusted to Joseph his entire household.

But let's not lose sight that Joseph's success was a result of the action of God in his life. Look at what Genesis 39, verse 2 says. It says, "The Lord was with Joseph." Friends, do not forget the story is not about these people. The story, the main character here, it's not Joseph. The main character is God. Don't lose sight of that, because sometimes it's easy for us to go reading these stories of the Bible and saying, well, you know, here you have Abraham, here we have Jacob, here we have Daniel, here we have David. And then, you know, all these stories.

Yes, the story describes the events of these people's lives, of their lives. But let me tell you something. With God removed from their stories, these would be just regular, random people. God is the catalyst that makes-- the Lord of Israel, the God of Israel is the catalyst that makes Israel relevant, otherwise, do you remember all the fathers of nations from four, five thousand years ago? This story is about God. The Bible couldn't make it clearer. The Lord was with Joseph, and so because the Lord was with Joseph, verse 4 tells us, "So Joseph found favor in his sight and served him," speaking of Potiphar. "Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority." But although things were going well for him, Joseph was not corrupted by his new circumstances.

Friends, our fidelity to God is tested in two ways, two different ways, and I mentioned this in a previous lesson. First, the test of adversity; and secondly, the test of success. Most people fall short. Most people fall short on one or the other of these lessons, one or the other of these tests. Adversity or success ends up failing most humans. To many, when they find themselves in a successful situation, where they are seen as successful, they're seen as blessed, they're seen as, you know, nothing could go wrong, as intelligent, as smart, as rich--sometimes they think this is coming from themselves, from their effort.

Again, friend, never forget, two tests, adversity and success. As these tests go, not only when people face success, but when the adversities come, when the trials come, when the fires of life come, it's easy to

grow discouraged, to fall away, to think that either have been abandoned or forsaken. Joseph is an exception here, because initially and later on during his prison time, he's an example of faithfulness in success and in adversity.

In this moment of brief success, he bears witness to the stuff that he was made of. Because when Potiphar's wife attempts to seduce him, Joseph reveals that his relationship with God, the God of heaven, is greater than anything else. Genesis 39, verse 9 says, "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" You see that what he's worried about is his relationship with God. Of course, he's worried about the immediate consequences. He's worried about his master, what he would think. He knows that this is wrong, that this is immoral, but ultimately what is going on in his mind is "How could I hurt my God this way, that has taken such good care of me? How could I violate this relationship in such a way?"

And here we see that the reaction, and here we see that sometimes faithfulness and fidelity, they don't always provoke the best of reactions or the best of results. In this situation, Potiphar's wife, humiliated and enraged by the rejection of a slave, didn't hesitate to accuse him and to turn him over to her husband. And once again, the colors of the horizon that at this point had been glowing for Joseph--he was being recognized, he was successful, he was doing well in Potiphar's house. But here, the horizon, the colors of the sky become gray.

Once again, Joseph sees his world crumble around him. And at this point, as could have happened with so many other people, with so many of us, he could've easily been tempted to blaspheme against God. His new miseries are a direct result of his fidelity, of his faithfulness. Where is God? That would be the natural question. "Why me? I'm doing my best. I'm trying hard to be faithful in these hard circumstances. I'm already a slave. I've already lost my family. I'm already in a far away land. Why is this happening?"

I imagine the feel--I could imagine the feeling of abandonment, of loneliness, being almost insurmountable, but that's not the case that we find here in this story. We discover that even in prison, the Lord continued to bless him, and he prospered even there. Look at what Genesis 39:23 says. It says, "But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison, and the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph--to Joseph's hand, all the prisoners who were in the prison." Whatever they did there, it was His doing. The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the Lord was with him. And whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper. The Lord made it prosper so much so that his witness, Joseph's witness in that prison was a witness, was a testimony of faithfulness in adversity, as a servant of the Most High. And that deeply impressed those who shared the same lot as he in the prison.

You see this constantly. Joseph, in Potiphar's house, was faithful, in the trial of Potiphar's wife, was faithful, and even in prison, apparently abandoned by God and the world, in that pit, once again, is faithful.

