***Joseph, No. 1

RV131-02***

We are studying the tribulation evangelists in Revelation 7:4-8. This is segment number seven.

During the tribulation era on earth, the gospel of salvation will be proclaimed by a special task force of 144,000 Jews. These Jewish evangelists will be sealed by God to protect the tribes who are making up these evangelists, and the nation of Israel as it will exist at that time. The antichrist, of course, will want to close the mouths of these people by taking their lives. Therefore, God has to take special action to make them immortal.

In Genesis 49, Jacob, on his deathbed, pronounced the future destiny of each tribe based on the character traits of the tribe's founding patriarchs. We have been looking at these patriarchs one-by-one; their characteristics; and, consequently, what they passed down to their progeny. Reuben is mentioned first. He failed in his role as the firstborn, and demonstrated a spirit of compromise with evil. Levi and Simeon were hot-tempered men whose word could not be trusted. Judah was a man of honor, respected by the other tribes, and was appointed as the royal line. Zebulun was a source of safety to those in need, and perhaps will be playing that role in the tribulation. Issachar was a docile beast-like personality who tolerated oppression as long as he was well fed. Dan was a venomous snake who brought death and idolatry into the nation, and probably for that reason is not even mentioned in the list in the book of the Revelation. Gad was the source of military protection to preserve the nation's freedom. Asher was talented in the creation of good foods. He was an expert in the culinary arts. And Naphtali was an agent to execute divine justice, and also had a literary gift to be able to inspire others to action.

**Joseph**

So, if you will turn to Genesis 49, we will pick up the consideration of the tribes with the next tribe, the tribe of Joseph. The prophecy of Jacob concerning him is recorded in Genesis 49:22-26. He is the family background of the tribe of Joseph. Joseph, as you know, was the eleventh son of Jacob, and he was the first son born to Jacob's favorite beloved wife, Rachel, who up to this time, in the family experience, had been barren. In Genesis 30:22-24, we read, "And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her (for she had been praying about this), and opened her womb. And she conceived and born son and said, 'God has taken away my reproach.' And she called his name Joseph and said, 'The Lord shall add to me another son.'" She was confident that she had something going now that would continue. The name "Joseph" in the Hebrew means "adding." And Rachel named the boy that because it implied her confidence that she would now bear another son.

Joseph became Jacob's favorite child, for probably a number of reasons, not the least of which was the fact that he was getting on in age, and that this was the son of his older years, and was the son of Rachel, who was very dear to him. So, Joseph became a favorite child, and Jacob treated him with special kindness.

In Genesis 37:3 we read, "Now Israel (which was another name for Jacob) loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age, and he made him a coat of many colors." Jacob's love for this child of his old age and of his beloved wife, Rachel, caused the other sons to have an antagonistic attitude toward Joseph. As a matter of fact, they downright hated the kid.

In Genesis 37:4 we read, therefore, "And when his brethren saw that their father loved him (that is Joseph) more than all his brethren, they hated him, and they could not speak peaceably to him." They hated him so much that they showed one of the first signs of hating a person. You cool them. You freeze them out. And one of the ways that you freeze a person out, and demonstrate your hatred and antagonism, is that you say, "I'm not going to talk to that person." So, when they could, they just didn't talk to the boy. And when they had to, they spoke to him in an abusive, rough manner.

As Joseph grew up, he, however, had something that the other brothers did not have, which in fact caused them to hate him all the more. Joseph was one of those delightful kind of children who had the natural good sense (which is somewhat rare) to recognize that your parents know more than you know. And in Joseph's case, he recognized that his father Jacob knew something about God – that his father Jacob had some real divine viewpoint.

Every parent would like to convey that to their children. Every parent would like to see his children growing up with the insight of realizing that they begin ahead of the average crowd. They're way out ahead of the herd of human beings (their peers), because they come from a family which is already oriented to divine viewpoint principles. Therefore, they have a basis of moving ahead in life, building upon what their parents have already invested in them. Parents should stress that to their children – that they do begin with a great advantage in having been born into a Christian oriented home.

Parents counter that in a variety of ways themselves when they suggest that there are other sources that are equally valuable in information to the child, like his own peers. We have some parents in the academy who are obsessed to get their children into the public school at the beginning of, say, the junior high level, which is now insanely at the sixth-grade level. In recent days, we have talked with several of the principals in the Irving public schools, and they say that's one of the worst mistakes that has been imposed upon them, because a sixth-grader is still such a child. Find a sixth grader someplace in your life, and see what an absolute nonentity infant that is. To throw them into the context of association with eighth-graders is sheer madness. Why do parents do that?

