

The Conflict of the Ages #9 and #10

By Lloyd Anderson

Lloyd Anderson:

We come in our study today, a continuation of the story of Joseph, who was the son of Jacob.

You remember without any question, I'm sure that the devil really felt that Joseph was going to be the seed of God. And so he singled Joseph, who was the son of Jacob, out for attack. And he was going to try to do away with Joseph. Now, you and I know, of course, that one of Jacob's other sons is the son through whom Christ the promised seed was ultimately to come. And of course, I'm thinking of Judah. But at the same time, I want to show you how the devil attacked the family of Jacob, doing what he could to try to disannul and thwart the purposes of God, with reference to God's real reason in bringing the promised seed into the world, the Lord Jesus Christ. And so in Genesis, chapter 39, verses 1 to 23, you find this particular condition very, very much to the forefront of our study today. I think we need to remember as we study these lessons on the conflict of the ages to realize that the devil is doing his dead level best to thwart, as we have often said, and disannul, and do away with the promise and the purposes of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord. If he can strike at you as a Christian and get you to live any less for Christ than you know you want to be living, he has achieved a mighty victory. If he can get you to fall into sin, if he can get you to do something that a believer ought not to do, it becomes a victory for the devil himself. And this has been his ministry across the years and across human time: to thwart, and disannul, and do away with, and break up the program of God in every particular detail, particularly as it refers to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now in Genesis, chapter 39 and verses one to twenty three, and I hope you'll read it at your leisure, and incidentally, let me continue with a thought that I tried to give you a few broadcasts ago. Why don't you go ahead and get one of these cassette tape recorders, and then record some of the messages over the radio that you really like in a series from any Bible teacher? I'm not trying to say that it should be of my messages, but any Bible teacher that you like. And then you'll have that recording and you can play it back to yourself or to others at your leisure. You see, and this becomes a tremendous thing. Many, many times, I will take a message off television or the radio that I really want to keep permanently. And then I can turn to it and play it over and listen to it and get something even more out of it than I did before. Now, in chapter 39, we see that Joseph is in prison. Temptation, which so often appears in times of prosperity, is very, very hard to resist when it rises from the unexpected and secret quarters. To have Joseph executed was now the devil's intention in this conflict of the ages and he set a perfect stage for Joseph to incur the wrath of his master Potiphar, who was the chief executioner in the land of Egypt under Pharaoh. There was opportunity, nobody was near to hinder. There was, importunity, no limit to Potiphar's wife's persistence. There was proclivity, no healthy young man but what have those human sexual desires? Joseph's rebuff and rebuke to the woman, however, carried the thought that it was unbelievable to even think that he could be tempted to sin against the Lord.

Now, although he was falsely and unjustly accused, Joseph remained silent before his accusers. He was kept from sinning by duty, because he had labors for his master to perform. He was kept from sinning by his honor because he had a loyalty to Potiphar to preserve, by faith, because he had a love for the Lord to express. And this incident in Potiphar's Palace, where Potiphar's wife, in chapter 39 of Genesis, tries to tempt Joseph to seduction, is one of the most violent

temptations for him. But because it formed the necessary link in the chain of events that led Joseph to Pharaoh, God saw him through it all. And we read in the Scriptures in Genesis 39 that the Lord gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And to the chagrin of the devil, God kept Joseph from immediate execution, possibly because Potiphar suspected that he was being framed. Certainly he recommended Joseph to the prison warden, and this would have been hardly probable if he did not still trust Joseph in spite of what his wife had said. And then finally, you'll remember, to make a long story short, they brought Joseph hastily out of the prison. He was given time only to shave his face and exchange his prison garments for clothing that would make him presentable to the king. The natural beard was a disgrace among the ancient Egyptians, though they often wore false beards. Among the Hebrews, if the face was shaved, it was considered an insult to manly dignity.

Then you remember the scripture says in Genesis 39, "It is not in me, God, shall give an answer of peace." For two years, Joseph had given God first place, both in service, in solitude, and standing before a king, and God continued to bear him up. He does not hesitate to mention the Lord, and His power, and His wisdom, as he senses the fear and anxiety of the King. And thus he assures him that comfort and provision and protection and prosperity rest only in the hands of the Lord. And so, he dreams. And you remember the story, how that finally Joseph is elevated to the position of second in command over the whole land, the land of Egypt. Then in chapter 42 of the Book of Genesis, you find an interesting thing, beginning with verse 1, Genesis chapter 42. Now we come to the land of Israel or the land of Canaan. Jacob, you remember, had continued to mourn for his son Joseph, through the years, and he would not be comforted by anyone. He really missed his son, who had been sold by his brothers into the land of Egypt, who had gone

into prison because of the framing of a false and a wicked woman. And then God brings him out of prison, and he elevates him to be second in command under Pharaoh over the whole land of Egypt. Now, if you're allied with God, my friend, in this mid-20th century, God will always see you through, if you're faithful and loyal to him and every area.

