

NOTES

January 14, 2018

Joseph's Dream and Mistreatment

Genesis 37: 1-36

Now Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan. ²These are the records of the generations of Jacob. Joseph, when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers while he was still a youth, along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father. ³Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic. ⁴His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms. ⁵Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. ⁶He said to them, "Please listen to this dream which I have had; ⁷for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf." ⁸Then his brothers said to him, "Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. ⁹Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, "Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." ¹⁰He related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?" ¹¹His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind. ¹²Then his brothers went to pasture their father's flock in Shechem. ¹³Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will send you to them." And he said to him, "I will go." ¹⁴Then he said to him, "Go now and see about the welfare of your brothers and the welfare of the flock, and bring word back to me." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. ¹⁵A man found him, and behold, he was wandering in the field; and the man asked him, "What are you looking for?" ¹⁶He said, "I am looking for my brothers; please tell me where they are pasturing the flock."¹⁷ Then the man said, "They have moved from here; for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan. ¹⁸When they saw him from a distance and before he came close to them, they plotted against him to put him to death. ¹⁹They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer! ²⁰Now then, come and let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; and we will say, 'A wild beast devoured him.' Then let us see what will become of his dreams!" ²¹But Reuben heard this and rescued him out of their hands and said, "Let us not take his life." ²²Reuben further said to them, "Shed no blood. throw him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but do not lay hands on him"—that he might rescue him out of their hands, to restore him to his father. ²³So it came about, when Joseph reached his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his

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tunic, the varicolored tunic that was on him; ²⁴and they took him and threw him into the pit. Now the pit was empty, without any water in it. ²⁵Then they sat down to eat a meal. And as they raised their eyes and looked, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing aromatic gum and balm and myrrh, on their way to bring them down to Egypt. ²⁶Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it for us to kill our brother and cover up his blood?" ²⁷Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers listened to him. ²⁸Then some Midianite traders passed by, so they pulled him up and lifted Joseph out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. Thus they brought Joseph into Egypt. ²⁹Now Reuben returned to the pit, and behold, Joseph was not in the pit; so he tore his garments. ³⁰He returned to his brothers and said, "The boy is not there; as for me, where am I to go?" ³¹So they took Joseph's tunic, and slaughtered a male goat and dipped the tunic in the blood; ³²and they sent the varicolored tunic and brought it to their father and said, "We found this; please examine it to see whether it is your son's tunic or not." ³³Then he examined it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him; Joseph has surely been torn to pieces!" ³⁴So Jacob tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. ³⁵Then all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, "Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son." So his father wept for him. ³⁶Meanwhile, the Midianites sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, Pharaoh's officer, the captain of the bodyguard.

Discussion Questions **Genesis 37: 1-36**

1. Verses 3-4 show that Jacob loved Joseph more than his other children and gave him special honor (the multi-colored coat); and that his brothers hated Joseph for this special love from their father. When have you seen the devastation that this favoritism causes in a family. How is this preferential love NOT like the love of our God? How would you counsel someone who endured unfair treatment from a parent?

2. Verses 29-30 show us that Reuben, the oldest brother who convinced the others not to kill Joseph, planned to come rescue Joseph from the pit ... only to find that he had been sold into slavery. What can we learn about compromise from Reuben's behavior? How could Reuben have acted differently?

3. Verses 31-35 show that Joseph's brothers not only sold their brother as a slave, but lied to their father, Jacob, to cover up the truth. Note how sin breeds more sin, and lying leads to devastation. How can our sin be stopped so it doesn't go further. See Hebrews 4:14-16 and 1 John 1:9.

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