Well, it's because these parents are telling their children that once you hit sixth-grade, the opinions, and the ideals, and the influence of your peers is more important than the authority and the influence of your parents. These parents are too mentally and spiritually limited to realize that that is the message their children are getting. And their children are saying, "Uh-huh, I don't have to listen to the old man and the old lady because they're out of it. The people who are in are all my other sixth-grade friends here, and all my other seventh grade friends, and all my junior-grade people. They're the ones who are in the know. So, I pick up my signals from them.

Joseph was not like that. Joseph looked around at the other kids his age. He looked around at the pagans around him, for he was surrounded by the Canaanites civilization, and he did not view them with esteem. He came up with the conclusion that his father, Jacob, had a divine viewpoint frame of reference, and he was teaching that to Joseph, and, therefore, Joseph was way ahead of the game. As a matter of fact, Joseph was not even willing to be influenced by his older brothers when he saw them resisting the divine viewpoint that his father, Jacob, was standing for.

Jacob, as you know, came to that divine viewpoint understanding the hard way. He was a deceiver. He was a conniver. He was a two-timer in his early days. And it was because of the severe discipline that God brought upon him through a variety of ways that finally, through considerable, divine bruising, he came to the point where he decided that God knew what He was talking about, and he was going to obey the instructions of the living God, and quit operating on his human viewpoint opinions. Therefore, Joseph built on his family's spiritual heritage, because he was not awed; he was not attracted; and, he was not impressed by the human viewpoint cultures and the thinking of his day. It takes a really special kind of a manly boy, and a womanly girl, to be able to do that. Most kids are wimps who cannot rise in Christian families to say, "I've already got it." They're the kind of wimps that are really impressed with all those bongo heads that sit next to them in their classrooms at school, who are their age; know more; who have their own level of ignorance (and that's all they can share with one another); and, who have no frame of reference with which to meet life.

We struggle in Christian education to guide parents into an understanding of these things. We try to devise ways and regulations and participations on their part to get this across to them, because it is such a rare commodity in the understanding of parents. Parents themselves do not understand that there is a philosophical difference that is at the core of Christian education against public school education, and it is not reading, writing, arithmetic, and discipline. Once you have that, you still have nothing. It is a philosophical difference that carries on into eternity.

Joseph got it from his father, Jacob, and Joseph latched on to it. Joseph did not begin his life at a lower level of intellectual and moral insight than his father had attained. So, God blessed and prospered this boy from his earliest days. There was no way that Joseph was not going to come out a winner. There was no way that this boy was not going to prosper in every way, by the simple fact that he said, "My parents know what they're talking about. I would not begin my life under a lower level, intellectually or morally, than they have. I'll begin where they are, and I will build upon that. I will not question what is obviously God's truth that they possess.

Joseph's devotion to his spiritual integrity, as I say, was also demonstrated by his refusal to approve the evils of his older brothers. That's tough for a kid to do. If you've got older siblings, and they're practicing evil, it is tough for you to say, "You're wrong, and I'm not going to approve what you're doing. I'm going to go with God's way, which is what my parents are going with.

In Genesis 37:2, we therefore read, concerning this quality in Joseph: "These are the generations of Jacob: Joseph, being 17 years old (so, we're talking about a 17-year-old teenager here), was feeding the flock with his brethren. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought unto his father their evil report" (their evil conduct). How do you like them bananas? Oh, we're told in the honorable circles of the teenage crowd: "You don't want to rat on people. You don't want to tell what other people are doing. And here, you don't want to read on your brothers." But Joseph said, "Oh, no. It is wrong what my brothers are doing, and I am going to rat on them. I'm going to let my father know the evil that they're doing now." Obviously, that was the best thing in the world for the brothers. If you have a kind heart, and if you want to have a system of love expressed, then you go to people, and you deal with the issue of what they're confronted with.

I recently came from Wheaton College for a graduation service, and Vice President Bush was the commencement speaker. Because he was the commencement speaker, across the street from the auditorium where the commencement exercises were held, there was a mob probably about as long as this room of students and other people who were holding placards: anti-nukes; anti-resistance of communism in Nicaragua; and, anti- all the stuff down the line. I got there early, so I walked down the line, and I read all the signs, and I saw a man walking around who looked well-dressed. He looked like he had prospered enough that he could be a radical. Consequently, he was in charge.

