

Come Follow Me March 7-13

Genesis 37-41

“The Lord Was With Joseph”

As you read [Genesis 37-41](#), pray that the Holy Ghost will help you see how the scriptural passages relate to your life. Record any insights you receive.

Record Your Impressions

Sometimes bad things happen to good people. Life teaches us that lesson clearly, and so does the life of Joseph, the son of Jacob. He was heir to the covenant God had made with his fathers, but he was hated by his brothers and sold into slavery. He refused to compromise his integrity when approached by Potiphar’s wife and so was cast into prison. It seemed that the more faithful he was, the more hardship he faced. But all this adversity was not a sign of God’s disapproval. In fact, through it all, “the Lord was with him” ([Genesis 39:3](#)). Joseph’s life was a manifestation of this important truth: God will not forsake us. “Following the Savior will not remove all of your trials,” President Dieter F. Uchtdorf taught. “However, it will remove the barriers between you and the help your Heavenly Father wants to give you. God will be with you” (“[A Yearning for Home](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 22).

(8-1) Introduction

“The story of Joseph, the son of Jacob who was called Israel, is a vivid representation of the great truth that ‘all things work together for good to [those] who loved God.’ (See [Rom. 8:28](#).) Joseph always seemed to do the right thing; but still, more importantly, he did it for the right reason. And how very, very significant that is! Joseph was sold by his own brothers as a slave and was purchased by Potiphar, a captain of the guard of

Pharaoh. But even as an indentured servant, Joseph turned every experience and all circumstances, no matter how trying, into something good.

“This ability to turn everything into something good appears to be a godly characteristic. Our Heavenly Father always seems able to do this. Everything, no matter how dire, becomes a victory to the Lord. Joseph, although a slave and wholly undeserving of this fate, nevertheless remained faithful to the Lord and continued to live the commandments and made something very good of his degrading circumstances. People like this cannot be defeated, because they will not give up. They have the correct, positive attitude, and Dale Carnegie’s expression seems to apply: If you feel you have a lemon, you can either complain about how sour it is, or you can make a lemonade. It is all up to you.” (Hartman Rector, Jr., “Live above the Law to Be Free,” Ensign, Jan. 1973, p. 130.)

GENESIS CHAPTER 37

Jacob loves and favors Joseph, who is hated by his brothers—Joseph dreams that his parents and brothers make obeisance to him—His brothers sell him into Egypt.

1 And Jacob dwelt in the land ^awherein his father was a ^bstranger, in the land of Canaan.

2 These *are* the ^agenerations of Jacob. ^bJoseph, being seventeen years old, 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.

3 Now Israel loved ^aJoseph more than all his children, because he *was* the son of his old age: and he made him a ^bcoat of ^cmany colours.

(8-2) Genesis 37:3. What Was the Coat of Many Colors?

There is some question as to what Joseph’s coat actually was. The Hebrew word denotes “a long coat with sleeves ... i.e. an upper coat reaching to the wrists and ankles, such as noblemen and kings’ daughters wore” (Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary, 1:1:335; note also 2 Samuel 13:18, which says that the daughters of King David wore similar coats). The coat may have been of different colors, but its significance seems to have been far more than its brightness and beauty. One noted scholar suggested that it was “a tunic reaching to the palms of the hands and soles of the feet; the long tunic with sleeves worn by young men and maidens of the better class; in the case of Joseph, supposed by Bush ... to have been the badge of the birthright which has been forfeited by Reuben and transferred to Joseph” (Wilson, Old Testament Word Studies, s.v. “colour,” p. 82).

If indeed this coat signaled that Joseph held the birthright, which may have been in question among the brothers because there were four firstborn sons in Jacob’s family, this fact would explain the intense hostility and jealousy the coat provoked among the

other sons of Jacob. The following brothers could easily have thought that they should have had the birthright.

Reuben. He was the firstborn of all the sons. Although he had lost the right (see [Reading 7-28](#)), he may not have accepted that fact.

Simeon. Since he was the second son of Leah and next in line following Reuben, he could have assumed the birthright would come to him after Reuben lost his right to it.

Judah. He could have argued that not only Reuben had lost the right, but so had Simeon and Levi, through the massacre of the Shechemites (see [Genesis 34](#)). The disqualification of these sons would make him the rightful legal heir.

