

Joseph--Genesis 37:12-36

Brothers Sell Joseph

I. Additional Scriptures...

1. God's Son was also sold for silver (Matthew 26:15).
2. God abhors deceitful people (Palms 5:6; Mark 7:20-23; Romans 1:28-32; Ephesians 4:22).
3. Envy is rottenness of the bones (Proverbs 13:40).
4. Love does not envy (1 Corinthians 13:4).

II. Chronology.

The events we read about in this text take place in the 3rd Period of Bible History: **Patriarchy**.

These events attach on to the purpose line of the Bible in that they serve as the first stage to the development of the descendants of Israel/Abraham (Gen 12:1-3) into a great nation, through which all other nations will be blessed, by the Messiah to come. The time the children of Israel spend in Egypt is the time they become a large group of people.

III. Summary.

The first part of this chapter helps us to see what great tension existed between Joseph and his brothers. Now we find Jacob sending Joseph to check on his brothers and Joseph accepting without complaint the assignment. His strong faith in God seems to have given him the courage to answer his father, **HERE AM I**, when the trip to Shechem was suggested. As Joseph wandered in the field in search of his brothers, he contacted a certain man who (no doubt after hearing a description of his brothers from Joseph) told Joseph he had overheard them saying they would go to Dothan. Evidently the area around Dothan was hilly and provided the brothers opportunity to see Joseph coming toward them from a long distance. Here was their opportunity to get rid of this troublesome sibling. They referred to him spitefully as **THIS DREAMER**. They hoped to make their murder of Joseph seem to have been done by an animal. The eldest son of Leah and oldest of all the brothers intervened and prevented the slaying of Joseph by suggesting that he be placed in a pit. It was Reuben's intent to free him and return him to his father (v. 22). Meanwhile, in Reuben's absence, a band of traders of the Ishmeelites appeared on the scene and Judah made suggestion that they sell Joseph to the Ishmeelites. This they agreed to do and Joseph was then on his way to Egypt. Upon Reuben's return to the pit, he found it empty and was grieved by what he discovered. All of the brothers joined in the vile deception of their father. They would soak the coat of Joseph in the blood of a kid and let Jacob draw the conclusion that the son of his old age had been mangled by an animal. Joseph makes his way into the household of Potiphar, captain of Pharaoh's guard.

IV. Outline.

1. Jacob sends Joseph to check on his brothers (12-14).
2. Joseph learns his brothers are in Dothan (15-17).
3. As the brothers see Joseph coming they decide to rid themselves of the Dreamer (18-20).
4. Reuben suggests a substitute plan, intending to free him (21-22).
5. Joseph is thrown into the pit (23-24).
6. Merchantmen on the way to Egypt are spotted and a deal is struck to sell them Joseph (25-28).

7. Reuben discovers where Joseph had gone (29-30).
8. A scheme to deceive Jacob is concocted and Joseph is sold to Potiphar in Egypt (31-36)

V. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ Potiphar was the powerful ruler of Egypt.
02. _____ Joseph found his brothers feeding the flocks at Shechem.
03. _____ Ancient people showed their joy and rejoicing by putting on sackcloth.
04. _____ Reuben intended to rescue Joseph from the other brothers' evil plot.
05. _____ The Ishmeelites were headed toward Egypt.

Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. _____ The starting place of Joseph's journey to check on his brothers was: (a) Jericho; (b) the valley of Hebron; (c) Gilead.
07. _____ Blood that was used to dip Joseph's coat into was from: (a) a boar; (b) an ox; (c) the kid of a goat.
08. _____ At Shechem, a certain man found Joseph, (a) wandering in the field; (b) walking in the highway; (c) drawing water, and redirected him to Dothan.
09. _____ (a) Reuben; (b) Judah; (c) Simeon said of Joseph, "let us sell him to the Ishmeelites."
10. _____ The Lord will (a) judge; (b) rebuke; (c) abhor the deceitful man.

Fill in the Blanks

11. One of the twelve, Judas Iscariot, said... "What will ye give me, and I will _____ him unto you? And they covenanted with him for _____ pieces of _____.
12. _____ 1:29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, _____, malignity; whisperers,
13. Gen 37:_____ And they said one to another, Behold, this _____ cometh.
14. Gen 37:_____ And they sat down to _____: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of _____ came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and _____ and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.
15. Gen 37:_____ And _____ returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he _____ his clothes.

