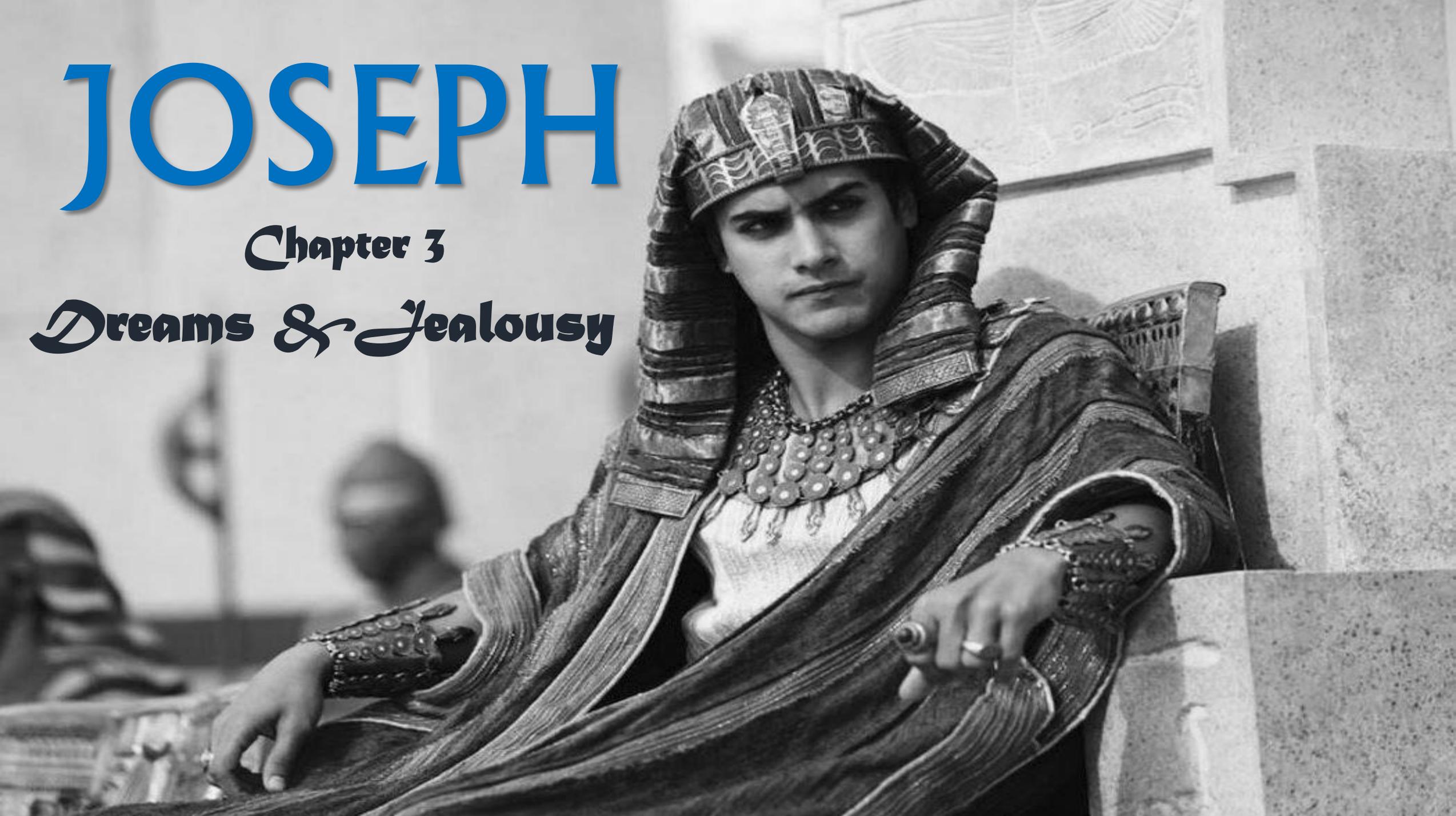


# JOSEPH

Chapter 3

*Dreams & Jealousy*



# Chapter Three

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## Dreams & Jealousy

**This chapter will center on  
the 3 aspects of the spiritual fight  
over the future position of Joseph.**

**Last week we said that the giving of a special robe symbolized that Joseph was in 1<sup>st</sup> place in the heart of Jacob.**

**However, that fact is already well known  
by everyone in the family and the robe  
signified two other very important things...**

First, the robe symbolized that Joseph was being **primed** to be the heir of the family and therefore being **prepared** to inherit the lion's share of the wealth.