Dan. Because his mother, Bilhah, was considered Rachel's property, he could argue that he was Rachel's firstborn, not Joseph, and therefore should have received the birthright when Reuben lost it.

Gad. He was the firstborn son of Zilpah and therefore could easily have thought he should have taken the birthright after Reuben forfeited it.

Joseph's dreams (see [Genesis 37:5–11](#)), which clearly signified future leadership, only added to the resentment among the brothers.

4 And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

5 ¶ And Joseph dreamed a “dream, and he told *it* his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:

7 For, behold, we *were* binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made “obeisance to my sheaf.

8 And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

9 ¶ And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.

10 And he told *it* to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What *is* this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to “bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

11 And his brethren “envied him; but his father observed the saying.

12 ¶ And his brethren went to feed their father's “flock in Shechem.

13 And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed *the flock* in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here *am I*.

14 And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

15 ¶ And a certain man found him, and, behold, *he was* wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou?

16 And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed *their flocks*.

17 And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

18 And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.

19 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.

20 Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

21 And Reuben heard *it*, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.

22 And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, *but* cast him into this pit that *is* in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

23 ¶ And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, *his coat of many colours that was on him*;

24 And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit *was empty, there was no water* in it.

25 And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry *it* down to Egypt.

26 And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit *is it* if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?

27 Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he *is* our brother *and* our flesh. And his brethren were content.

28 Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty *pieces* of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

(8-3) Genesis 37:28

The price received for Joseph, twenty pieces of silver, is the same price specified later in the Mosaic law for a slave between the ages of five and twenty (see Leviticus 27:5).

Typically, the price for a slave was thirty pieces of silver (see Exodus 21:32).

29 ¶ And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph *was* not in the pit; and he rent his clothes.

30 And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child *is* not; and I, whither shall I go?

31 And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood;

32 And they sent the coat of *many* colours, and they brought *it* to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it *be* thy son's coat or no.

(8-4) Genesis 37:32

Mormon recorded in the Book of Mormon that when Jacob saw that a remnant of the "coat of many colours" (v. 32) had been preserved, he prophesied that so also would a remnant of Joseph's seed be preserved (see Alma 46:24).

33 And he knew it, and said, *It is* my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.

34 And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.

35 And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.

36 And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard.

(8-5) Genesis 37:36. What Was Potiphar's Position?

The Hebrew phrase which is translated as "captain of the guards" literally means "chief of the butchers or slaughterers." From this meaning some scholars have thought that he was the chief cook or steward in the house of the pharaoh, but other scholars believe that *butcher* or *slaughterer* is used in the sense of *executioner*, and thus Potiphar was the "commanding officer of the royal body-guard, who executed the capital sentences ordered by the king" (Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary, 1:1:338). Either way, Potiphar was an important man, but the latter position especially would give him great power and status in Egypt.

GENESIS CHAPTER 38

Judah has three sons by a Canaanite woman—Er and Onan are slain by the Lord—Tamar, disguised as a harlot, bears twins by Judah.

(8-6) Genesis 38:1–30. Judah and Tamar

With typical honesty, the Old Testament includes the sordid tale of Judah's incestuous relationship with his daughter-in-law. There seem to be several reasons for its inclusion

here. First, once again are illustrated the effects of the covenant people forgetting the importance of marrying in the covenant. Unlike his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather (Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham), Judah was not concerned about intermarriage with the Canaanites. The negative results of this marriage out of the covenant are clearly shown here. Second, the story shows the lineage of Judah from which the Messiah would eventually come (see [Matthew 1:3](#); [Luke 3:33](#)). An additional lesson here shows that ancestry is not the determiner of one's righteousness. Finally, the truth that failure to honor one's commitments often leads to greater trouble is clearly shown. Had Judah faithfully kept his promise to Tamar, the seduction would never have taken place. Likewise, had Judah been faithful to the laws of morality, he never would have sinned with Tamar.

1 And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name *was* Hirah.

2 And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name *was* Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her.

3 And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name Er.

4 And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name Onan.

5 And she yet again conceived, and bare a son; and called his name Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when she bare him.

6 And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name *was* Tamar.

7 And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him.

8 And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother.

9 And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled *it* on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother.

