

JOSEPH

Chapter 2

Favorite Son



Our Format:

We will briefly describe the events of this Chapter in the Life of Joseph... and then make direct points of application at the end.

Chapter Two

Favorite Son

This chapter will center on
the 3 main characters involved in that
fateful day at the well...

Jacob, the 10 Brothers and Joseph.

As we will see, their lives have been on a decades-long collision course which will culminate in a major choice that day.

**That singular decision at the well
will be the product of decades of
deception, disgrace & disappointment.**

In this session we will follow their personal paths back a ways in order to see the events and motivations which led to such an act.

Part 1

Jacob:

A Progression of His Past

Picture the life of Jacob, like a long locomotive, racing along the tracks of time.



**This locomotive is hauling many cars.
The cars represent many memories,
events and choices that have created the
man who is now called Israel.**

Meanwhile, the conductor of the train
(presumably Jacob's psyche)
has been shoveling the coal of regret,
disappointment & pain into the engine
of that train for some time.

Jacob did not decide overnight
to reject his sons, prefer Joseph
and give him an ornate coat.

Last week we summarized a few of these painful events...

A disregard for his brother, a self-centered self-advancement, even a willingness to deceive his father...



However, there are three events which played the biggest role in the progression of the person who Jacob has become...

These three life shaping events directly influenced the course of time and the selling of Joseph into slavery...

The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Genesis 25:27-28

First, Jacob was raised primarily by his mother as his father *favored* his brother. Jacob was not 'outdoorsy' like his brother and was happy to stay close to home.

As a result,

Jacob will struggle to know how to father well, because he was not *fathered* well.

As a result,

Jacob will fail to connect with his
10 outdoorsy, aggressive & manly sons...
who are reminiscent of Esau. He will more
readily connect with his well-behaved son.

As a result,

Jacob will prefer the son of his *favorite* wife and encourage him to stay near home and put him in a supervisory role over the others.

Jacob served seven years to get Rachel,
but they seemed like only a few days to him
because of his love for her. But when the evening came,
Laban took his daughter Leah and brought her
to Jacob...When morning came, there was Leah!
So Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done
to me? I served you for Rachel, didn't I?
Why have you deceived me?"

Genesis 29:20, 23, 25

Second, Jacob was tricked into marrying a woman he did not love on the night that he thought that he was marrying the woman that he did love.

As a result,
Jacob will carry *disdain* for the 10 boys
not born to his desired wife. They are a
constant reminder of that terrible trick.

As a result,

Jacob will be *disconnected* from the wellbeing of other children...including the rape of his daughter and placing them in front of approaching fighting men.

As a result,
Jacob will begin to *blame* them for
everything wrong in his life.

Rachel began to give birth and had great difficulty...

And as she was having great difficulty in childbirth, the midwife said to her, “Don’t despair, for you have another son.” So Rachel died and was buried on the way...Over her tomb Jacob set up a pillar, and to this day that pillar marks Rachel’s tomb.

Genesis 35: 16-17, 19

Third, the wife that Jacob loved,
died while giving birth to her 2nd son...
leaving Jacob with 10 sons and 3 wives
that he did not truly love.

As a result,

Jacob will openly favor the two sons that he had with Rachel. They are a constant *reminder* of the great love he had for her.

As a result,

Jacob is left to raise Joseph & Benjamin without their mother...which, a mother, was the leading parental figure in his own childhood...leaving Jacob helpless.

As a result,

Jacob will *prepare* Joseph to be the next in line & the heir of the family estate...just as his mother had done for him.

Jacob views Joseph as the eldest of his real sons, the two he had with his real wife Rachel...and therefore should be the heir.

Part 2

The Brothers:
A Product of their Pain.

Picture the life of the 10 brothers, like a long locomotive, racing along the tracks of time.