Friends, we can't control the things that happen to us in our life, but we can control how we'll react, and that's a hard lesson for all of us. It's a hard lesson. Here we see Joseph, despite the situation, he chooses an attitude of gratitude, an attitude of praise, and that's the differentiating factor here in this young man's life.

Now, Thursday's lesson, which has the title, "The Dreams of Pharaoh," revolves around the events found in Genesis chapter 40 and 41. Here we see that God's providence continues to be a major element in this story, because, otherwise, this story would just be incredible. It would be literally incredible, unable to be believed. All right, this is such an incredible turn of events that happens here. We see that God's providence is still in control, imperceptible to human senses. Silently, gradually, Joseph is led to the realization of his calling, of his vocation. God gave him an ability of interpreting dreams. And here we see that he uses that ability to interpret the dreams of the cupbearer and the baker in this story, these two prisoners that served Pharaoh. To all effects, this event, humanly speaking, it just didn't make much sense. Why is this happening? Why does God care so much to give Joseph the ability to reveal the



dreams to these two just men lost in history, otherwise? But this is where we see this perspective of God.

We read in the Bible that the Lord God Himself says, "My thoughts are way above yours. You can't think on the same level as I can," says the Lord, basically. And here we see that God, He has that broader vision, that perspective that we just don't have. Here He sees the importance of this moment, of this event. When we analyze the interpreted dream in the broader context of God's plans, lines that seem to be just loose ends begin to make sense, and a radical change in the course of things takes place. Because two years later--yeah, two years-- it didn't happen overnight. It wasn't a week later, or a month later, or even a year later. Two years later in Genesis chapter 41, verse 1, Pharaoh, the most powerful monarch of the time, had a dream that alarmed him. And we know the story of those dreams--the fat cows and the skinny cows, the plump and the blighted wheat--and in a series of incredible events.

And here we have to jump over a big portion of the story, a lot of the details--and I invite you to go back to Genesis 39, 40, 41, and read the events here, paying attention to the smallest details, because those are the ones that make the difference. In a series of incredible events, Joseph is brought to the presence of this powerful monarch, of this powerful king, to give him the meaning of his dreams, and that only happens because the cupbearer remembers that 2 years before in prison, someone had been able to interpret his dream.

Interestingly, Joseph, Joseph is incredible here, because Joseph could've seen this as an opportunity of escape. He could've played the narrative, even if he hadn't been given this gift, this opportunity had been given, he could've used this to, in one way or another, see this as his chance of escape. But here that's not even, that's not on Joseph's mind. That's not even on the same wavelength of what he's thinking of, because the story tells us that he points away from himself, and he points to God, who is the true source of wisdom.

Any one of us would be dreaming of freedom and the possibilities that an interview with the king could provide, but Joseph points away. He points to He who is the true interpreter of dreams. Just like Daniel centuries later, who also, in the presence of the monarch, under similar circumstances, in Daniel chapter 2, verse 28 said there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets. Now Joseph, in the presence of Pharaoh, answers with a similar-- in a similar way. Genesis 41:16 says, "It is not in me. God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

You know, friends, Ellen White observes that the spirit of self is the spirit of the devil. Here we see that Joseph casts the attention off himself, onto the true main character of the story. The world is full of the spirit of megalomania, of arrogance.

But what is truly astounding and saddening is when we see that in the church, in the body of Christ, where we wouldn't believe that it would happen, or we wouldn't want it to happen. The saddest thing is when we see this truly happening among those who profess following Christ, poor creatures that pathetically attempt to take the place of the Most High and to take the glory that belongs only to Him.

Not so with Joseph. He points away from himself. The true source of revelation is another. And it also becomes clear that Pharaoh understood the message, because when he decides to choose Joseph to be the new Prime Minister of Egypt, his reason is--and this is in Genesis 41:39-41--he says, "In as much as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word. Only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you." And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt."

