

**Peace** be with you, listening friends. We greet you in the name of God, the Lord of peace, who wants everyone to understand and submit to the way of righteousness that He has established, and have true peace with Him forever. We are happy to be able to return today to present to you your program *The Way of Righteousness* in which we are recounting the stories of the Prophets of God, one by one. We are continuing to read in the first section of the Word of God called ***the Torah***.

In our last lesson, we learned about the prophet Jacob who was Abraham's grandson.

We saw how God gave Jacob a new name: **Israel**. Jacob means *deceiver*, but Israel means *one who reigns with God*.

Now Jacob had two names: Jacob and Israel. Israel is also the name of the new nation, which God had promised to make from the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Jacob had twelve sons. From these twelve sons arose the people of Israel, the nation through which the Redeemer would come.

Do you know the names of **the twelve sons of Jacob**?

They are Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph and Benjamin.

Today we begin the captivating story about the sons of Jacob, especially the one named **Joseph**, who was the eleventh son.

Now let us get into the wonderful story of Joseph!

We are reading in the Torah, the book of Genesis, in chapter thirty-seven. The Scriptures say:

*This is the account of the family line of Jacob.*

***Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers...And he brought their father a bad report about them.***

*Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made a richly ornamented robe for him.*

*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.*

*One day 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:*

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

*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.*

*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."*

*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?**"*

*His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.*

*Now his brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks near Shechem, and Israel said to Joseph, "As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. **Come, I am going to send you to them.**"*

*"Very well," he replied. So he said to him, "Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks, and bring word back to me."*

*So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, **they plotted to kill him.***

*"Here comes that dreamer!" they said to each other. "Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams."*

*When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. "Let's not take his life," he said. "Don't shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the desert, but don't lay a hand on him." Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father.*

*So when Joseph came to his brothers, **they stripped him of his robe**, the richly ornamented robe he was wearing, and **they took him** and threw him into the cistern.*

*Now the cistern was empty; there was no water in it.*

*As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt.*

*Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood?"*

*Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood."*

*His brothers agreed. So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and **sold him** for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.*

*When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes. He went back to his brothers and said, "The boy isn't there! Where can I turn now?"*

*Then they got Joseph's robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. They took the ornamented robe back to their father and said, "We found this.*

*Examine it to see whether it is your son's robe."*

*He recognized it and said, "It is my son's robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces."*

***Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days.** All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. "No," he said, "in mourning will I go down to the grave to my son." So his father wept for him.*

*Now Joseph had been **taken down to Egypt**.*

*Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there.*

***The Lord was with Joseph** and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant.*

*Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned.*

*From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the Lord blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph.*

*The blessing of the Lord was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field.*

*So he left in Joseph's care everything he had; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.*

*Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"*

*But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. No one is greater in this house than I am.*

*My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife.*

***How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"***

*And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even to be with her.*

*One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside.*

*She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.*

*When she saw that he had left his cloak in her hand and had run out of the house, she called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "this Hebrew has been brought to us to make sport of us!"*

*He came in here to sleep with me, but I screamed. When he heard me scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."*

*She kept his cloak beside her until his master came home. Then she told him this story:*

*"That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house."*

*When his master heard the story his wife told him, saying, "This is how your slave treated me," he burned with anger.*

*Joseph's master took him and put him in prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined.*

*But while Joseph was there in the prison, the Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden.*

*So the warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there.*

*The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because **the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.***

And so begins the story of Joseph, the son of Jacob.

We can summarize what we have seen today with this statement: **Joseph loved righteousness and hated wickedness.**

He would rather suffer in prison than enjoy the passing pleasures of sin. That was why, when the wife of his master invited him to lie with her and commit adultery, Joseph refused, saying "How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"

Joseph knew that **serving God** and **serving sin** do not go together!

Joseph had presented his heart to God. That is why he loved righteousness and hated wickedness.

Like his great-grandfather, Abraham, **Joseph also believed what God had promised concerning the Savior** who was to come to earth to die for the sins of Adam's descendants.

God judged Joseph to be righteous because Joseph **believed** the word of God.

Because of his faith, God forgave Joseph of his sins and filled his heart with the desire and the power to overcome sin and to live righteously in an evil world.

God "walked" with Joseph because Joseph "walked" with God.

Joseph could not enjoy sin, because his heart belonged to God. The one who believes and worships God from the heart will **love what God loves** and **hate what God hates**.

That is what the Scripture declares when it says:

*"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other."*

*"For what do **righteousness** and **wickedness** have in common? Or what fellowship can **light** have with **darkness**?"*

*"God is **light**; in Him there is **no darkness** at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth."*

Those who truly belong to God believe the Word of God and seek to obey it. But those who do not belong to God are controlled by sin.

They may have the **outward form of religion**, but **sin still controls** their thoughts, the intentions of their hearts, their words and their deeds.

They may intend to overcome sin, but they are unable to do so, because **sin is stronger** than they are.

They do not have in their hearts **the power of God's Holy Spirit**, which God gives to all those who believe His Word and accept the way of salvation which He has established.

You who are listening today, has God renewed your heart by His power?

Have you received **the Good News** about the Savior who has the power to cleanse your heart from all sin? Or are you still living under the dominion of sin?

The Scripture says: ***"Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.... Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up."***

Friends, we thank you for listening.

In our next study, in the will of the Lord, we will continue with the story of Joseph and see how he got out of prison and rose to the position of ruler over the whole land of Egypt....

God bless you as you meditate upon this verse found in the Scriptures:

***"God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth"***

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