

Genesis Ch. 37

- God spends 1 ½ chapters describing creation, then from chapters 3-36 we see the lives of Adam, the fall of man, the flood, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – 8 significant people and events.
 - From chapter 37 forward, 23 chapters are devoted to one person, Joseph.
 - Joseph is only 1 of 2 men named in the Old Testament of whom there is no mention of sin in their lives. (Daniel is the other.)
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V: 1 “Jacob” dwelt in the land – Hebron, near Mamre.

- To both Abraham & Isaac this was the place of “Richness & Communion” before the Lord – but to “Jacob” it was a place located about 30 miles outside of God’s will, 30 miles away from “Bethel” the place of obedience and blessing for Jacob.

V: 2 *“These are the generations of Jacob...”*

- This is a significant phrase and is used 11 times in the book of Genesis.
- The first time is in **Genesis 2:4** speaking of the generations of the Earth, as God created all things.
- The next 10 times are in reference to or actually delineating between the various generations. This generation begins, the previous one ends – the focus changes.
- Here the phrase “... *the generations of Jacob...*” is a signal that we will begin to focus more on Jacob’s sons, and more specifically Joseph.
- Jacob will be mentioned a few more times, but only in passing, or as his presence relates to the account of Joseph’s life.
- Joseph is 17 years old, a relative youngster compared to his brothers. Reuben is somewhere around 30 years old, the rest being in their mid to late 20’s.
- As we progress we’ll see that there are many parallels between the life of Joseph and the life of Jesus.
- One of the first things we see about this young man is that he is seen “feeding the flock” – if nothing else, Jacob taught his sons to work. A wealthy home and servants didn’t keep them from being put to work.
- We also see Joseph stepping into that practical and symbolic role of the “Good Shepherd.” (Feeding the flock – Isaiah 40:11)

Isaiah 40:11 “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.”

- Joseph was with the sons of Bilhah & Zilpah, meaning: Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.
- Joseph brings “their” evil report to his father.
- Given their track record to date this couldn’t have been much of a challenge, seemingly one by one, each of the brothers has been named in some type of sin.
- Simeon & Levi, killing the men of Shechem, everybody else joins in on the looting, Reuben defiles himself with his father’s concubine, now the other brothers of the concubines are tagged.
- Joseph & Benjamin were too young to partake in any of these events and the only other brother not named yet specifically is Judah – who along with offering up his brother as a slave, has a whole chapter devoted to his sin.
- Sadly, apart from Joseph’s dreams we don’t see any of the sons of Jacob build an altar to God, hear his voice, or that God appears to any of them as He did with Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob.

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- Joseph is often depicted as prideful, arrogant, and eager to be a tattletale.
 - Joseph may simply have been just an honest young man who honored his father.
 - Jacob’s love for Joseph may simply have been reciprocated to the extent that he valued that relationship more than that of his brothers.

[Like Jesus he lived to do the will of the father:](#)

John 8:29 “And He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him.”

- Joseph may simply, like Jesus – not have been a respecter of persons:

Proverbs 29:25 “The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.”

- This appears to be more about living in harmony with his father than about living in compromise with his brothers.

V: 3 *“Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children...”*

- Favoritism between children is not a good thing, Jacob & Esau grew up and were separated this way.
- Biblically husbands and wives are to favor each other over their children, but not between children.

Acts 10:34 *“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:”*

Ephesians 6:4 *“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”*

- When it comes to Jesus, He is to be highly favored above all:

Jesus said:

Luke 14:26 *“If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.”*

- Perhaps “Israel” is so named in this passage because of his favor for the one most like Jesus.
- Perhaps what Jacob sees after a sobering review of his progeny is that Joseph above all the rest has a capacity for spiritual things, much in the same way that there was a distinction between Jacob & Esau.

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- Jacob makes Joseph a coat of many colors – the wording in Hebrew could also indicate a coat with long sleeves, which extends to the “palms” of the hand..
 - Long sleeves were an indication of authority and this could possibly have meant that Jacob intended to give Joseph the “birth-right” – leaving him in charge of the family, including his brothers.
 - Not a popular idea with his brothers, but in light of future events, consistent with God’s will and another possible reason as to why “Israel” favored Joseph.

V: 4 The other brothers took note of the favoritism – as they always do – and they took it out on Joseph instead of addressing their father over the issue.

- Even though there is the father – son relationship, there is a Biblical way to resolve issues like this.

Turn to: Matthew 18:15-17

Matthew 18:15-17 “¹⁵Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. ¹⁶But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. ¹⁷And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”

- Having 10 older, bigger, meaner, brothers that “hate” you could not have been an easy life.
- Generally speaking typologies and symbolisms fall apart when we push it too far. There are however some obvious similarities between Joseph and our Lord Jesus that we will take note of in this chapter.