10 And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also.

11 Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter in law, Remain a widow at thy father's house, till Shelah my son be grown: for he said, Lest peradventure he die also, as his brethren *did*. And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

(8-7) [Genesis 38:5–11](#). Why Was Tamar to Marry the Brothers of Her Husband?

Ancient customs of the Middle East provided that a brother of a deceased man should marry his widow. Under Moses this custom became law (see [Deuteronomy 25:5–10](#)).

The purpose of such a marriage was to produce a male heir for the dead man and thus perpetuate his name and memory. It was regarded as a great calamity to die without a son, for then the man's lineage did not continue and also the man's property reverted to someone else's family (through daughters, if he had any, or through other relatives). It may be that Onan, who by virtue of the death of his older brother would have been next

in line for the inheritance of Judah, refused to raise up seed through Tamar because the inheritance would have stayed with the elder son's family. He went through the outward show of taking Tamar to wife but refused to let her have children. Thus when Judah failed to keep his promise to send the youngest son to her, Tamar resorted to deception in order to bear children.

12 ¶ And in process of time the daughter of Shuah Judah's wife died; and Judah was comforted, and went up unto his sheepshearers to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.

13 And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold thy father in law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep.

14 And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which *is* by the way to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife.

15 When Judah saw her, he thought her *to be* an harlot; because she had covered her face.

16 And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee; (for he knew not that she *was* his daughter in law.) And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me?

17 And he said, I will send *thee* a kid from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give *me* a pledge, till thou send *it*?

18 And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that *is* in thine hand. And he gave *it* her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him.

19 And she arose, and went away, and laid by her veil from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.

20 And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive *his* pledge from the woman's hand: but he found her not.

21 Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where *is* the harlot, that *was* openly by the way side? And they said, There was no harlot in this *place*.

22 And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said, *that* there was no harlot in this *place*.

23 And Judah said, Let her take *it* to her, lest we be shamed: behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her.

24 ¶ And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she *is* with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.

(8-8) Genesis 38:24

It is important to note Judah's twisted sense of values. He had no qualms about sending Tamar home with unfulfilled promises nor of picking up a harlot along the road. But when he heard that Tamar was pregnant he was so incensed that he ordered her put to death.

25 When she *was* brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, By the man, whose these *are, am* I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose *are* these, the "signet, and bracelets, and staff.

26 And Judah acknowledged *them*, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more.

27 ¶ And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins *were* in her womb.

28 And it came to pass, when she travailed, that *the one* put out *his* hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first.

29 And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, How hast thou broken forth? *this* breach *be* upon thee: therefore his name was called "Pharez.

30 And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name was called "Zarah.

GENESIS CHAPTER 39

Joseph, prospered by the Lord, becomes ruler of Potiphar's house — He resists the advances of Potiphar's wife, is falsely accused, and is cast into prison — The keeper of the prison commits the prison's affairs into Joseph's hands.

1 And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and "Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the ^bIshmeelites, which had brought him down thither.

2 And the ^aLORD was with ^bJoseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

3 And his master saw that the LORD *was* with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to "prosper in his hand.

4 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.

5 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.

6 And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a "goodly person, and well ^bfavoured.

7 ¶ And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her "eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.

8 But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what *is* with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand;
9 *There is* none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou *art* his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

(8-9) Genesis 39:9. What Were Joseph's Reasons for Refusing Potiphar's Wife?

Joseph's answer to the advances of Potiphar's wife shows his great personal righteousness. King Benjamin taught the Nephites that "when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiah 2:17). If that principle were to be stated negatively, it would read, "When ye are exploiting or sinning against your fellow beings, you are only sinning against God." Joseph understood this principle perfectly and answered Potiphar's wife by pointing out that it would be a terrible thing to take advantage of his master in this way. He took the next logical step when he added, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9).

10 And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, *or* to be with her.

11 And it came to pass about this time, that *Joseph* went into the house to do his business; and *there was* none of the men of the house there within.

