

Genesis 37

We are beginning one of the most beloved sections of Scripture—the life of Joseph.

As we look at this passage, we see a story dripping with human emotion: favoritism, jealousy, betrayal, and deep sorrow. But beneath the surface of this family drama, we see the steady hand of a God working out a plan that is far bigger than any one man.

The Favored Son and the Fractured Family

In Genesis 37:1-4, we see the setting. Jacob is dwelling in Canaan, and we are introduced to Joseph, a young man of seventeen. Now, the Bible tells us plainly that Israel—that is, Jacob—loved Joseph more than all his children. Why? Because he was the son of his old age, born to his beloved Rachel.

Jacob expresses this favoritism by making Joseph a special tunic. Your Bible might say a "coat of many colors." While that's a beautiful tradition, the Hebrew phrase often implies a "tunic with sleeves."

In those days, a sleeveless tunic was for the laborer, the man out in the field doing the heavy lifting. A tunic with long sleeves was the garment of royalty or oversight. By giving Joseph this coat, Jacob wasn't just giving him a gift; he was signaling to the other ten brothers that Joseph was the intended heir and ruler of the family. This, coupled with Joseph bringing an "evil report" of his brothers' behavior, created a tinderbox of resentment. The text says they "hated him and could not speak peaceably to him."

The Dreamer and the Revelation

Then, God gives Joseph two dreams (Genesis 37:5-11). In the first, sheaves of grain bow to Joseph's sheaf. In the second, the sun, moon, and eleven stars bow to him.

Now, Joseph, in his youthful zeal, tells these dreams to his brothers and his father. If they hated him before, they despise him now! Even Jacob rebukes him, though he "observed the saying," tucking it away in his heart.

It is fascinating to note that this dream in Genesis is the "key" that unlocks Revelation chapter 12. When John sees a woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars, we don't have to guess who she is. The Bible is its own best commentary! Just as in Joseph's dream, these symbols represent the nation of Israel. This shows us the beautiful consistency of God's Word from the first book to the last.

The Betrayal at Dothan

The narrative shifts to the fields of Dothan (Genesis 37:12-28). Jacob sends Joseph to check on his brothers. When they see him coming—identifiable by that coat from a distance—they conspire to kill him. "Look, this dreamer is coming!" they sneer.

They strip him of his coat and cast him into an empty pit—a dry cistern. While they sit down to eat, showing a chilling calloused heart, a caravan of Ishmaelites appears. Judah, perhaps seeking a profit or a way to avoid direct murder, suggests selling Joseph into slavery. For twenty pieces of silver, Joseph is sold and carried away to Egypt.

Seeing Jesus in Joseph

As we study Joseph, we cannot help but see a "type" or a "shadow" of our Lord Jesus Christ. Look at the parallels:

- Joseph was the beloved son of his father; Jesus is the Beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased.
- Joseph was rejected by his own brothers; Jesus came to His own, and His own received Him not.
- Joseph's robe was stripped from him; Jesus' garments were divided by soldiers at the Cross.
- Joseph was sold for twenty pieces of silver; Jesus was betrayed by Judas for thirty pieces of silver.

The brothers thought they were thwarting Joseph's dreams. They said, "We will see what will become of his dreams!" But friend, you cannot thwart the counsel of God. What they intended for evil, God was already weaving into a plan for salvation.

Practical Application & Challenge

1. Beware of the Root of Bitterness: The brothers' hatred started with a seed of jealousy that grew into a murderous conspiracy. Is there someone you are "unable to speak peaceably to" today? Take that resentment to the Foot of the Cross before it defiles your soul.

2. Trust God in the Pit: Joseph went from a favored son to a slave in a single afternoon. You may feel like you are in a "pit" today—rejected, lonely, or treated unfairly. Remember that the pit was not the end of Joseph's story, and it is not the end of yours. God is with you in the silence.

A Challenge for the Believer: Are you walking in the "coat" God has given you, or are you trying to live someone else's life? God has a specific calling for you. Trust His timing. Joseph waited thirteen years from the pit to the palace. Be patient in the process of sanctification.

An Invitation to Life

Perhaps you identify more with the brothers today. You feel the weight of your past actions. Like Joseph's brothers, you might try to "bury" your guilt, but as we see later in Genesis, guilt always find a way out. There is only one way to be truly free from the stains of the past.

Jesus Christ did not just dream of our salvation; He accomplished it. He shed His precious blood on the Cross to wash away every sin. He was laid in a pit—a tomb—but on the third day, He rose again! The resurrection declares for all eternity that He is God, Savior, and Lord.

If you have never given your life to Him, why wait? You can't fix yourself, and you can't hide your "bloody coat" from God. Come to Him today, confess your need, and receive the white robe of His righteousness.