Speaking of Jesus:

John 1:11 “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.”

V: 5 As Joseph has this dream which he reveals to his brothers, it doesn't endear him to his brothers who hate him all the more.

V: 6-8 Jacob relates his dream – which further infuriates his brothers.

- Just because Joseph's brothers reacted poorly / in the flesh (what else could have been expected from this bunch?) doesn't necessarily mean that it shouldn't have been spoken.
- Not too many people liked Isaiah's message, or Jeremiah's – but they were to be spoken.
- The reaction is not the gauge of the legitimacy of the message.
- Even as Joseph spoke about his dreams, their reactions were pretty much the same as that of non-believers when we tell them about what God is doing in our lives, or when we share the word of God with them.

Galatians 1:10 “For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”

Habakkuk 2:2-3 “²And the Lord answered me, and said, write the vision, and make it plain upon tablets, that he may run that readeth it. ³For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.”

- Had Joseph not spoken these dreams God might not have been glorified in their fulfillment.

V: 9-11 Jacob dreams another dream, similar to the first – yet this time involving his parents (which I don't completely understand because his mother Rachel is dead, unless Leah has stepped into that role.)

- No one else “liked” the dreams that Joseph was having.
- It would seem almost foolhardy to enter into this discussion of the 2nd dream after the 1st was so poorly received.
- Knowing the poor reaction, why would Joseph share the 2nd dream?
 1. Compelled by God?
 2. Excited that God was speaking to him through dreams? (Enthusiasm)

Proverbs 29:18 “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”

- His brothers envied him; but his father observed the saying.

James 1:19 “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:”

- His brother's envied him perhaps because they may have sensed some truth in the dreams, or perhaps they may have sensed that God was the One giving Joseph the dreams to begin with.

V: 12 The brothers travel away from Hebron, taking the flock to Shechem to feed them there.

- This is almost fifty miles away, there is no mention of Bethel in their travels – the house of God wasn't part of their itinerary.
- They obviously weren't concerned any longer about reprisal from the locals by whom they were certainly outnumbered.
- Jacob knew where they had gone, and he wasn't concerned about their safety either or he wouldn't have sent his favorite son into enemy territory to check on them.
- Sadly they went out of their way to go back to the place that symbolized disobedience in Jacob's life, back to what they knew best, the life of the flesh – the old life and its seductions.

V: 13-14 The “Israel” / father sends his son to a far away place, to his brethren, who would reject him and seek to kill him.

- The earthly father didn't know all these things, but our heavenly Father did.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever would believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

V: 15-17 Jacob's brothers aren't in Shechem anymore, they've moved another 15 miles to the north to Dothan – “Two Wells” or “Two Cisterns”. (Define)

- It may have been into one of these empty cisterns that Joseph's brothers threw him into.
- Later in verses 20 & 24 the word “pit” is used which is:

Pit: (H953) “bowr”, bore; a pit, hole, especially one used as a cistern, denoting a rock hewn or man made cistern or well.

V: 18-20 Joseph's brothers are a treacherous worldly lot!

Later God would testify:

Deuteronomy 7:6-8 “⁶For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. ⁷The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: ⁸But because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”

- God didn't make them a great nation because they were so qualified, or because they were so moral – like us God chose them because He is gracious!
- “Dreamer” (H1167) “Ba'al” – possessor of dreams, Lord, husband, owner.
- These “brothers” hatch a plot to murder Joseph, to rid themselves of the “dreamer”, much like the “brothers” that Jesus was sent unto:

John 5:18 “Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.”

- Joseph's brothers devise a plan to contradict the dreams, attempting to thwart the will of God.

Isaiah 45:9a “Woe unto him that striveth with his maker!”

V: 21-22 Reuben hears about it and develops a counter plot, an alternate plan – intending to rescue his brother.

- Reuben doesn't exert direct leadership, as should have been expected. This may be because of his lapse in judgment resulting in his sin with his father's concubine.
- Any semblance of spiritual authority he might have had, once lost, is very difficult to recover.
- Reuben is not unlike Pontius Pilate; at first trying to save Jesus because he's done no wrong, then not knowing what to do, then giving in and going along with the "brothers".

V: 23-24 They nab Joseph and take his coat from him – trying to symbolically strip him of his blessing and any authority real or imagined.

- Jesus had his robe stripped from Himself as well.

