

“Joseph had a dream”

Genesis 37

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Genesis 37:1-3

1 Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan. **2** This is the account of Jacob’s family line. Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them. **3** 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 an ornate robe for him.

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“...Joseph’s robe was probably of the kind worn by royalty-long sleeved, ankle length, and colorful. The robe became a symbol of Jacob’s favoritism toward Joseph, and it aggravated the already strained relation between Joseph and his brothers.”

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Genesis 37:4-11

4 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. **5** Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. **6** He said to them, “Listen to this dream I had: **7** We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it.”

8 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. **9** 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.”

10 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?” **11** His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

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Genesis 37:12-15

12 Now his brothers had gone to graze their father’s flocks near Shechem, **13** 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.

14 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.” Then he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron. When Joseph arrived at Shechem, **15** a man found him wandering around in the fields and asked him, “What are you looking for?”

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“Joseph’s brothers were already angry over the possibility of being ruled by their little brother. Joseph then fueled the fire with his immature attitude and boastful manner.”

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Genesis 37:16-18

16 He replied, “I’m looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are grazing their flocks?” **17** “They have moved on from here,” the man answered. “I heard them say, ‘Let’s go to Dothan.’” So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. **18** But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him.

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Genesis 37:19-24

19 “Here comes that dreamer!” they said to each other. **20** “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.” **21** When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. “Let’s not take his life,” he said.

22 “Don’t shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don’t lay a hand on him.” Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father. **23** So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe — the ornate robe he was wearing — **24** and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

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“Ten men were willing to kill their younger brother over a robe and a few reported dreams. Their deep jealousy had grown into ugly rage, completely blinding them to what was right.”

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Genesis 4:4-8

4 And Abel also brought an offering — fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, **5** but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. **6** Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast?”

7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.” **8** Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

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Genesis 37:25-28

25 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. **26** Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood?”

27 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. **28** 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.

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“The brothers were worried about bearing the guilt of Joseph’s death. Judah suggested an option that was not right but would leave them innocent of murder.”

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Genesis 37:29-33

29 When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes. **30** He went back to his brothers and said, “The boy isn’t there! Where can I turn now?” **31** Then they got Joseph’s robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. **32** They took the ornate robe back to their father and said, “We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son’s robe.” **33** He recognized it and said, “It is my son’s robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces.”

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“To cover their evil action, Jacob’s sons deceived their father into thinking Joseph was dead. Jacob himself had deceived others many times, including his own father.”

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Genesis 37:34-35

34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days. **35** All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. “No,” he said, “I will continue to mourn until I join my son in the grave.” So his father wept for him.

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Genesis 37:36

36 Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s officials, the captain of the guard.

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[Potiphar] “was a prominent court official and high-ranking officer in Egypt, perhaps captain of the royal guard.”

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Life Applications

- **We should not be arrogant about the spiritual gifts the Lord gives us.**
- **Sin affects families for generations.**
- **God works in all situations both good and bad.**

Final Thoughts

“Though he could not know it, Joseph was going through an experience which was to become a major theme of the Bible. The godly Servant was despised and rejected, only to become the rescuer of those who abuse him.”

Joyce G. Baldwin

Final Thoughts

Isaiah 53:3-6

3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. **4** Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. **6** We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Final Thoughts

Romans 8:28

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.