Now, Jacob would not be comforted and he continued to mourn for his son. He felt responsible for his son's death. He thought his son was dead. Having sent Joseph alone on a perilous journey. From Genesis, chapter 42 in verse 36, and this was interesting to me as I studied the word of God here in Genesis, chapter 42 in verse 36. What do we read? "And Jacob, their father said unto them," that is to the boys, "Me, have ye bereaved of my children! Joseph is not and Simeon is not, and you will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me!" Now from this particular passage in Genesis 42 and verse 36, it would seem that Jacob might possibly have suspected that Joseph, his son, had met with fall-foul play by his own brothers. But he lived in spite of his sorrow, in comfort, surrounded by all of his sons and their families. The devil, as the prince of the power of the air, has permissive, though limited control over nature, God often used the evil purposes of the devil to bring his erring people back to Himself, and thus remind them that they were dependent upon Him. Now, here in this story, God uses the famine in Israel to fulfill the purpose of the dreams of Joseph and to bring the Jewish people, with their father, down to the land of Egypt to buy grain during the drought, and to face Joseph's brothers with their sin.

And we read in Genesis 42, beginning with verse 1, that Joseph was governor over all the land, though Joseph, the role is the prime minister was one of a rare honor and splendor, it carried with

it considerable anxiety, and I think we need to know that. He dealt with nobility who were no doubt jealous of his power as a Jew in Egypt, and he bargained with multitudes of people that were mad with hunger because of the drought. He built dikes and reservoirs to conserve the natural rise and overflow of the Nile River. Each spring, he erected granaries to store the surplus grain. He knew the yield of every corner of the land, which he'd directed men and planting and reaping and harvesting. He managed the trade for supplies, and Pharaoh declared Joseph to be a man in whom the spirit of God was living. Now that was a tremendous commendation coming from a heathen king to a man like Joseph. Then we read in Genesis 42 that Joseph saw his brothers, and he knew them when they came down with their father, Jacob, to the land of Egypt. You remember they had come to Egypt to buy grain. That is, the brothers without the father at that time. But they must have looked in the face of every slave they encountered, because they might have been afraid that they might have discovered Joseph, whom years ago they had sold into slavery.

And just as eagerly, Joseph must have looked for their faces among the inquiring strangers who came from many nations to the land of Egypt for food. For he recognized them readily when they made their appearance. He greeted them roughly to remind them of his own rough treatment at their hands, you remember. And he tested their love for money by secretly returning their money. And the hidden silver cup and the sack of the small boy Benjamin was to test their loyalty for one another and to prove that they love their own father. And then we read that uh, they said to him that they wanted to live on the land, and that was the reason they came. They wanted to live in Israel and they came down to Egypt to get food. Jacob sacrificed, and he wanted to know the will of God. And he went without fear into Egypt, trusting the Lord to make of him a great

nation. And the devil, now, and here you see him moving again in this conflict of the ages, thought that Joseph, as an inmate of prison, would be one of the first to succumb to the pangs of hunger. For at best, prisoner's food was meager, and in time of famine it would be cut off entirely. And he had thought that the 67 people in Jacob's family would starve because food could not possibly be found for so many. And you see, what he's doing? He's trying to wipe out the family of Joseph, and he's striking at Christ who would come through the line of Jacob. God overruled. And Israel prospered, and multiplied exceedingly in the land of Goshen, we read, and later on you recall God raised up Moses hundreds of years later to lead them out of the slavery of Egypt into the Promised Land.