Second, the robe symbolized that Joseph was being *placed* in a supervisory *position* over the work of the brothers.

**We will look at these two important facets of the robe in succession...**

# Part 1

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The Robe:

The Prize of Material

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

Genesis 37:3

When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

Genesis 37:4

By giving the robe to Joseph,  
Jacob was anointing him for the prize of  
the majority share of the family wealth.

Not only was Joseph the favorite son,  
but also the eldest of his only beloved wife:

**Therefore, Jacob saw Joseph as his heir.**

The robe represented the ever so  
coveted status of being the prize holder  
of the future family wealth.

**In essence, Joseph would take possession  
of all that every other brother wanted  
to take possession of.**

However, this was not the prized possession that God had in mind for Joseph...but rather Judah.

Through the coming events,  
God will begin to **prepare** Joseph & Judah  
for the prize that he has for them each to  
take possession of...as we will see, neither  
are ready for such things at the moment.

In many ways, the prized possession  
of the family wealth was much too small  
of a dream for **Joseph's** future...  
**as God would have him inherit  
all the wealth of Egypt.**

In many ways, the prized possession  
of the family heir was much too small of  
a dream for **Judah's** future...

**as God would have him inherit the spiritual  
lineage of the coming deliverer.**

**Not only did the robe represent the prize  
of the future family material wealth...  
but also a specific position.**

# Part 2

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The Role:

The Position of Man

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

By giving the robe to Joseph,  
Jacob was anointing him for the  
**position** of overseer or administrator  
of the family business.

The robe represented the ever so coveted status of being the *boss* of the family enterprise...which is the role Joseph assumes in the narrative.

In essence, Joseph had taken the position  
that every other *brother* wanted  
be positioned in.

However, this was not the position  
that God had in mind for Joseph  
or the brothers.

Through the coming events,  
God will begin to reveal to Joseph & the  
brothers the position that he has for them...  
which neither are ready for such a position  
at the moment.

In many ways, the position of overseer of the family business was much too small of a dream for Joseph's future...  
**as God would have him oversee all the power of Egypt.**

In many ways, the position of overseer of the family business was much too small of a dream for the brother's future...

**as God would have them inherit the spiritual leadership of the nation of Israel.**

**This position creates/reveals another  
character flaw/need in Joseph...**

Joseph is ready to *lead*,  
but has never been *led*.

**Before Joseph can lead those under him,  
he must learn to submit to leadership over  
him. He will soon learn to honor Potiphar &  
Pharaoh's position over him.**

**This position illustrates  
a repetitive biblical truth...which will  
become more apparent next week:**

Before someone can be *raised* up  
into a high position of great *responsibility*,  
they must often be brought down  
into a low position of great humility.

# Part 3

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The Dreams:  
The Providence of God

Joseph had a dream...

Genesis 37:5

**We will read the entire narrative of  
both dream sequences and then make  
all of our observations at once.**

Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his  
brothers, they hated him all the more.  
He said to them, “Listen to this dream I had.”

**Genesis 37:5-6**

**“We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it.”**

**Genesis 37:7**

His brothers said to him,  
“Do you intend to reign over us?  
Will you actually rule us?”  
And they hated him all the more  
because of his dream and what he had said.

**Genesis 37:8**

Then he had another dream,  
and he told it to his brothers.

“Listen,” he said, “I had another dream,  
and this time the sun and moon and eleven  
stars were bowing down to me.”

Genesis 37:9

When he told his father as well as his brothers,  
his father rebuked him and said,  
“What is this dream you had? Will your mother  
and I and your brothers actually come and bow  
down to the ground before you?”