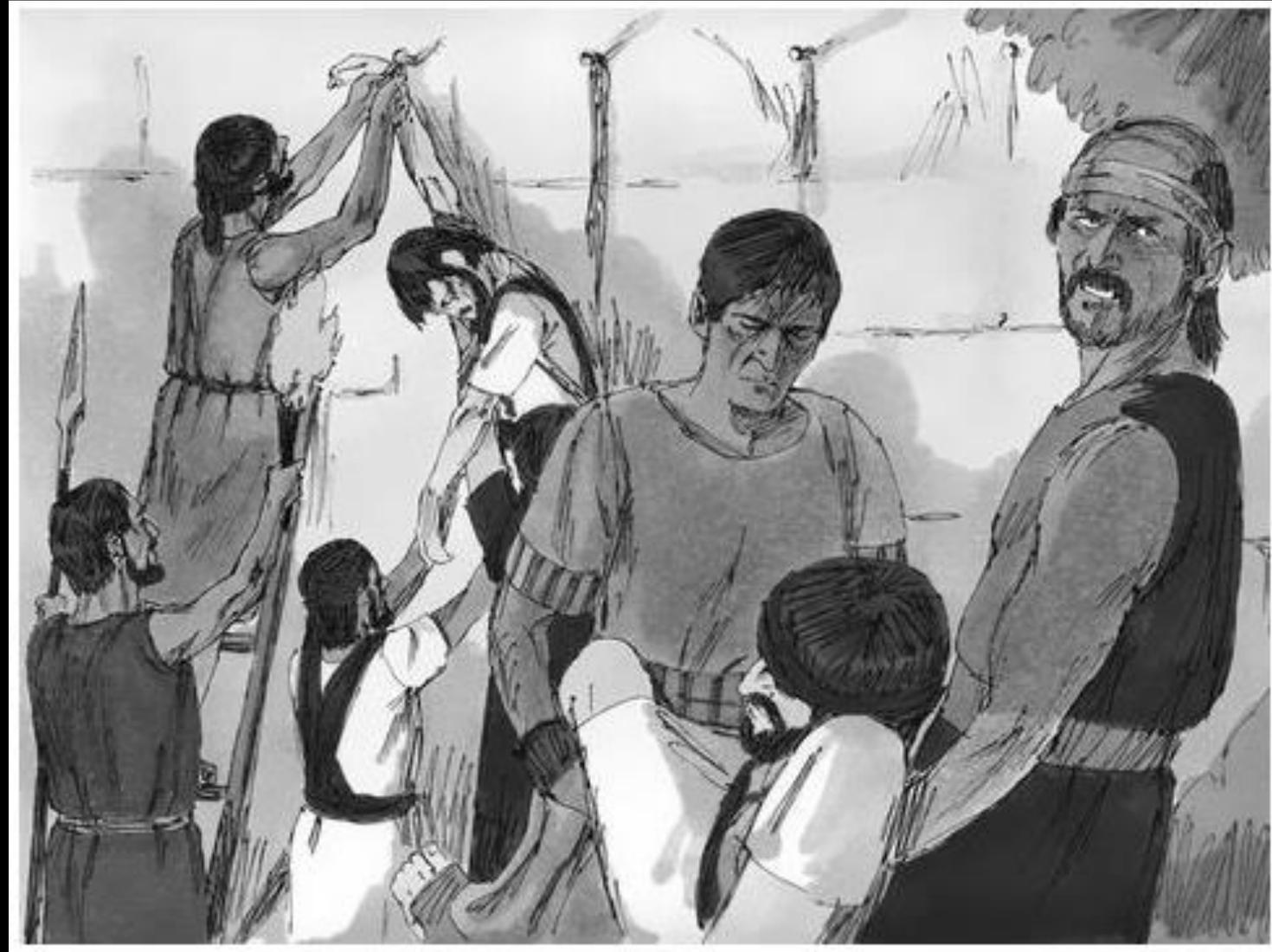


**This locomotive is hauling many cars,
the cars represent many memories,
events and choices that have created the
men they are now.**

Meanwhile, the conductor of the train
(presumably their collective psyche)
has been shoveling the coal of rejection,
pain and anger into the engine of that
train for some time.

**They did not decide overnight
to kill Joseph and
then throw him in a cistern.**

Last week we
summarized a few of
these painful events...



However, there are three events which played the biggest role in the progression of the person these men have become...

These three life shaping events directly influenced the course of time and the selling of Joseph into slavery...

Jacob looked up and there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men; so he divided the children among Leah, Rachel and the two female servants. He put the female servants and their children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear.

Genesis 33:1-2

First, when Esau had finally caught up with Jacob, in an apparent attempt to seek revenge... Jacob *positions* the entire family in front, in order to *protect* himself, Rachel & Joseph.

As a result,

Leah, the other wives and brothers get the clear message that Jacob does not value them nearly as much as Rachel & Joseph.

They are utterly expendable to him.