The ascension of Joseph is surprising. He goes beyond even Potiphar's household. He goes--he's taken above the station of his old master to govern the whole of Egypt. And here's another incredible detail. Because anyone that was wronged, like Joseph was, probably would've sought vengeance. But the Bible doesn't describe any such feeling, trying to seek vengeance on Potiphar or on his wife. This was a man that had given himself, that had turned himself over to God, to his God, and he allowed Him to be his vengeance.

What a powerful story of how even surrounded by disasters and by chaos, the divine providence of God always prevails, and His purposes are never frustrated, are never twisted, even by jealousy, by hatred, by malice, by the ruthlessness of human maliciousness. The last word is always His, because His decrees are trustworthy. He is infallible. Nothing, no one, anywhere, at any time, is capable of frustrating the designs of the God of heaven.

My dear friend, again, you know, we go through these lessons, and while we do look at the stories from a biblical perspective, seeing what's happening in the stories of these people, it's important to apply these lessons in our life. I'll tell you, we live in hard times, in times where the chaos, the storms of life continue raging. This is something that isn't unique to a certain period of time in history. It's always been hard. There have always been hardships and difficulties in chaos. Sometimes we're tempted to think that we have it worse than other people in other moments.

Friends, the truth of the matter is that wherever there is sin, there is difficulty. Wherever there is sin, there is chaos. Wherever sin is, there is a storm. Our small planet has been submerged into this storm, but the reality continues to be that the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob continues to be the God of truth, the God of strength, the God of power, the Alpha and the Omega.

God is never taken by surprise. He has the hands that never shake, which is why just as these men here in the Bible, we have to learn to put our lives in His hands, because that's the best place to be, always. The best place to be is always within God's will. That's my invitation for you here today. Please accept that prayer for you, that we, all of us must put our lives in God's hands.

I would like to invite you, one last time, to take advantage of our free offer, "The Power of a Positive No." Here you'll see, just as Joseph was capable of saying no in a moment of temptation, no in a moment of trial, we see that that is an important lesson, an important virtue for all of us to learn. So, don't forget to take advantage of that free offer. You could call the number 866-788-3966 and ask for offer number 159. If you're in continental North America, you can text SH084 to the number 40544. If you're outside of continental North America, you can go to the website [study.aftv.org/SH084](http://study.aftv.org/SH084), and you could get a digital download.

I invite you to take advantage of this, and I invite you, more than anything else, to invite Christ into your heart. Allow Him to be your tether in a moment of storm, your rock, your anchor. And I'm sure that just like Joseph, you'll be able to prosper not only through the trials of adversity, but also in the trials of success. May God bless you.

I'd like to finish with a word of prayer. Please bow your head. "Dear Lord, thank You so much for the stories of the Bible that teach us so many important and incredible lessons. Lord, here we see a young man that was just cast into this terrible storm of chaos. And Lord, we want to live a life similar to Joseph, similar to these Bible heroes: Joseph, Daniel, so many others that in moments of crisis were able to maintain their hopes and their faith in You.

Lord, at the same time, we are small. We're extremely fallible beings, and we mess up and make mistakes, which is why, Lord, I claim the promise of Micah 7, verse 8, where the prophet, he tells the enemy, 'Do not laugh over me. Do not laugh over me, O my enemy, because even when I fall, the Lord will lift me up. When my dwelling is in the darkness, the Lord will be my light.'"

Lord, I claim that promise not only for myself, but for everyone that is listening, that is watching right now. And Father, we sometimes, we do fall, and we abide in the darkness in moments of life, but You are our light. Lord, we know that victory is only in You. This story is only about You. You are the God that fulfills the promises, Lord. We're, again, we're fallible. We break promises, many times. But, Lord, that's why I ask for forgiveness. I ask for transformation. I ask to be more like Christ. And I ask that not only for myself, but for all who are watching and listening right now. I ask You these things, and I praise Your name. I bless Your name, Lord, for these beautiful truths that we've learned today, and I ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen, amen.

Announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the keyword on your screen to 40544 or visit the web address shown on your screen, and be sure to select the digital download option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with Amazing Facts, wherever and whenever you want, and most important, to share it with others.