12 And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.

13 And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth,

14 That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice:

15 And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out.

16 And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home.

17 And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me:

18 And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out.

19 And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled.

20 And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners *were* bound: and he was there in the prison.

(8-10) Genesis 39:20

Because Potiphar had great power with the pharaoh and perhaps was even head of the royal executioners (see Reading 8-5), it is remarkable that Joseph was only put into prison and not executed. A slave accused of attempting to rape his master's wife would seem to have deserved the most severe punishment, and yet Joseph was only imprisoned. Could it be that Potiphar, knowing of Joseph's character and his wife's character, suspected the truth and, although he felt compelled to take action, chose comparatively lenient punishment? Whatever the case, the hand of the Lord certainly preserved Joseph from what would otherwise have been almost certain death.

21 ¶ But the ^aLORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that *were* in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the ^adoer of it.

23 The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing *that was* under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and *that* which he did, the LORD made *it* to ^aprosper.

GENESIS CHAPTER 40

Joseph interprets the dreams of Pharaoh's chief butler and chief baker — The butler fails to tell Pharaoh about Joseph.

1 And it came to pass after these things, *that* the butler of the king of Egypt and *his* baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt.

2 And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers.

3 And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the ^aprison, the place where Joseph *was* bound.

4 And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward.

5 ¶ And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which *were* bound in the prison.

6 And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they *were* sad.

7 And he asked Pharaoh's officers that *were* with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye *so* sadly to day?

8 And they said unto him, We have dreamed a ^adream, and *there is* no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not ^binterpretations *belong* to God? tell me *them*, I pray you.

9 And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine *was* before me;

10 And in the vine *were* three branches: and it *was* as though it budded, *and* her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes:

11 And Pharaoh's cup *was* in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.

12 And Joseph said unto him, This *is* the interpretation of it: The three branches *are* three days:

13 Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler.

14 But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house:

15 For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon.

16 When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also *was* in my dream, and, behold, *I had* three white baskets on my head:

17 And in the uppermost basket *there was* of all manner of bakemeats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head.

18 And Joseph answered and said, This *is* the interpretation thereof: The three baskets *are* three days:

19 Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.

20 ¶ And it came to pass the third day, *which was* Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants.

21 And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand:

22 But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them.

23 Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.

(8-11) Genesis 39:21–23; 40:1–23

The spiritual greatness of Joseph is a remarkable thing. How many people have become bitter over some real or imagined slight, or blamed the Lord for some personal tragedy? In the very midst of being faithful and holding true to that which is right, Joseph was falsely accused and thrown into prison. How easy it would have been for him to give up, to say, "What's the use of trying to serve God? All He does is punish me." But there was not a trace of bitterness, no blaming the Lord. Joseph just continued being righteous and faithful. Unselfishly he offered to interpret the dreams of his two fellow prisoners, telling them that the knowledge came from God (see Genesis 40:8). He still

trusted in the Lord, although he must have felt doomed to spend his life in prison. If any person had cause for discouragement and bitterness, it was Joseph, but he never faltered in his faith. Truly, Joseph is a model to be emulated.

GENESIS CHAPTER 41

Pharaoh dreams of the cattle and the ears of grain—Joseph interprets the dreams as seven years of plenty and seven of famine—He proposes a grain storage program—Pharaoh makes him ruler of all Egypt—Joseph marries Asenath—He gathers grain as the sand upon the seashore—Asenath bears Manasseh and Ephraim—Joseph sells grain to Egyptians and others during the famine.

1 And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh ^adreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river.

(8-12) Genesis 41:1. How Long Was Joseph in Prison?

Joseph was in prison for two years after he interpreted the dreams of the chief butler and baker (see Genesis 41:1). He was sold into slavery when he was about seventeen (see Genesis 37:2), and he was thirty years of age when he became vice-regent to the pharaoh (see Genesis 41:46). Altogether he served thirteen years with Potiphar and in prison. The record does not tell how long he served Potiphar before his imprisonment, but that he worked his way up to be the overseer of the prison implies some period of time before the butler and baker joined him. So it is likely that Joseph was in prison at least three years and possibly much longer.

2 And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine and fatfleshed; and they fed in a meadow.

3 And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favoured and leanfleshed; and stood by the *other* kine upon the brink of the river.

4 And the ill favoured and leanfleshed kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke.

5 And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good.

6 And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them.

7 And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, *it was* a dream.

8 And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was ^atroubled; and he sent and called for all the ^bmagicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but *there was* none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.

(8-13) Genesis 41:8. Why Were the Wise Men of Egypt Unable to Interpret the Pharaoh's Dreams?