**Genesis 37:10**

**There are 6 dreams  
within the Joseph narrative,  
given in 3 pairs.**

**We receive interpretations of the latter two pairs. However, we are never given an explanation to the pair of dreams which Joseph has.**

**A direct explanation is not needed,  
as the entire story acts as a detailed  
interpretation of the dreams...**

**This allows us to make many observations.**

By giving the dreams to Joseph,  
God was anointing him for the  
incredible future prize & future position  
that lie ahead of him in Egypt.

**These dreams were strange  
for several reasons...**

**All that is apparent on the surface is that Joseph (11<sup>th</sup> youngest) sees a vision where he is raised up into some high position or high status and his brothers bow in reverence before him.**

**The brothers were shepherds of flock  
and not field farmers...  
therefore the elements  
of sheaves of wheat are 'out of place'.**

Joseph was not known to work  
in the fields alongside the brothers,  
but he is working with them in the fields,  
binding wheat along with them.

When it is said that Joseph told the dreams  
to **'his brothers'** and it is said twice that  
**'they hated him all the more'...**

**...it should be taken to mean that  
the dreams were told to the  
10 older brothers...excluding Benjamin.**

The specific number of brothers/sheaves is not mentioned in the first dream.

The assumption would be that it is the (10) older brothers who worked in the fields...excluding Benjamin again.

The number of brothers/stars  
is mentioned in the second dream (11).

**This is important because  
I believe the two separate dreams  
represent the two separate trips which  
the brothers took to Egypt...  
and the significance of each trip.**

Joseph's  
first dream  
is about  
earthly matters:  
food, wheat,  
sustenance.



Joseph's  
second dream,  
is about  
spiritual matters:  
redemption,  
restoration,  
forgiveness.



On the first trip  
(represented by the 1<sup>st</sup> dream)  
only the 10 older brothers are present  
and they bow to Joseph for the  
physical provision of wheat/grain  
(represented by sheaves of grain bowing).

On the second trip  
(represented by the 2<sup>nd</sup> dream)  
all 11 brothers are present  
and they bow to Joseph for the  
spiritual restoration of the family and  
therefore becoming the stars/tribes of Israel  
(represented by 11 stars bowing).

The brothers scold Joseph upon hearing the first dream & offer their interpretation of the dream, taking it to mean that Joseph intends to reign & rule over them.

One problem with this interpretation is that the dreams are God's intentions and not Joseph's. Furthermore, Joseph never reigns or rules over the brothers. He rules/reigns over Egypt and the people there.

Jacob scolds Joseph upon hearing the second dream & offers his interpretation of the dream, taking it to mean that the sun & moon bowing down, are Jacob & Rachel.

One problem with this interpretation is that Rachel is already dead and therefore cannot physically bow, and these dreams are fulfilled by literal, physical bowing. Jacob also never bows before Joseph.

I personally believe that the sun & moon  
which bow are symbolic of either...

**Pharaoh** and the **People of Egypt** or  
**Egypt (Sun)** and the **Middle East (Moon)** or  
**Ephraim** and **Manasseh**  
who become joint tribes of Israel.

**More on this in future sessions.**

Remember we said that up until this point in history, only 4 divine dreams have been recorded...2 of which were given to Jacob.

**After his 1<sup>st</sup> dream, with a stairway to heaven, Jacob is blown away and worships the Lord in addition to making a monument unto the Lord. (Gen 28:10-22)**

**After his 2<sup>nd</sup> dream, with instructions to return to Canaan, Jacob openly discusses the dream with his two wives and packs up.**

**(Gen 31:4-13)**

It is troubling that when Jacob's son has two dreams, he not only does not inquire of the Lord...he is unimpressed and even scolds Joseph.

**It is doubly troubling that in the future,  
a godless Pharaoh will earnestly seek  
and respond to a divine interpretation.**

**Both Jacob & the brothers interpret  
the dreams individually:**

**They make their own attempt,  
apart from any divine guidance.**

**Both Jacob & the brothers interpret  
the dreams negatively:**

**They assume the worst,  
and imagine only an unfavorable outcome.**

Both Jacob & the brothers interpret  
the dreams incorrectly:

There are errors in their interpretations.

