

JOSEPH BAND

ABOUT JOSEPH

(JOE Zeph) - May He add

This is the name of several men in the Bible. Of all of them, Jacob's eleventh son is the most prominent.

Joseph was the name of the 11th son of Jacob (Gen 30:24). He was sold into slavery and later rose to an important position in the Egyptian government. The account of Joseph's life is found in Genesis 37-50. He was the first child of Rachel (Gen. 30:24) and his father's favorite son (Gen. 37:31). This is most clearly shown by the special coat that Jacob gave to Joseph. The favoritism eventually brought serious trouble for the whole family. Joseph's ten older brothers hated him because he was their father's favorite and because Joseph had dreams, which when interpreted, brought in unhealthy, envy and mischief towards Joseph. It is no surprise that Joseph's brothers hated him enough to want to kill him (37:4).

Joseph's brothers were shepherds in the land of Canaan. Jacob sent Joseph to search for his brothers who were tending the flocks in the fields. When Joseph found them, the brothers seized him and wanted to kill him but for Reuben only who opposed them. Joseph was eventually sold into slavery to passing merchants; and they dipped his beautiful coat in animal blood to convince Jacob their father that Joseph had been killed by wild animals (37:34- 35). Joseph was taken to Egypt where he was sold to Potiphar, an officer of the ruling King Pharaoh of Egypt. Joseph's good conduct in his new abode soon earned him the highest position in the household of Potiphar. But the wife of Potiphar soon became infatuated with Joseph and tempted him to commit adultery with her. When he refused, she accused him of crime and Joseph was sent to prison. While in prison, Joseph's behavior earned him a position of responsibility over the other prisoners. Joseph met Pharaoh's Butler and his Baker while in the prison among other prisoners. When each of them dreamt, Joseph interpreted their dreams. When the butler left the prison, he failed to intercede on Joseph's behalf and Joseph spent two more years in prison.

When Pharaoh had dream that none of his counselors could interpret, the butler remembered Joseph and mentioned him to the Pharaoh. Then Joseph was called to appear before Pharaoh. He interpreted Pharaoh's dreams, predicting seven years of bountiful harvest to be followed by seven years of famine. Pharaoh appointed Joseph as Prime Minister to his surprise. This was a position of great prestige (Gen. 41:37- 57). Joseph was second only to Pharaoh in power. People from surrounding lands came to buy food from him.

The famine also struck Canaan and Joseph's brothers eventually came to Egypt to buy grain. When they met Joseph, they did not recognize him. He however recognized them and decided to task them to see if they had changed. He accused them of being spies. Then he sold grain to his brothers on the ground that Simeon stayed back as a hostage until they brought Benjamin (his younger brother and the last son of his father) to Egypt with them (Gen 42:14-24). Joseph was overcome with emotion when the brothers returned to Egypt with Benjamin. He revealed himself to them as their brother whom they had sold into slavery. Joseph's forgiveness was genuine. He sent them back to Canaan with gifts for his father and invited

the family to come and live in Egypt. The grace of God working in the family of Jacob is evident in the way Joseph dealt with his personal suffering which preserved the family as instrument of God's will. Joseph also was aware that his rise to power was for the good of his family not for his own glory (Gen. 45:7-8).

Other men named Joseph in the Bible included:

1. The father of one of the spies into Canaan (Num. 13:7)
2. A son of Asaph (I Chr.25:2,6)
3. One who married a foreign wife during the Exile (Ezra 10:42)
4. A priest of the family of Shebaniah (Neh. 12:14)
5. The husband of Mary, mother of Jesus (Matt. 16- 24; 2:13; Luke 1:27,2:4)
6. A converted Jew of Arimathae in whose new tomb Jesus Christ was laid (Matt. 27:57-59; Lk. 15:43)
7. The three different ancestors of Christ, about whom little is known (Lk. 3:24; 26;30)
8. A disciple (known as Barabbas and Justus) considered to take the place of Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:23)