Many assume that the dreams of pharaoh were beyond the scope of Egypt's wise men and yet, in some ways, it is remarkable that these magicians could not have come up with some kind of logical explanation using their own well-known symbolism.

“Being troubled about this double dream, Pharaoh sent the next morning for all the scribes and wise men of Egypt, to have it interpreted. ... [The magicians were] men of the priestly caste, who occupied themselves with the sacred arts and sciences of the Egyptians, the hieroglyphic writings, astrology, the interpretation of dreams, the foretelling of events, magic, and conjuring, and who were regarded as the possessors of secret arts ... and the *wise men* of the nation. But not one of these could interpret it, although the clue to the interpretation was to be found in the religious symbols of Egypt. For the cow was the symbol of Isis, the goddess of the all-sustaining earth, and in the hieroglyphics it represented the earth, agriculture, and food; and the Nile, by its overflowing, was the source of the fertility of the land. But however simple the explanation of the fat and lean cows ascending out of the Nile appears to be, it is ‘the fate of the wisdom of this world, that where it suffices it is compelled to be silent. For it belongs to the government of God to close the lips of the eloquent, and take away the understanding of the aged (Job xii. 20).’” (Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary, 1:1:349.)

9 ¶ Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day:

10 Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, *both* me and the chief baker:

11 And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream.

12 And *there was* there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret.

13 And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged.

14 ¶ Then ^aPharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the ^bdungeon: and he shaved *himself*, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.

15 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and *there is* none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, *that* thou canst understand a dream to ^ainterpret it.

16 And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, *It is* not in me: ^aGod shall give Pharaoh an answer of ^bpeace.

17 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river:

18 And, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fatfleshed and well favoured; and they fed in a meadow:

19 And, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill favoured and leanfleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness:

20 And the lean and the ill favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine:

21 And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they *were* still ill favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke.

22 And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good:

23 And, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, *and* blasted with the ^aeast ^bwind, sprung up after them:

24 And the thin ears devoured the seven good ears: and I told *this* unto the magicians; but *there was* none that could declare *it* to me.

25 ¶ And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh *is* one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he *is* about to do.

26 The seven good kine *are* seven years; and the seven good ears *are* seven years: the dream *is* one.

27 And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them *are* seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine.

28 This *is* the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God *is* about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh.

29 Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt:

30 And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land;

31 And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it *shall be* very grievous.

32 And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; *it is* because the thing *is* established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

33 Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt.

34 Let Pharaoh do *this*, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years.

35 And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities.

36 And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.

37 ¶ And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants.

38 And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find *such a one* as this *is*, a man in whom the Spirit of God *is*?

39 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, *there is* none so discreet and wise as thou *art*:

40 Thou shalt be ^aover my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be ^bgreater than thou.

41 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have ^aset thee over all the land of Egypt.

42 And Pharaoh took off his ^aring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and ^barrayed him in ^cvestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;

43 And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ^aruler over all the land of Egypt.

44 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I *am* Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife ^aAsenath the daughter of Poti-pherah ^bpriest of On. And Joseph went out over *all* the land of Egypt.

46 ¶ And ^aJoseph *was* thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

47 And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls.

48 And he gathered up all the ^afood of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which *was* round about every city, laid he up in the same.

49 And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for *it was* without number.

50 And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On bare unto him.

51 And Joseph called the name of the firstborn ^aManasseh: For God, *said he*, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.

52 And the name of the second called he ^aEphraim: For God hath caused me to be ^bfruitful in the land of my affliction.

53 ¶ And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended.

54 And the seven years of ^adearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

55 And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.

56 And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and ^asold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt.

57 And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy *corn*; because that the famine was *so* sore in all lands.

Ideas for Personal Scripture Study

[Genesis 37:1–28](#); [39](#); [41:9–45](#)

“The Lord was with Joseph” in his adversity.

Time and again, good fortune seemed to abandon Joseph, but the Lord never did. As you read Joseph’s story, ponder questions like these: What did Joseph do to stay close to the Lord during his times of trial? How was the Lord “with him”? ([Genesis 39:2–3](#), [21](#), [23](#)). You might also ask similar questions about your life. What evidence have you seen that the Lord has not forsaken you in your times of trial? Consider how you can share your experiences with family members and future generations (see [1 Nephi 5:14](#)). What can you do now to prepare yourself to remain faithful when you face trials in the future? See also [John 14:18](#); [Romans 8:28](#); [Alma 36:3](#); [Doctrine and Covenants 121:7–8](#); D. Todd Christofferson, “[The Joy of the Saints](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2019, 15–18.