Jacob and the brothers interpreted the dream out of the worldview of their *past* pain, disappointments and cynicisms and they *project* that onto God's intentions.

**Ironically, Joseph will be the  
dream-interpreter and God has a very  
positive, live saving & favorable  
intention for the dreams.**

Joseph will correctly interpret the meaning of the other two pairs of dreams in the narrative. This presents a major question...

**Did Joseph know (some of)  
the meaning of his own dreams?**

**It could be reasonably argued...**

That during the caravan trip into Egypt the Lord revealed a portion of the meaning of his dreams...namely that God has a plan for him, a hope & a future.

**It could be reasonably argued...**

That this was the basis for Joseph's change in character upon arrival at Potiphar's house; his positive attitude & work ethic and the basis of his walk with God during that time.

**It could be reasonably argued...**

That the only reason Joseph offered to interpret the baker and cupbearers dreams... is because God had given him interpretations regarding his own dreams...what other experience would possibly give Joseph the notion that he could interpret their dreams?

Something worth noting,  
is that there is no suggestion of hardship,  
mistreatment or slavery within either dream.

**God knows what we need to know or  
don't need to know & when we need to know it.**

For Joseph, these dreams must have felt like a divine *confirmation* of the position that his father had placed him in.

**These dreams must have felt like a divine reaffirmation of the intentions of the robe.**

He likely failed to realize  
how futuristic they were.

I believe this is how the jealousy  
(and pride) was amplified.  
Joseph may have believed that he was  
living out his dreams currently.

**Last week, we said that...**

**The robe created or revealed a potential problem in the character of Joseph, that is; He was not yet a hard worker.**

**Last week, we said that...**

**This problem would need to be fixed if Joseph was to become the incredible laborer needed to oversee 14 years of world-wide food preservation.**

**Now, these dreams will reveal another  
character need/ flaw...**

**Before telling his brothers the first dream,  
the text says that his brothers  
'couldn't speak a kind word to Joseph'...**

Upon telling his brothers the first dream,  
the text says twice that the  
telling of the dream made them  
'hate Joseph all the more...'