Now Dinah, the daughter Leah had born to Jacob,
went out to visit the women of the land.

When Shechem son of Hamor saw her,
he took her and raped her.

When Jacob heard that his daughter
Dinah had been defiled...he did nothing about it..

Genesis 34:1-2, 5

Meanwhile, Jacob's sons had come in from the fields as soon as they heard what had happened.

They were shocked and furious...

Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me..." But they replied, "Should he have treated our sister like a prostitute?"

Genesis 34:7, 30-31

Second, after their sister is raped, Jacob does nothing and even agrees to give her in marriage. When the brothers avenge her abuse, Jacob scolds them for the target they placed on his back.

As a result,

Dinah and the brothers get the clear message that they must take family matters into their own hands... as Jacob will not *defend* them when they are in trouble... nor *discipline* them when they cause trouble

Israel said to Joseph, “As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them...Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks, and bring word back to me.”...and he brought their father a bad report about them.

Genesis 37:2, 12-14

Third, the 10 brothers have been assigned the task of *providing* for the family while Joseph mainly remains at home.

To make matters worse,
Jacob *places* young Joseph in a
supervisory role as foreman over them.

As a result,

The brothers *despise* Joseph all the more
and he becomes a constant reminder to
them that their mother is not loved,
they are not loved and that they are not
the heir apparent...

As you can see,

The singular decision to sell Joseph will be the product of decades of unchecked jealousy, anger, bitterness & resentment... on the part of both the brothers and Jacob!

