

## **JOSEPH** *The Power of Conviction*

**Scriptural Account:** Genesis 37,39, Hebrews 11:22

**Biographical Background:**

Joseph was the 11<sup>th</sup> son (of 12) of Jacob "Israel". He was born in Padan-Aram when his father was 90 years old, and was his father's favorite child because he was born to Rachel. Jacob's favoritism was shown in his getting Joseph a coat of many colors, which was probably a token of rank indicating that it was his intention to make Joseph the head of the tribe. Naturally this aroused the jealousy of his elder brothers. This envy became stronger when Joseph dreamed dreams that indicated that they would be subservient to him – and told them the dreams! They took an opportunity that presented itself to them when Joseph was 17 years old and caught him away from home. They put him in a pit and later sold him to a passing caravan of Arabs on the trade route passing through Dothan going to Egypt.

He became a slave to Potipher, a prominent military officer. Potipher's wife made more than one attempt to seduce him, but he resisted. She, angered, framed him resulting in his being put in prison for several years. There, he won the favor of the warden and was soon put in charge of the other prisoners. Two of the prisoners were officers of Pharaoh (chief butler and baker) who dreamed disturbing dreams. God allowed Joseph to interpret their dreams, which came true as he predicted. Eventually the butler remembered Joseph's ability when Pharaoh had disturbing dreams that his wise men could not interpret. Joseph was called to interpret. These dreams predicted seven good years for Egypt, followed by seven years of famine. On the strength of that, Pharaoh freed and promoted Joseph to prime minister of the country and assigned him the management of the country's product. We know that this was God's way of preserving His people – Jacob's family -- who came to Egypt to survive the famine time. There is much more to this story, but this sketch will suffice us for today's lesson.

### **DREAM (word Explanation)**

In biblical times a dream was more than just a dream; it was often a way God used to communicate with His prophets. Jews, Greeks, Egyptians and Assyrians all had professional dream interpreters. The O.T. mentions different kinds of revelatory dreams. In some God spoke directly. In others He communicated in symbols. God even spoke to pagans in dreams (as to Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar). Through a dream, God warned Joseph of Herod's plot to kill the baby Jesus. There are a number of other incidences.