

# Apply The Word

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## Message Info

Title:

Providence in the Dark

Speaker:

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Date:

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Scriptures:

Genesis 37:1-36

**Theme:** Trust the Lord's deliverance and you will navigate through the darkness.

**Introduction:** The story of Joseph (Gen 37-50) is a very important bridge in the biblical story of redemption. It helps us to understand how Israel became a nation and how Israel wound up in Egypt and would be delivered from there. Joseph himself also serves as an example of innocent suffering and teaches us how we should think about God's providence in *our* suffering.

We can consider Joseph's story in three stages:

### 1. The deliverer identified and despised (1-11)

Verse 2 tells us that these chapters are the story of Jacob: the story of Israel, of the church. It also tells us that Joseph is Jacob's successor as God's chosen. Joseph's brothers hate him because Jacob shows him favoritism. They also hate him because the Lord favors him.

Joseph has 2 dreams that confirm that the Lord will elevate him above his brothers and even above his parents. The brothers respond with envy, while Jacob begins to consider the Lord's purpose in these dreams.

### 2. The deliverer rejected and (12-24)

Jacob sends Joseph out to check on his brothers. He only finds them because a man 'happens' across his path and directs him to them.

When the brothers see Joseph, they plan to kill him. He is ultimately spared death, but is stripped of his robe and cast into a pit.

When the brothers attack, they make clear that they intend to prevent Joseph's dreams from being fulfilled. In that way, they are attacking the Lord's purposes.

### 3. The deliverer exiled and preserved (25-36)

An Ishmaelite caravan 'happens' along the way and the brothers sell Joseph into slavery. They are unwittingly accomplishing the Lord's purpose for them all. Gen 37 reveals some of the evil and dysfunction in the family of Israel, which also confirms that the Lord does not save the righteous and the good. He saves the wicked and the evil. He saves his enemies.

We also see that the Lord in his providence ordains evil in the lives of his people to accomplish his purposes of glorifying himself and of bringing good into our lives.

Though Joseph was going into a dark place, the Lord was working his good purposes and rays of hope began to break through.

**Questions:**

1. How are you thinking about and responding to the trials and struggles in your life?
2. Does the providence of God function in your life?
3. What darkness are you facing? How is your faith being tested?