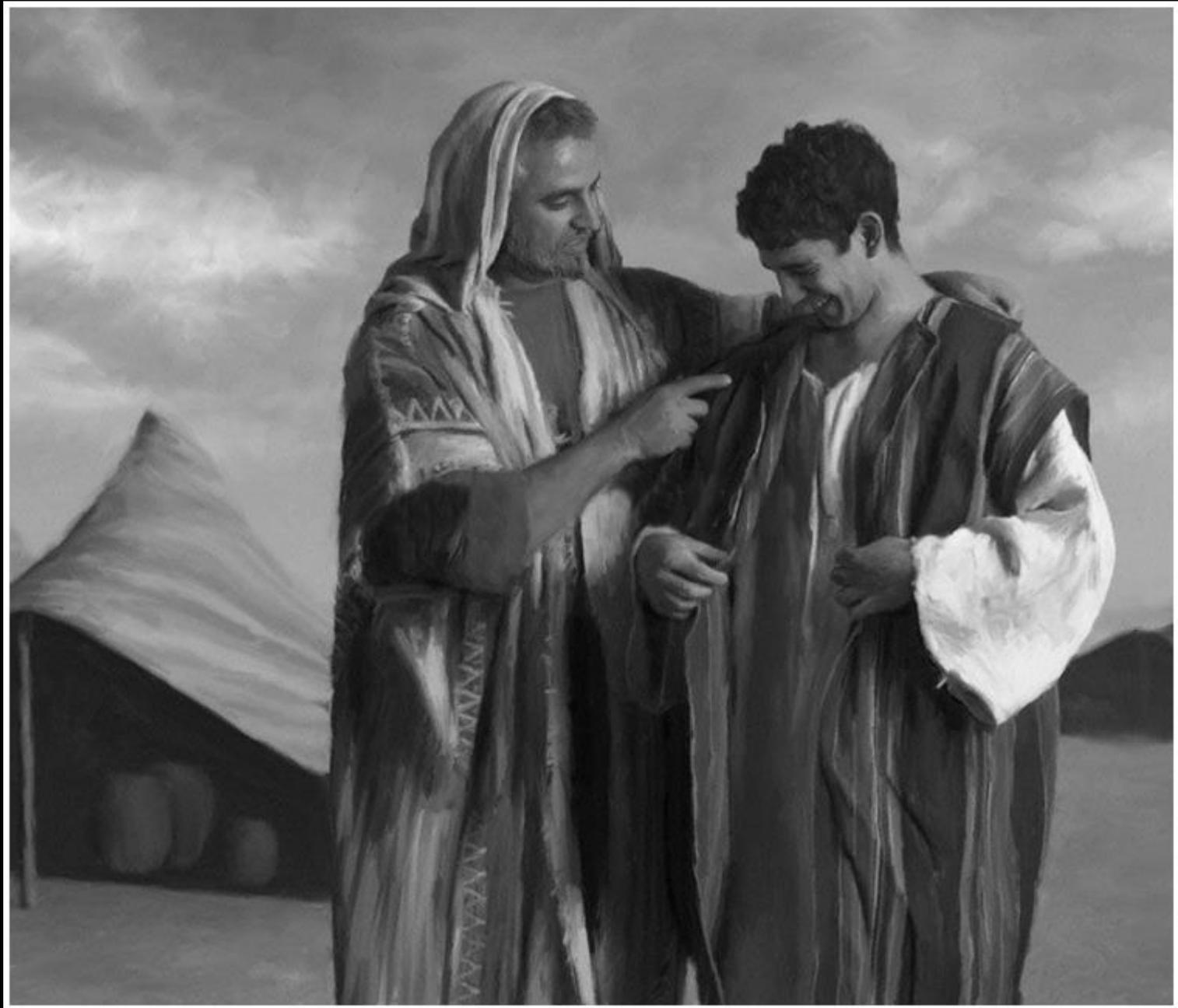
Part 3

Joseph:

A Projection of their Problems

As all of this jealousy, anger,
bitterness & resentment is festering...

**Jacob decides
to make Joseph
an ornate robe.**



**There is far more going on in this act
than what is commonly communicated
in a classic Sunday school lessons.**

**All of Jacob's past pain & disappointment
and all future hope & expectations are
represented in the robe.**

For Jacob: The robe *symbolizes*
the height of his joy, the pride of his life,
the one thing he got right and the only
thing which truly makes him happy...
and he places it on Joseph.

By contrast...

**All of the 10 brother's past pain,
disappointment and rejection
are represented in the robe...**

For the Brothers: The robe *signifies* the height of their pain & their father's rejection... They are not loved, they are workers not future heirs.

Now Israel loved Joseph more than
any of his other sons...and he made
an ornate robe for him.

Genesis 37:3

**Some versions translate the word ornate
as 'varicolored' or 'colorful'**

Some versions translate the word ornate as
‘long-sleeved’
‘a tunic reaching the end
of the hand or foot’

The word itself in Hebrew means:

flat (of the hand or foot)

Putting it all together, this was an ornate tunic, of a variety of colors with long sleeves reaching the hand and a long base reaching the ankles.

The significance of the robe was threefold...

First, it symbolized that Joseph was
in 1st *place* in the heart of Jacob.

Second, it symbolized that Joseph was being *prepared* to be the heir of the family.

Third, it symbolized that Joseph was being put in a supervisory *position* over the work of the brothers.

Oddly enough, this was not the position
that God had in mind for Joseph.

Long-sleeves, long-length robes were a specific symbol of status...that is, you cannot work in the fields with sleeves to your wrists or a robe to your ankles.

Joseph was being told by his father that he would not have to worry about working hard during his life.

He would not only be the heir of great material wealth, but he would also be in a managerial role overseeing the work being done by his brothers. Which is the role he assumes upon receiving the robe.

This creates a pivotal *problem* within the character of Joseph, beyond pride...

At this point, Joseph is not a worker and does not know how to work hard.

If Joseph is meant to save the world from the coming years of famine, he will need to work very, very hard...not only during the 7 years of plenty, but also the 7 years of famine.

Through the upcoming events,
God will begin to **prepare** Joseph for the role
of Prime Minister of Egypt and the role of
overseeing the major country-wide projects.

In conclusion...

**The stage for a
serious sinful act has been set.**

By Jacob's painful past, favoritism,
resentment and the giving of this robe...
dry logs have been heaved into a large pile.

By the brother's pain of rejection, their lack of love received and the giving of this robe... gasoline has been poured all over the logs.