He came over and looked at me, and I looked at him, and I said, "I wonder if you're aware of the fact, in your opposition here on your signs to military endeavors, how this expression of protest that you're able to make is because we have a military establishment that has established the peace to protect you from aggressors so that you can stand here protesting in behalf of those very aggressors?"

He said, "Yes, isn't it wonderful that we have such a military establishment?" I found out later that he, apparently, was either a professor at the school or somebody who was involved in the student group.

I said, "Are you aware of the fact that, in the day of King Hezekiah (the Old Testament records for us), Sennacherib of Syria came down with a mighty military force, and Hezekiah knew that he was doomed, and he turned to God in prayer, and he asked God to establish peace for him. And God laid down a principle of warfare for establishing peace by the answer to that prayer. The answer was that, one night, the pre-incarnate Christ came through the camp of the Assyrians, and 185,000 crack infantry troops were slaughtered by the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scripture says that the result was that the next morning, Sennacherib saw what had happened – that his capacity to make war was gone. He turned, and he went home. And the Bible says that Israel enjoyed peace."

And he said, "Oh, yes, isn't it wonderful? But if the Lord Jesus Christ exercises military activity, it's all right – just so the United States doesn't do it."

I said, "Well, sir, you obviously have a great limitation of knowledge of Bible doctrine to suggest that God no longer is capable, and does not leave people in positions of authority through the Word of God and through the indwelling Spirit of God as to what is the mind of God in these matters. You are very much mistaken if you think that He does not guide us to that very action, and to establishing peace in that very way." Then I turned and walked off.

He said, "Well, I love your brother;" whereupon, I turned around, and I walked back, because now he had touched a significant chord in my heart.

I said, "I don't think you do, because you don't know anything about what is love. Love would not put these young people, standing here on this curb, in mortal jeopardy to aggressors who are just eager to pour across our southern borders. If you were really a man who understood love, your love would want to protect them from that kind of aggression, and from that kind of loss of freedom. Let us hope, sir, that these young women standing here, following your leadership, will not be among the first to be raped when those aggressors have an opportunity finally to come pouring across our southern borders." And then I turned and walked away, and he said nothing more.

This is the kind of insane idiocy that is out there in the intellectual world. This is the kind of thing about which parents are standing around, with their fingers in their ears, trying to figure out what to do next, and cannot instruct their children, and cannot call upon their children to stand up on a definite biblical position.

But here came a man like Joseph, and he said, "I will listen to my father, who has taught me God's viewpoint, and I will not get caught up in the human viewpoint of the world. And I will know what reality is, and I will live according to it. And when I find people who do not do that, then I speak out against what they are doing, including my own brothers, if necessary.

The result of the heritage that these tribes that descended from Joseph had (which were namely two tribes – Manasseh and Ephraim), was that great leaders came from those tribes. Joshua, Deborah, and Samuel came from the tribe of Ephraim, descended from Joseph. Famous men like Gideon and Jephthah came from the tribe of Manasseh, descended from Joseph. So, Joseph set his progeny on a tremendous course of understanding divine viewpoint reality. And he did it because he listened to his father, Jacob, and he knew what the realities were of life, in contrast to so many people today who have the best of education, and who don't have the foggiest notion of what the reality of the Word of God has to say about the things that Satan is doing today.

As you look at the characteristics of this tribe, Jacob compared the progeny of Joseph to a fruitful vine which received abundant nourishment. Genesis 49:22 says, "And Joseph is a fruitful bough (a fruitful vine), even a fruitful bough by a well whose branches run over the wall." Joseph is pictured here as one who is receiving abundant nourishment, and therefore, like a vine, is fruitful, and is developing. The vines of Joseph would climb over the wall nearby where they grew, indicating their strength and their multiplication. The godly character of Joseph resulted in great divine prosperity upon his descendants. That is what this indicates, and that was true. The prosperity of Joseph is seen in the fact that he received the double-portion which belonged to Reuben, the firstborn. It was Joseph who received the double-portion, for from him came two tribes, which became incorporated into the nation – the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim.

Jacob observed the hatred, however, which was also to be exercised toward Joseph, who chose to believe God's Word, and to live accordingly, and to ignore his peers, and to ignore the human viewpoint around him. He had already seen that in his son's life. So, in Genesis 49:23, we read, "The archers have harassed him, and shot at him, and hated him." Joseph is pictured here as one who is going to be under attack by the archers who hate him, and they want to silence him. This refers, of course, to Joseph's experience with his brothers, and later, that which was experienced by his descendants, who also came under attack to be silenced by those who were anti-God establishment.