Now, what about living in the land of Egypt? And this time we turn to the Book of Exodus, chapter one in verses seven to 14. And I want you to read that at your leisure. The scripture says "There arose a new king over Egypt which did not know Joseph". Now, this is always true, isn't it, in every generation? You have made friends with, and perhaps knew some great pastor of a church where at your age you grew up and you loved him deeply and dearly, and then you get older and then a new generation comes along, and the pastor dies off and nobody knew him. You see, and finally, everybody who did know him is gone. And that's what happened in Egypt. A new king came to Egypt who didn't know Joseph at all. Now, this was probably a reference to Thutmose the third who lived in 1504 to 1450 before Christ. It would certainly seem that he was the great oppressor of Israel in the land of Egypt, from which Moses led them later on. The Jewish people were made to become slaves, working in the building of walls, and ramparts, and the pyramids of Egypt. And they were in Egypt, you remember, because of a famine, and Jacob brought his family into Egypt, and the family multiplied until now. By the time Moses later on

leads them out of Egypt toward the Promised Land, some Bible teachers believe there were almost three million Jewish people. They were all slaves in the land of Egypt. Israel cried out of their misery to Jehovah for deliverance, and God heard. And God began to unfold His gradual plan for the liberation of His people that would come through Moses and Aaron later on.

Now, the devil tried to destroy the nation of Israel, but God delivered them with an outstretched hand. And this has always been the story of the devil as over against the Lord. And certainly, as we look at the story of Jacob's household and particularly Joseph, whom the devil I'm sure thought would be the promised seed. We see how the devil tried to move in and destroy the line of Jacob, from which Christ would come by attacking Joseph and the members of his family.

Now we're going to see in our next study from Exodus chapter 16, how God moves against the whole nation of Israel to try to keep Christ from coming into the world. It's be-good to be with you, and I trust that you will remember the broadcast in prayer. And I say this as a member of the board of directors of Biola, and also a pastor of a church, and your radio Bible teacher, I trust that you will send those letters in. We need to hear from you every month in order to keep this broadcast on the air and in order to keep this tremendous school going for the glory of God in the training of young people for full time Christian service.

[Silence, music plays for a second and then cuts out]

[Shuffling papers and blowing nose]

Lloyd Anderson:

In our study together during September, October, and November, you remember we mentioned to you we're currently in a series on the conflict of the ages. How that Genesis chapter 3 and verse fifteen is the key verse to this whole series that runs through the end of November. You remember in Genesis 3:15, you have the first promise of spiritual redemption in the Bible. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Now, if, even as a Christian, you have the idea that the devil himself is not a busy individual trying to disannul, and thwart, and do away with the purposes of God in Christ and in you, then, my friend, you have another guess coming, I can assure you. Because this adversary, this one who is the enemy of God and the enemy of the believer, is going to do everything he can to see to it that you do not honor constantly the Lord Jesus Christ. And this has been true across the ages of human time. We tried to show you that it began in the Garden of Eden. Man and woman were placed in the ideal situation. And yet, in the form and guise of a serpent as the mouthpiece of Satan, he spoke to them. He put a question mark where God had put a period. And the result is that the human race was catapulted into sin. And so he does everything he can to keep Jesus Christ not only from coming into the world, but also accomplishing what he came to do on the cross.

Now, we tried to show you that he attacked the family of Adam, and then he attacked the children of Adam by Cain, killing Abel. Then he moved in to the human race during the days of Noah. It became so voluptuous and sinful and wicked that God wiped out the human race with the exception of the family of Noah. Then you'll remember it entered into the family of Noah itself. Then you recall we shared with you the fact that God was striking also at the family of Abraham, because it would be through Abraham that Christ, ultimately, the promised seed was

going to make His wonderful appearance. Then you'll remember we saw that it struck, he did, that is the devil, struck at the family of Isaac. And he raised an enmity between Esau and Jacob, trying to kill off Jacob, because it would be through Jacob that the promised seed Christ would ultimately come. And then you remember, he moved against Joseph and did everything he could to disannul the purposes of God in that area. And today, we're going to begin our study in Genesis chapter 37. And I do hope you have your Bibles opened to that passage, and you read it at your leisure. But in chapter 37, you're going to see, that here, Satan strikes at the family of Jacob, not only Isaac, with Jacob and Esau as the sons, but now he strikes at the family of Jacob, which was composed of 12 sons. And we're going to try to show you that man can go nowhere beyond the reach of God, to show that a godly man always brings blessings to those for whom he works, and to prove that the ears of God are open to the cries of His own people.