V: 25 *“And they sat down to eat bread:...”*

- If there was any doubt as to the hardness of their hearts – this verse puts that thought to rest.
- They take their own brother, their own flesh and blood, strip him of his coat, and throw him in a pit with no food or water and begin to debate whether to kill him or sell him over a meal.
- Kind of like the mobster boss eating shrimp linguini and ordering the goon squad to rub somebody out.

V: 26-27 Judah pipes up and suggests that they can profit from this scenario as opposed to concealing his murder.

Proverbs 5:21 *“For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.”*

- The plan: let's let the Gentiles take care of him.
- So they handed Jesus over to the Romans – who eventually carried out the crucifixion.

V: 28 Joseph is sold for 20 pieces of silver.

- While all these things are being discussed, Joseph is in the pit begging for their mercy: a voice that would haunt them for the next 22 years.

Genesis 42:21 “And they said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.”

- Judas betrayed Jesus for the price of a slave; 30 pieces of silver.
- There is both a similarity and a distinction:

The price of dedication for young boys:

Leviticus 27:5 “And if it be from five years old even unto twenty years old, then thy estimation shall be of the male twenty shekels,…”

The price of an adult male servant:

Exodus 21:32 “If the ox shall push a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.”

V: 30 In spite of all the other things that happened, Reuben as the oldest considered himself responsible for his younger brother (s).

- How can he return home with this report? Sensing the responsibility.

V: 31-33 Jacob’s sons kill a kid / baby goat and use it’s blood to deceive their father.

- Ironic that it was Jacob who many years prior had killed a pair of young goats and used them to deceive his father Isaac.

Galatians 6:7 “⁷Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

- The sons don’t tell an overt lie, they simply allow Jacob to draw the desired conclusion, that Joseph was killed by wild animals.
- Jacob should have called in the homicide detectives who would have probably put the squeeze on the rest of the brothers to get to the truth.
 1. They dipped the coat in blood.
 2. Jacob immediately assumed that an “evil beast” had “torn (Joseph) in pieces”
 3. This doesn’t match the evidence thus far: There is no indication that the coat was torn up? Who found it? What was left of the body? Where is he buried? Was there a black glove at the scene?

V: 34-35 Jacob mourned for his favorite son in the fashion typical of the eastern culture. The tearing of clothes, sack cloth (coarse cloth, itchy) – and ashes (not mentioned here).

- His sons hypocritically try to comfort their father.
- No one else is mourning; just Jacob.
- Jacob's cries must have reminded them of Joseph's mournful plea's in the pit.
- 1st Mention of daughters; plural – there are more besides Dinah who is the only daughter named.

V: 36 Meanwhile, down in Egypt – Joseph is sold into the household of Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, and captain of the guard.

- Potiphar = “Belonging to the sun” (Ra, their sun god).
- Officer = (H5631) “cariyc”, saw-reece'; a eunuch; and thus a minister of state:-- chamberlain, eunuch, officer.
- Guard = (H2876) “tabbach”, tab-bawkh'; body guard, or a special elite guard of the military, or executioner.
- Potiphar was the head of a group of these men, Jacob was about to see and experience the world in ways that he had never imagined.

Genesis 25:26	Isaac is 60 years old when Jacob & Esau are born.
Genesis 26:34	Isaac is 100 years old, when Esau takes two wives @ 40.
Genesis 35:28-29	Isaac is 180 years old at his death.
Genesis 30:24	Joseph is born.
Genesis 30:25	Jacob wants to leave, and go home with his wives & children, now he works for cattle / wages 6 more years.
Genesis 31:38	Jacob has been gone from home for 20 years when he begins to return.
Genesis 31:41	7 years for each wife, 6 years for the cattle.
Genesis 37:2	Joseph is 17 or so years old when he is sold into slavery.
Genesis 41:46	Joseph is 30 years old when he is appointed 2 nd in Egypt, after which there are 7 years of plenty, and 7 years of famine.
Genesis 45:11	2 years into the famine (5 left to go) Jacob is beckoned to Egypt with the remainder of his family.
Genesis 47:9	Jacob is 130 years old when he stands before Pharaoh.

- When Jacob is 130, Joseph is 39. (30 + 7 +2)
- Jacob is 91 years old when Joseph is born to him from Rachel.
- Joseph was born after Jacob had been with Laban 14 years (7 for each wife), and as he agreed to work for Laban for cattle (6 years).
- Jacob was 91 when Joseph was born, 14 years prior he left home at 77 years old. Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob was born, meaning he was 137 (60 + 77) years or so old as chapter 27 opens.
- Jacob is 120 years old when Isaac dies at 180.
- Jacob is 108 years old as the situation with Joseph unfolds, meaning this chapter goes back and overlaps previous chapters to some degree.