Josef's godly character kept him stable and strong in the face of personal adversity and injustice. As Jacob indicated, it would be the character of his descendants to be faced with this kind of hatred, as Joseph was; to be faced with adversity, as he was; and, to be faced with the worst kinds of injustices, as Joseph was. But if they took the characteristics of their patriarch, they would meet it in the same stable way as he did.

For example, Joseph, while he was under abuse, did not turn against God. He did not discredit God's teachings. When things were happening to him all around his ears, he did not whine: "Why me?" He knew that he was dealing with a God of integrity. When the worst came to him (when the greatest injustice came to him), he didn't turn against God. He didn't become bitter. He didn't get overwhelmed with a surge of self-pity. Joseph's ways were those of divine viewpoint righteousness, so his enemies could not destroy him, for God was standing in their way. That is a good principle to remember – that God stands in the way of our enemies when we are in the position of righteousness.

**Do You have the Right Enemies?**

In Luke 6:22-26, we have a principle that the Lord Jesus lay down in this respect, which in short says this (applying this to Joseph's case): "Joseph had the right enemies." That's something that you and I as Christians have to ask ourselves sometimes: "Do we have the right enemies?" You say, "Oh, I don't have any enemies. Everybody likes me." And now we know something about you. Now we know what category you fit into. Those who are open with the world to divine viewpoint are going to have enemies. Luke 6:22 says, "Blessed are you when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company (freeze you out), and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy; for behold, your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner, their fathers did unto the prophets." And the prophets were right. And the very people who were hating people like Joseph were the people who were also hating the prophets, who were telling the truth, and this got worse in the nation of Israel as it went along.

"But woe unto you that are rich, for you have received your consolation." You think you have it made because you have your wealth: "Woe unto you that are full, for you shall hunger." You think you have it made because you got all the food in the world that you want: "Woe unto you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep." You who are anti-God, and you're having a great time, and you're getting a lot of laughs out of life – you better enjoy it, because it's going to turn to bitterness: "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets." It was the false prophets of whom people spoke well. You have only to look in the religious realm, such as in the charismatic movement, to see some of the worst false prophets on the face of the earth today, and listen to how well people speak of them, to know how far they are from God's thinking.

It's important for a Christian to have the right enemies. You can tell a great deal about yourself in terms of the people who are your friends and those who resent you. In 1 Peter 3:8-12, we have another principle laid down which Joseph reflected, Joseph left vengeance with God. So, when he was abused, he did not retaliate. As you know, as you think through his history, he had some terrible moments of abuse, not the least of which was at the hands of his own brothers, and at the hands of people in prison that he had done favors for, who quickly forgotten. So, what did he do? Well, he followed this principle that Peter lays out here for our admonition. 1 Peter 3:8: "Finally be all of one mind, having compassion, one of another; love as brethren; be pitiful; be courteous; not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing; but on the contrary, blessing; knowing that you are called to this, that you should inherit a blessing. For he that we love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. That's terrific advice. Joseph illustrated this. Do you want a long life? Do you want a good life? Do you want to enjoy the good things of life? Then shut your mouth when it comes to speaking evil. Close your mouth when it comes to speaking to deceit.

Verse 11: "Let him eschew evil (hate the thing that's wrong), and do good; let him seek peace, and (as a matter of fact) pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." And the implication is that, if you do evil, He doesn't listen to your prayers either. If you want God to listen to your prayers, then it says to be aware of the fact that he's watching what you're doing."

Furthermore, Joseph, we find, took satisfaction in his sufferings because they were attacks against God's divine viewpoint, and not against his own sins and human viewpoint. There are some Christians who make the mistake of feeling that they're very noble when God is coming down on them in discipline because they're suffering for Jesus, when in fact they're suffering for their own evil and their own wrongdoing. They're not suffering because of their association with the Lord.

Every suffering that we read about in the case of Joseph was because of his enemies and because of other people's evil, not because he was guilty of evil. So, in 1 Peter 3:13-17, we have this principle: "And who is he that will harm you if you be followers of that which is good? And if you suffer for righteousness' sake, you are happy. And be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled, but sanctify (set apart) the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a question of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience that, whereas they speak evil of you as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good manner of life in Christ. For it is better if the will of God be so that you suffer for well-doing then for evil-doing." So, people will abuse you; people will misrepresent you; and, they'll speak evil of you. You still keep living the stable godly life, and you leave the results in the hands of the Lord.