Now, you'll remember in our study today, we wanted to share it with you, but before we come to that, let me say this word before we pray. In the summer of 1972, that is next summer, I will be leading a tour to the Holy Land. And this will be a tremendous time, I've already been there six times, and I think I'm quite familiar with that area, and perhaps in a position to be helpful to you. And if you're interested in going to the Holy Land, to Rome, of course, in Italy, and Athens, and Greece, and down into Egypt, with all of its history, and with all of its background, and then into Israel, and then up into Europe, and also the city of Ephesus, where you have one of the seven churches of revelation, this will be a tremendous experience. And if you're interested in going with us this coming summer, sometime in July and August, we're getting ready to firm up the time, please let me know by writing to me, if you will. If you're interested in going to the Holy Land and surrounding territories, let me know, because we're leaving in the summer of '72,

sometime in July and August. And we'd like to give you some of the details if you're interested. Be sure you write to me, if you will. Our father, we pray Thy blessing now upon the study to which we come, and we ask Thy blessing upon every word of it as we look into it, for we ask it in Jesus' name and for His sake, amen.

Now, Jacob, you remember, by this time had arrived in the land of Canaan, but he was not at Bethel where God desired him to be. His gratitude to God for the miraculous events connected with his return to Canaan had seemingly lost their importance. Soon after Jacob had reached the lush meadows of the place called Shechem, where he had purchased land with every intention of settling down, since all personal danger from Laban and Esau his brother had now passed, what pressure was it that caused him to make this decision? One can only conjecture and wonder. Had Rachel, his wife, persuaded him that relief from a nomadic Bedouin type of life was necessary to her welfare? Had his sons urged him to remain there, that they might make marriage alliances with the native families of the field? Had Jacob believe that by living on the outskirts of the city, and erecting an altar there, that he was really obeying the Lord? Now all of these questions come into our minds, concerning Jacob and his family. Now, out of this religious lethargy, out of this contented, prosperous life, Jacob had been rudely uprooted. He had been dishonored and disgraced by his sons, who out of family pride and religious fanaticism under the cloak of brotherly affection, had atrociously murdered the men of a Shechem tribe, and had looted and destroyed a city.

In his distress and shame, Jacob, you remember, had turned to the Lord, who had reminded him of the fact that once they had met at a place called Bethel. And Jacob had honestly wanted to

meet God there with personal and outward purification of his life, so that he had collected and buried all the strange gods that he found among the members of his company. If he were blessed of the true God of Israel, all false gods had to go. These gods were probably images of curious design in gold and silver, which had been taken as spoils from the city of Shechem, which he destroyed. Or perhaps they were personal images of the pagan servants whom he had hired. Now, Jacob had been so greatly blessed by God at the place called Bethel, and his faith had been so greatly renewed and strengthened, that the sorrow of his parting from Rachel, soon after, while in route to his father at Hebron in the south of Jerusalem, was born with great courage and fortitude. The care of an infant son was assumed by Jacob with patience and continued courage. Lying on a couch in the dim light of the evening, a lady saw her little daughter approach, and unaware of her mother's watchful eye, she took a bunch of grapes from a dish on a nearby table and then she quietly departed. The circumstance grieved the mother, and yet she kept still. Within five minutes, the child returned and put back the fruit that she had stolen. Saying as she did, "That's one time you got left out, Mr. Devil." You know, these same words could very well close each account of the devil's attacks to be studied in our particular series through November. The Devil moves in, and then when the human being allows God to have His own way, then you begin to see that the Lord Himself is willing and able.

Now we see the devil in this conflict of the ages, as he moves in upon the household of Jacob, through whom Christ was ultimately to come. And in Genesis chapter 37, beginning with verse 17, you have the fate of Joseph, who was Jacob's son. You remember, beginning with verse 17 of Genesis 37, Satan singles out Joseph, whom he believes to be the promised seed for an attack. At the age of 17, Joseph was a superior character with high intellectual qualities. He inherited the

best characteristics of his ancestors. He had the faith of Abraham. He had the spiritual piety of Isaac. He had the patience of Jacob. And he also had the good looks of his mother, Rachel. He had personal charm, and purity of soul, and power of self-control. His kind disposition, his wise understanding, his honesty, and his reliability, combined with the memory of Rachel, whom he greatly resembled. And it so endeared Joseph to the heart of his father, Jacob, that he made Joseph his heir and gave him a beautiful coat of many colors. You remember the story. Joseph was scorned and hated by his brothers because of these favors that were bestowed upon him. But they hated him even more because of his dreams, which represented him receiving their obedience. The Brothers of Joseph, for the sons of Jacob they were, were so rude in their hatred of Joseph that they refused him the common courtesy of the greeting of peace, “shalom”. All was accorded to the stranger, or even to the vilest person that you might meet along the way.