**Yet, he persists and tells them the  
second dream still, sometime later.**

**What is this character flaw?**

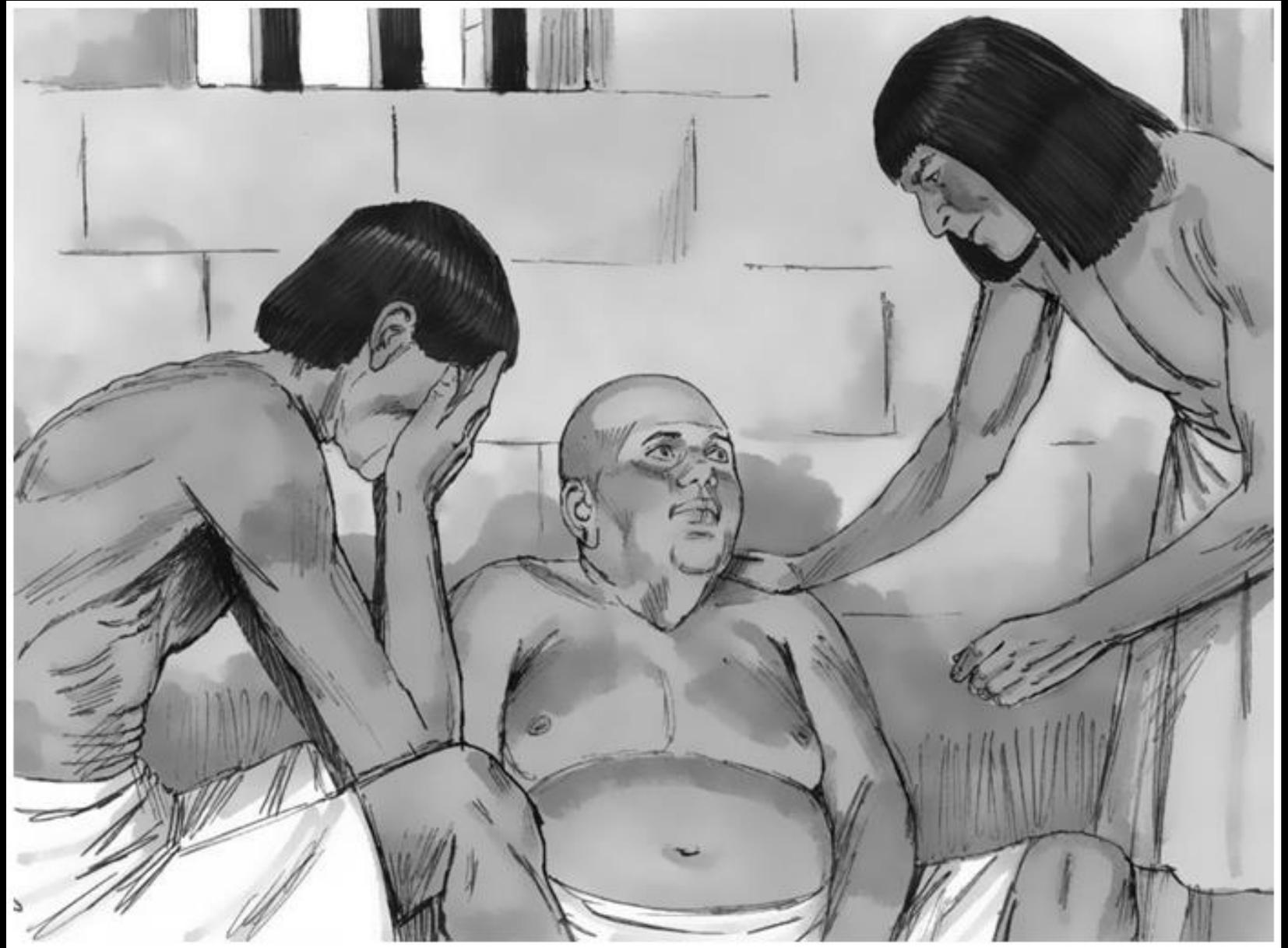
An *insensitivity* and  
a lack of awareness of other's pain  
coupled with some measure of pride which  
overlooks the disappointments of others.

**This problem would need to be fixed if Joseph was to notice that the baker and cup bearer were downcast and ask them the reason thereof.**

Joseph didn't  
take notice of  
his brothers  
troubled  
reaction to his  
own dream...



...but he will notice the troubled reaction of Pharaoh's servants to their own dreams.