1 Peter 4:12 adds this to that: "Beloved, do not think it is strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to test you, as though some strange thing happened on to you. Joseph didn't think it's strange. Joseph wasn't surprised by the antagonism. He knew exactly why. He knew that it was because he was listening to his father Jacob; he started on his father Jacob's level of spiritual development; and, he found that the others wanted to start on a level below that. They wanted to grovel around in the dirt and in the pigpen. And Joseph said, "I don't think that's smart," and they resented it.

1 Peter 4:13: "But rejoice in as much as you are partakers of Christ's suffering, that when His glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy. If you be reproached for the name of Christ, you are happy, for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part, He is evil spoken of, but on your part, He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffers a Christian. Let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time did come that judgment must begin at the house of God. And if it first began at us, what shall the end be of them that do not obey the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore, let him that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing as unto a faithful Creator."

That's exactly what Joseph did. As he suffered the abuses brought upon him, he committed himself to the hands of a faithful God and said," God, this is bigger than I can handle. It's unfair. It's wrong. I'm being mistreated. I leave it in your hands to resolve it." And it wasn't resolved overnight. It took years, but it was resolved. Joseph did what was right by the Word of God, and he left the attackers to God.

**Joseph's Dreams**

For a moment, run your mind over the injustices experienced by this godly boy, so that you get the frame of reference of what we're dealing with here. As you know, one of the things that brought him in trouble with his brothers was that he had a dream. At this time in human history, dreams were important, because the Scriptures had not been written, and God communicated through dreams. He does not communicate through dreams today, as Scrooge, in The Christmas Carol, knew all too well. He thought that he was dreaming when he saw the spirits, and he knew it was a piece of undigested beef, or a little bit of mustard that was causing him some indigestion, and causing him to have hallucinations. So, if you have a dream, don't try to use that as a communication from God. If you start thinking like that, I can tell you, almost with a certainty, that Satan will give you some beautiful dream, because now you will be thinking that God is communicating to you. And Satan will say, "Oh, that's what you think? Hey, I'll come in there and give you some real dreams," and he will cause you to be completely led astray from God. We now have the Bible. We don't look to dreams.

However, at this time, dreams were important. In Genesis 37:5-11, we have this record of Joseph having a dream. Now the boy is a teenager. He has a dream, and in his innocence, he goes out and tells his brother the dreams that he had. It was that they were all in the field, and they were binding their sheaves. All of a sudden, his sheave stood upright, and all of their sheaves bowed down to his sheaf of grain. Well, these people, who lived in an era where dreams were significant, and where dreams were interpreted, they understood exactly what the dream was suggesting – that they, his brothers, were going to be bowing down to this wimp, this little kid, this younger brother of theirs.

So Genesis 37:8 says, "And his brethren said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" And they hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words." They hated him even more simply because of the dream he had. At least they should have said, "Well, you're lying, and we hate you for lying. We don't like you misrepresenting." But they didn't question that he had the dream.

Furthermore, he has another dream. This time, as you know, he sees the sun, the moon, and 11 stars, and they all bow down to him. When his father Jacob hears this, Jacob rebukes the boy as well. Verse 10 says, "And he told it to his father and to his brethren, and his father rebuked him and said, 'What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I, and your mother, and your brother indeed come to bow down ourselves to you to the earth?' And his brethren envied him, but his father observed the same.

Jacob had learned enough about communication from God. He look at him, and he says, "Joey, this sounds funny to me. I don't understand you telling me this. This sounds like your mother and I and all your brothers are going to bow down to you as an authority. That's very strange, Joey. I don't understand this." But his brothers, who were a little uneasy, because God did communicate through dreams, and they envied him a little bit over the edge of concern that possibly there was a communication from God, and possibly this could happen. In any case, as you know full well, these dreams were precisely fulfilled later on in Egypt.

In Genesis 37:12-14, you have another one of the injustices suffered by Joseph when his brothers sold him as a slave into Egypt. He was 17 years old at this time. These verses tell us how his father Jacob sent him to check how his brothers were doing with the flocks out in the field. So, he found the brothers at Dothan. They saw him approaching. It's hard to imagine older brothers who would do this to a younger brother, but their first reaction was to look at this 17-year-old. And 17-year-olds are clumsy; they're awkward; they walk funny; they eat a lot; and, they do all kinds of strange things. And they really need a lot of sympathy and care and helping along the way. They're not really a dangerous species at all, generally. But here, these brothers hated him with a mortal hatred.