Announcer: "Amazing Facts, Changed Lives."

Darius Ziegler: My name is Darius Ziegler. I was born and raised in Elmore, Alabama. I grew up and I was raised Christian. We had to do exactly what my parents wanted, as far as Christian living, whether it be our friends, what we watched on television, even down to the things that we ate.

Male: You know, I used to wonder and sometimes question my mom about certain things, but, you know, she explained why, you know, like it's better for us, you know, it's the reasons, the way that God actually wants us to live and He—

Darius: And I'm starting to think in my mind, you know, this can't be right, this isn't fair. So, when college came after high school, and I was on my own, and I had no rules, I busted it wide open. After I had my--well, at least what I thought--my fill of partying, I started to realize that it wasn't all that it was cracked up to be. As time was going on, I was finishing up my freshman year of college, I still, I was very miserable. I wasn't happy with anything, and I still wanted to just get away. And I was looking through the phone book, you know, I was looking in the back, you know, in the Yellow Pages, and I seen, like, the recruiting advertisement for the Air Force.

So, I did exactly like the number said. I called them. I'm off to the military. I get there, and I made friends. Everybody loved me. At this time, I was just like, "Yeah, this is what I've been missing." And all these guys doing all this together, it was awesome, or so I thought. They tell us that we're getting deployed. And of all places we're going to the Middle East, and I'm going to a place where they don't want us there. Basically, every day your life was on the line, and I'm terrified.

But thankfully, after the months go by and we do our tour in the desert, they send us back home, and I'm excited. I get to go back and be with my friends. And I get back there, I get back to my dorm thinking everything is fine, everything is going to be cool. Something's changed. I'm the only person that's alone. All my friends, they have girlfriends, or they're married, and I'm the odd man out. So, I tried to follow suit, and I went out, and I met a young lady, and as time went on, we ended up getting married. Everything at first was great, at first.

Male: Well, I didn't know 100% of what they were going through, but it did seem like I got an impression that, you know, she was kind of trying to isolate him.

Darius: My wife doesn't want me having any type of contact with my family or friends. You know, the same thing that I was running from, now I'm living with. And I remember one night we ended up getting into a huge argument. And the next thing I know, the cops are there, and now I'm in jail, and my mind is just running 1,000 miles an hour. You know, I'm scared, I'm frantic, I don't know what to do.

After I was released from jail, I remember one day my sister invited us over for dinner, and they put on this movie. It was called, "The Final Events of Bible Prophecy," by Amazing Facts. And I remember it got to the end of the film, and it was showing the part where the New Jerusalem comes down, and the Lord descended out of heaven. It had all the lost standing around the city, as numerous as the sands of the sea when judgment was given, and fire rained down from God in heaven, and it destroyed them all.

And at that moment, I heard a voice as clear as day. I'll never forget it. It said, "Everything that you saw on this video is true. And if you do not change from the things that you have been doing, the lake of fire will be your end." I was more scared at that point than at any time in my life. After that happened, I said, "Lord, I'm tired of breaking your laws. I want to go get rebaptized and rededicate my life to God." I said I realize now that everything that I had been doing, all the running that I had been doing, God was doing

nothing but chasing me.

Now I'm back home. It's just funny, when I think about it. The entire time, all I did was run in a circle. It actually took running in that full circle to make me realize that this was where I needed to be. You know, I ended up getting remarried.

Mrs. Ziegler: Being married to Darius is amazing. I cannot have asked for a much better husband.

Male: It's like we're kids all over again, you know, growing up together. And, you know, it makes, you know, an inspiration in my life, you know, to keep my head up and things, doing right and everything, too.

Darius: I look at this story in the Bible of the prodigal son, and that's a story that I could relate to, because I feel like I was actually the living prodigal, that the entire time God was blessing me, but I couldn't see it because I thought that what the world had to offer was ten times greater. And when I came back, and he welcomed me back in with open arms, and my life is 100 times better than I could've possibly even imagined.