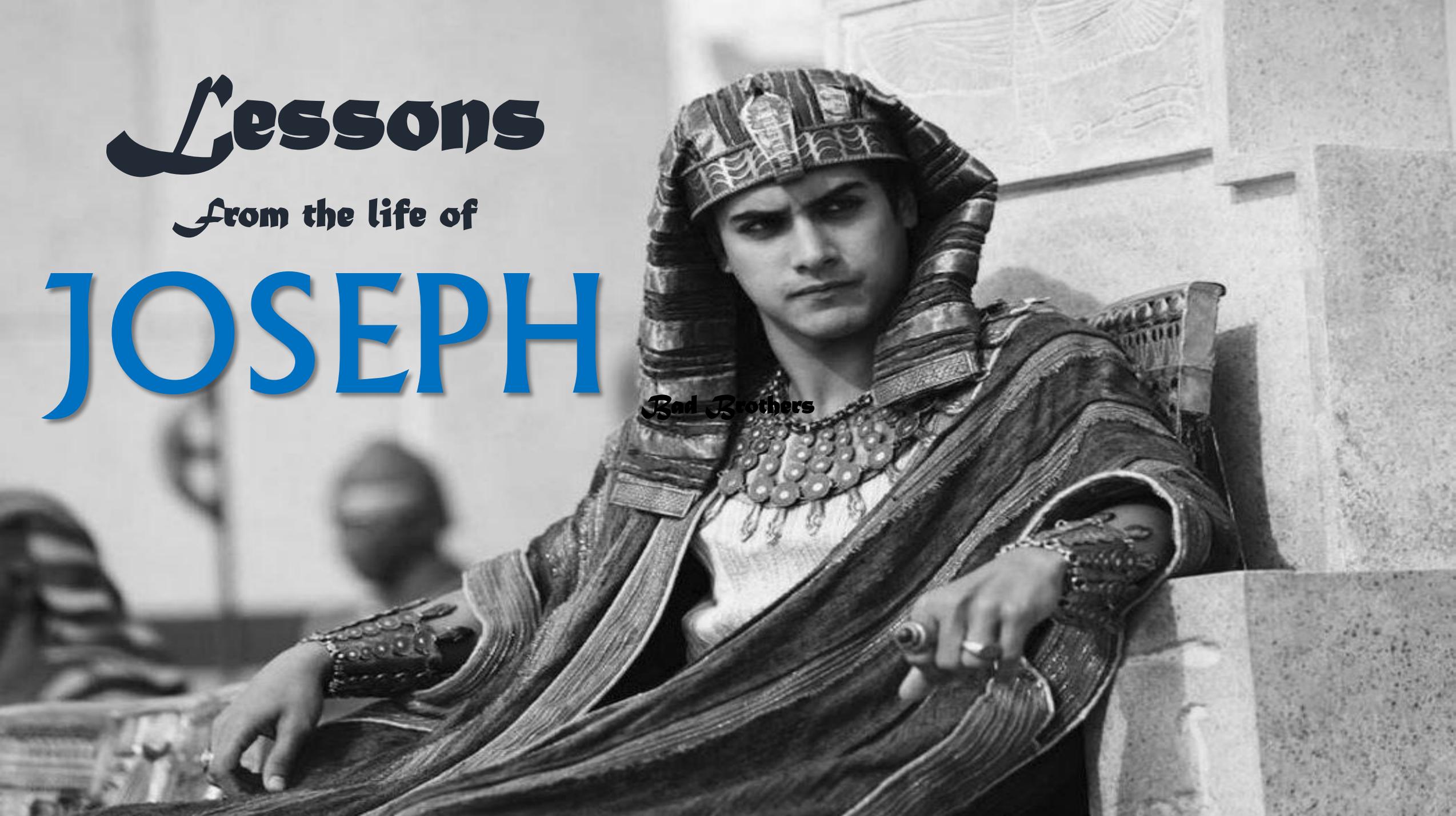
**This problem would need to be fixed  
if Joseph was to care for the hurting people  
of Egypt amid the famine.**

**Lessons**

*From the life of*

**JOSEPH**

*Bad Brothers*



# Lesson 1

Be careful of the coats we wear.

We should not be defined by our status, our salary, our retirement plans, our family, our position...we should find our *identity* in the coat God has placed on us.

# Lesson 2

Be careful of the positions & the prizes we seek. What the world seeks and says is rewarding, likely will not satisfy.

# Lesson 2

Joseph was actively living out the position which the robe represented, but that was not the role God intended for him.

# Lesson 2

**What role might you be pursuing or living out, which may not be what God intends for you right now?**

# Lesson 3

Be mindful of how earthy prizes and positions can be in direct *conflict* with God's plan for us.

# Lesson 4

Beware of failing to *recognize* when God is trying to say something... or like Jacob, treating the 'Word of God' as mundane.

# Lesson 5

Beware of a tendency to make up our own interpretations of God's Word... or interpreting God's Word out of past experiences & through our own worldview.

# Lesson 6

Beware of viewing the providence of God as harmful or negative. Beware of when past pain makes you so *cynical*, that you lack the faith to believe that God is up to something good.

# Lesson 7

Understand that there is a major difference in 'the will of God' and 'the timing of the will of God'.

# Lesson 7

God's will was that Joseph would be raised up...but not for 13 years; (after Potiphar & prison).

# Lesson 8

God may have a special position of ministry or leadership for you. However, he likely has a specific set of skills & spiritual disciplines in mind, which you will need in order to function well in that role.

# Lesson 9

God may place challenges in your path in order to prepare you for this special task.

These challenges are not meant to discourage you, they are to develop you!

# Lesson 10

Beware of the jealousy & hatred that can occur when God has a *special* position or role for *someone* else...and not you.

# Chapter Four

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Sold into Slavery