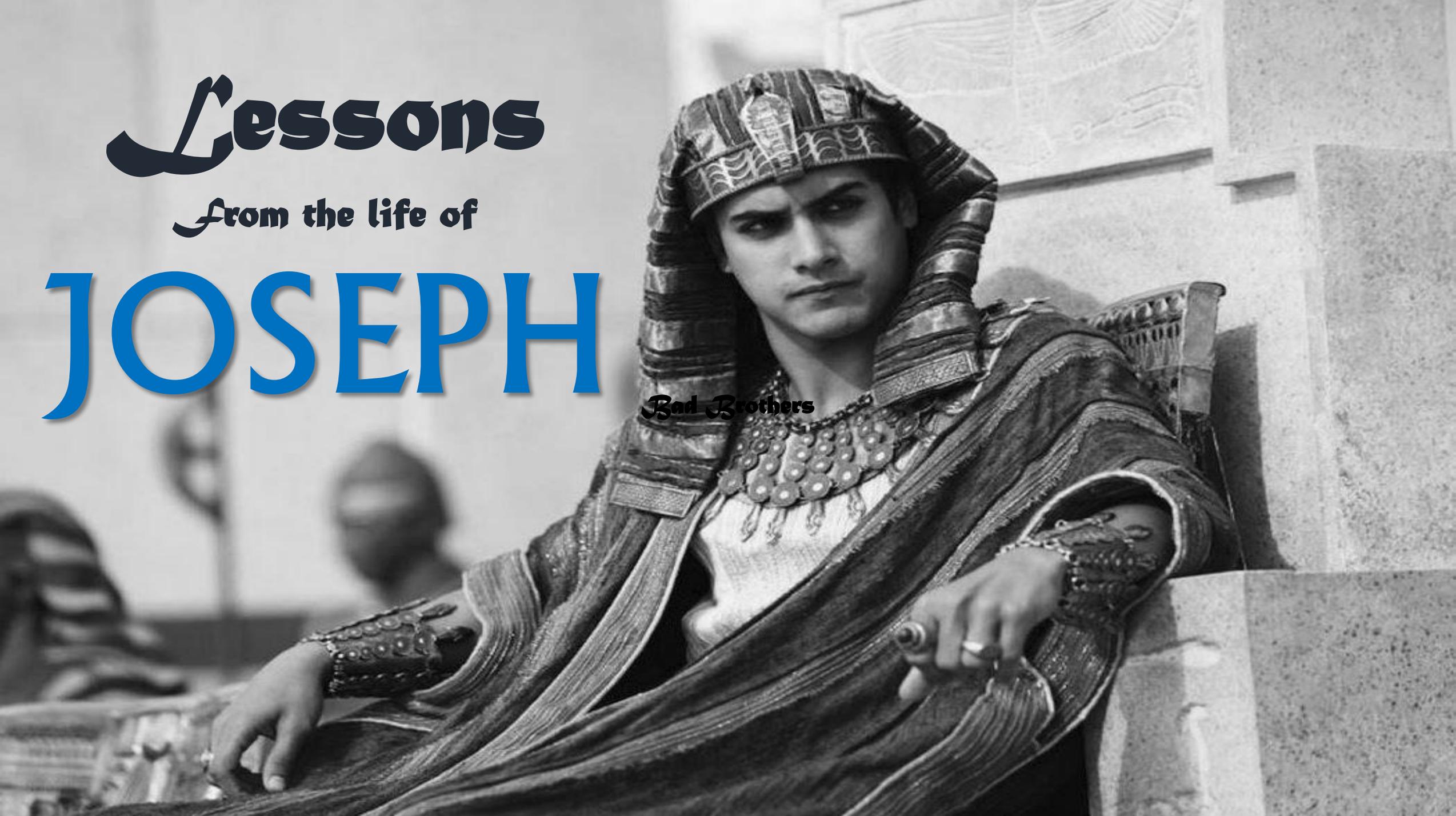
**Next week we will see that the two dreams
that Joseph has & the telling of them...
lights the match that is tossed
onto the pile of wood.**

Lessons

From the life of

JOSEPH

Bad Brothers



Lesson 1

We must be very mindful of the *power* that our heredity, our upbringing and our family history & past experiences have over us.

Lesson 2

Those of us who are fathers, must realize the importance of fatherhood...The importance of valuing, ***protecting*** and disciplining as well as the detriment of being passive and absent.

Lesson 3

We must realize that as parents, we have a major influence on the course of action that our children eventually take. Yes, they make their choices, but those are heavily influenced by us.

Lesson 4

We must realize that unchecked inner emotions such as bitterness, anger, resentment etc. will come to the *surface* in the form of outward action at some point.

Lesson 5

Our past, our family history, our painful experiences & our expectations combined with the powerful emotions of anger, jealousy & lust etc. can & will set a dangerous stage where serious sin can occur.

Lesson 5

We must be ever aware of the many
'forces' which are influencing our lives...
and we must find ways to rise above the fray
and break the cycles of sin in our life...
as Joseph will.

Chapter Three

Dreams & Jealousy