[Genesis 37:5–11](#); [40](#); [41:1–38](#)

If I am faithful, the Lord will guide and inspire me.

Elder David A. Bednar taught, “Revelations are conveyed in a variety of ways, including, for example, dreams, visions, conversations with heavenly messengers, and inspiration” (“[The Spirit of Revelation](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 88). The Lord used dreams to reveal truths to Joseph, Pharaoh’s chief butler and baker, and Pharaoh. The Lord also revealed to Joseph how to interpret these dreams. What can you learn from [Genesis 37:5–11](#); [40:5–8](#); [41:14–25](#), [37–38](#) about receiving and understanding revelation from the Lord? For instance, what can you learn from Joseph’s example when revelation seems difficult to understand? (see [Genesis 40:8](#); [41:16](#)).

Ponder how the Lord is revealing His will to you. What are you doing to act on revelation the Lord has given you? How are you seeking additional guidance from Him?

See also Russell M. Nelson, “[Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018, 93–96; Michelle Craig, “[Spiritual Capacity](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2019, 19–21.

[Genesis 38](#); [39:7–20](#)

With the Lord’s help, I can flee temptation.

When you are being tempted, Joseph’s example can give you encouragement and strength. As you read about his experience in [Genesis 39](#), notice things Joseph did to resist temptation. For example:

- He “refused” the advances of Potiphar’s wife ([verse 8](#)).
- He recognized that sinning would offend God and others ([verses 8–9](#)).
- He “hearkened not” to the temptation, even though it continued “day by day” ([verse 10](#)).
- He “left his garment ... and fled, and got him out” ([verse 12](#)).

With Joseph’s example in mind, consider making a plan for avoiding and resisting temptation. For example, you could think of a temptation you face, write down situations to avoid, and make a plan to rely on Heavenly Father when the temptation arises (see [2 Nephi 4:18](#), [27–33](#)).

Temptation:

Situations to avoid:

Plan to respond:

This account of Joseph’s strength when faced with temptation is preceded by a very different account about his older brother Judah, found in [Genesis 38](#). What do [chapters 37](#), [38](#), and [39](#), taken together, teach you about chastity?

See also [1 Corinthians 10:13](#); [1 Nephi 15:23–24](#); [3 Nephi 18:17–18](#).

Ideas for Family Scripture Study and Home Evening

[Genesis 37](#).

If you had been one of Joseph’s brothers, what could you have done to keep jealousy from weakening your relationship with him? How would it help us to “speak peaceably” to each other? ([verse 4](#)).

[Genesis 39](#).

The videos “The Refiner’s Fire” and “After the Storm” ([ChurchofJesusChrist.org](#)) relate the experiences of people who found strength by turning to the Lord during their trials. Maybe you could watch one of them and talk about what Joseph might say if he were to make a video about his experiences. You could sing together “[I’m Trying to Be Like Jesus](#)” (*Children’s Songbook*, 78–79) and look for advice your family could share with Joseph as he faced his trials.

Reading these verses could provide an opportunity to discuss the law of chastity with your family. Here are some resources that could help with this discussion: [Jacob 2:28](#); [Alma 39:3-9](#); “[Sexual Purity](#)” (in *For the Strength of Youth* [2011], 35-37); “Sexual Intimacy Is Sacred and Beautiful” (in *Help for Parents* [2019], AddressingPornography.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

[Genesis 41:15-57.](#)

What do we learn from these verses about how the Lord blessed the people of Egypt through Joseph? What can we learn about preparing for future emergencies? Discuss what you can do to be better prepared as a family. For ideas, see Gospel Topics, “[Emergency Preparedness](#),” topics.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

For more ideas for teaching children, see [this week’s outline](#) in *Come, Follow Me—For Primary*.

Suggested song: “[Jesus Is Our Loving Friend](#),” *Children’s Songbook*, 58.



Illustration of Joseph’s brothers taking away his coat, by Sam Lawlor