Now, Jacob, the father, had every right to be concerned with the welfare of his 12 sons, as they pastured their stock in the Shechem territory that he had been compelled to leave in disgrace previously. Commissioned by Jacob, you remember, the father, to find his brothers and bring back a report, Joseph, the son, did not hesitate to be obedient, though no doubt he thought of the many perils that he faced: the perils of weather, the beast, the robbers, and even the feeling that he had that his brothers hated him. Now, in verses seventeen to 36 of Genesis chapter 37, you have him thrown into the pit. Beginning with verse 17, we read that they conspired against him to kill him. How cowardly of nine strong men to plan the death of a timid, unresisting, innocent boy who came to them in love and concern, as Joseph did from his father, to talk to them and bring them food. Their devilish envy could only be satisfied with blood. And like Esau, they relished thought of it. And within a short time, Joseph was seized, and stripped, and silenced, and

sold, but not killed as the devil wanted him to be. And then we read in Genesis 37, beginning with verse 17, that they cast him into a pit. Now, this was a large, dry cistern. Reuben, you remember, one of the older sons, did a good thing when he suggested putting Joseph into the pit. But he did not do the best thing. He prevented them from killing his brother, but he did not defend him, and he should have done so. He expected, I think, to rescue Joseph at the first opportunity. But being unstable and unreliable, Reuben wandered far away at this critical time instead of watching nearby and hoping to rescue his brother, Joseph.

Now what about Joseph in the pit? To climb out he found it impossible to do. But to look upward? He found it wonderful. He looked beyond the rim of the pit, even beyond the stars, and by faith he looked unto the Lord, who had revealed to him an exalted destiny for his life. He trusted his fate to the hands of God. For they were dependable hands, were the hands of the Lord. Then we read, while he was in the pit, that a company of Ishmaelites, that is descendants of Ishmael, you remember the son of Hagar, who Abraham had taken to be his wife. Uh, the descendants from Ishmael were coming along as travelers and Arabs, and they were going down to Egypt, we read in Genesis 37. A passing caravan of several tribes traveling together for safety on their way to Egypt, changed the brothers' and the Devil's plan for Joseph's death by starvation. The thought of the brothers was, that if Joseph were a slave, he could never be their master. Such an argument, they felt, would satisfy Reuben, the oldest son, who wanted no bloodshed. The devil, likewise, and here you have the conflict of the ages, you see, likewise reasoned that the severe life of a slave must of necessity be short, and that Joseph, the protected son, would soon die under such physical stress, being a slave.

Now, Joseph, however, rested in the thought that he could go nowhere where God himself could not take care of him. And so we read that they sold him unto Potiphar. Now, Potiphar was a man of high rank, as the chief executioner for pharaoh, the king of Egypt. And since Joseph had been stripped of his coat, but not his character, Potiphar, for whom he became a slave, found him very industrious, prompt, and obedient, and absolutely reliable. In fact, Joseph thought of himself as the servant of God rather than the slave of Potiphar. And then we read in Genesis chapter 37, beginning with verse 17 down to verse 36, that the Lord was with Joseph, and he became a prosperous man. As Joseph walked in chains on the road of slavery to Egypt, as he stood on the auction block to be sold to Potiphar, as he entered Potiphar's employ, a stranger to land and language and customs of the land of Egypt, because he was a Jew, the Lord was with Joseph at all times. Because Joseph lived such a life that God could always be with him and depend upon him.

Joseph did his work well, because God, as well as Potiphar, had given it to him to do, and the devil could only gnash his teeth in defeat because of what God was doing in the life of Joseph. Because the devil in this conflict of the ages wanted to strike at Joseph, because he knew that perhaps through Joseph would the promised seed come. Then you remember in chapter 39 of the Book of Genesis, beginning with verse 1 down to verse 23, we find Joseph in prison. And you remember the reason for which he was in prison? He said, how can I do this great wickedness? How can I sin against the Lord? By living with Potiphar's wife, who is trying to tempt him to live with her. And we're going to get into that. In our next study together before the Lord.

[Audio pops and changes to a different recording]

Speaker 1:

-scoffers and mockers will come, and some of them in the pulpits. I'm ashamed and sorry to say many of them in the pulpits these days. There is one thing they-