Genesis 37:18: "And when they (his brothers) saw him (Joseph) afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another, "Behold, the dreamer comes. Come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit. We will say that some evil beast has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams." These are his older brothers. Can you imagine the brutality toward their parents? Do you see why these sons did not rise to the spiritual level of Jacob? They did not want to listen to Jacob's spiritual instruction. They were willing to execute a deceit upon the father, and to kill the boy, and to report to the father that some wild beast had taken him. These are older brothers who are doing this to a younger brother.

Many years ago, my number two son took his little brother to a swimming pool. He came back later in the day, and said he didn't get a chance to swim too much because he was so preoccupied with watching his brother. His mother said, "Well, couldn't you just have asked some of those other people to keep an eye on him?" And Steve responded immediately (I remember how, almost with indignation): "I wouldn't think of committing my little brother into the hands of some of those yo-yos." And he was just indignant that anybody would suggest that he would hazard his little brother's life into the hands of somebody else. That's a normal reaction from an older sibling toward the younger one. But this was very brutal, to say, "Let's kill this 17-year-old boy, and let's lie to our father."

Well, the older brother Reuben, who was a weakling and a compromiser with evil, did on this occasion rise to a noble level. For verse 21-22 indicate that that Reuben said, "Hey, let's not kill him. Let's not shed blood. Let's just throw him into this pit in the wilderness. We won't lay any hand on him." The implication was, "Here's this hole. It's so deep that there's no way he can get out of it, and we'll just leave him here. Out in this desert area, he'll die of thirst in a hurry. We won't have to say that we actually took his life. We didn't shed his blood."

What he had in mind was actually that he was going to come back later and release the boy. But while Reuben was away from the other group, Genesis 37:23 tells us that they decided to strip him of his coat of many colors; they took him; and they cast him into the pit, which was empty. There wasn't any water in it. Then later, when Reuben was away, they took the boy, and sold him into slavery.

When they took Joseph's coat, and they threw him into the pit, as a teenager, he was scared. He couldn't probably believe that his older brothers were really doing this, and that they really meant this. So, he did what a normal 17-year-old boy would do. He is not fully a man. He's not aggressive. He is fearful. He may have even shed tears, but he pled with them not to do this to him. We know that because in Genesis 42:21-22, many years later, Reuben reminds them of that occasion when they are now in Egypt, standing in front of this brother who is now second-in-command of the nation, and they don't recognize him. And they said one to another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother," because of the pretended aggressiveness of Joseph toward them. So, they're thinking back, "Why is God doing this to us?" And they said that it was because of what they did to their brother: "In that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear. Therefore, this distress comes upon us."

So, the 17-year-old was saying, "Hey, guys, don't do this to me. Please. And Reuben answered them saying, 'Didn't I speak unto you saying, 'Do not sin against the child,' and you would not hear. Therefore, behold, also is his blood. His blood is required.'" Reuben was quick to come in and say, "I told you that. That's exactly what I tried to tell you back then, and you wouldn't listen."

Well, as you know, Genesis 37:25-28 tell us that a group of traders were coming by, and they were headed for Egypt, and for 20 pieces of silver, they sold their younger brother to the slave traders. They covered their crime. Genesis 38:29-35 tells us that they covered their crime by dipping his coat in animal blood, and taking it to the Father.

Joseph was taken to Egypt, and again he suffers an injustice. He is sold into the home of Potiphar, who is the captain of the Pharaoh's guard, a very important man. Again, Joseph didn't change. He said, "My father Jacob, is right. He knows what he's talking about. He is compatible with God's thinking, and I believe it, and I go from there." And that character still stayed with him. His divine viewpoint character soon caused him to rise in authority in Potiphar's home.

So, in Genesis 37:36, we have that indicated to us. He was sols into Potiphar's home. Then, in Genesis 39:1-6, we have described how this man was so impressed that the boy was put in charge. Mind you, this is a 17-year-old. Very soon he's in charge of all the material possessions and the running of the household.

Genesis 39:1: "And Joseph was brought down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him at the hands of the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man. He was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all he did to prosper at his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him, and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.

"And it came to pass, from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake. And the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house and in the field."

Here's that principle again. Parents who do right bring blessing and prosperity upon their children, who themselves may not personally deserve it.

Verse 6 says, "And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he knew not anything he had, save the food which he ate. And Joseph was a handsome person, and well-favored." Joseph was one good looking boy.

So, he is now in Potiphar's home. He is in complete charge. And in through the door comes a slinky, twisting, gyrating little dude called Potiphar's wife. I think her name was "Honey." That's what he called her. She comes along; looks at this good looking girl; and, decides to seduce him.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1984

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