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be given on next week's handout

[Answers for Genesis 37:12-36 Questions... 1—False, she had already died bearing Benjamin; 2—False; 3—True, 7; 4—False, 9; 5—True, 10; 6—b, 11; 7—c, 2; 8—c, 9; 9—a, 8; 10—b, 3; 11—2, nation, great, blessing; 12—Reuben, Levi, Judah, Zebulun; 13—Jacob, Israel, power, prevailed; 14—7, covenant, Isaac, eighth, patriarchs; 15—more, hated, peaceably, Gen 37:4]

VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. **And he said to him, Here am I...** (v. 13). Joseph must have been well aware of the attitude his brothers had toward him and the dangers of such a trip. Yet, his father assigned to him a task and he offered no excuse or complaint about it. Isaiah responded in similar fashion to the call of the Lord (Isa 6:8). The great Macedonian Call heard by the Apostle Paul is another example of a bold and courageous response when duty calls (Acts 16:9-12).

2. **...even before he came near unto them...**, (v. 18). There is something glaring about this description of the depraved condition of these brothers. **EVEN BEFORE** they found out the reason for Joseph's coming to them, they had made up their minds to slay him. He was coming with their own well being as his primary interest and the fulfilling of a mission from their father. He could have been coming with some important message; he could have been coming to try to reconcile their differences, yet their minds were closed. How similar this way of thinking is to that of many sinners today, who could receive the saving message if they but listened with an open heart!
3. **...let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say...** (v. 20). It is a remarkable thing how easy it is to **ADD SIN TO SIN** (Isa 30:1). When we get away from our high moral standard from God and begin to deviate from it, it is so easy quickly to slide down that slick pathway and add other sins. They were conspiring to murder and they thought nothing of the matter of adding the sin of lying to their evil deed. David's terrible sin with Bathsheba was compounded by his attempt to cover up the sin. The only way to deal with sin properly is to sorrow over it in such a way that it leads us to repent of it, rather than to seek to cover it up.
4. **... Let us not kill him...** (v. 21). Oftentimes there comes along the voice of reason and opportunity is provided to avoid making a tragic mistake. In this situation it came from the oldest brother, Reuben. He would have been held accountable if his younger brother had been murdered. It is too bad when ungodly emotions (e.g., envy and hatred) are allowed to take over and the reasonable is rejected for the irrational. Though the brothers did not actually kill Joseph, they cared so little that in their minds the same end was accomplished and they allowed their father to think he was dead.
5. **And they sat down to eat bread...** (v. 25). This text is often cited as one of the saddest or cruelest verses in the Bible. We are talking about getting rid of a brother in our family and getting him out of our sight because of our hatred of him. There is such a lack of caring in their hearts that their sinful minds have already dismissed it and they are now able to sit down for a meal. How could they have eaten without the worst possible case of indigestion???
6. **... A company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead...** (v. 25). Actually when the brothers moved their sheep from Shechem about 15-20 miles north to Dothan, the result was that they were then located near the highway which passed through Canaan and was the connecting link from the East to Egypt. Egypt was a large customer for the spices and balms from the East because of their burial practices.
7. **... and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver...** (v. 28). Seems a pitiful sum, but I would suggest that the amount of money was not the motivation, but being rid of this **DREAMER**. The stage is being set for the fulfillment of Joseph's dreams, though, in this move.
8. **And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood** (v. 31). We wonder how Satan could so fill the minds of these sons to treat their father in such a manner. When this coat was presented to their father, he put sackcloth upon his loins and mourned his son for many days. Jacob was not to be comforted (vv. 35-36). How could the sons stand by and allow such torment in the heart of their father?
9. **Jacob ONLY THOUGHT that Joseph was dead.** This account of the selling of Joseph into slavery and the cover-up presented to Jacob illustrates in a very powerful way that it is possible to believe something **VERY STRONGLY** and yet be wrong in that belief. Saul of Tarsus believed **VERY STRONGLY** that it was his duty to cause havoc in the church and to persecute the followers of Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 23:1), but

he learned better. Our friends, neighbors, and relatives who are deceived today by false doctrine might be helped if we remember to tell them about how completely Jacob was deceived--how totally convinced he was that Joseph was dead--BUT HE WAS WRONG!

10. **And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard** (v. 36). Think about how God uses the evil that Joseph's brothers committed in order to bring about great good, and Joseph is God's instrument.

VIII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

Q M N G I L E A D D A J H K H S A P L N
 J L B K L S D A Q F H K G L G D Q O K B
 A K V J M A F S W O E L F M F F W H J V
 C J C H N Q G D P O B M D N D G P I H C
 O H D E F I L E H L R N S B I E E U G X
 B G X H B Q H F A I O B A V S H R Y E M
 U F Z G V W J G R S N V Q O H J T T G I
 R D A F C E K H A H Q C J C M K Y R Y D
 U E S D S R L J O N W X W X E L U E P I
 I S U S X H P K H E E Z E Z E P I W T A
 P A D B Z T E L E S R A R A L O P Q F N
 L Q F A E Y O C R S T S T S I I R Z D I
 K W G Q A N I R H F Y D Y D T U I A D T
 J E H W S U A M T E U F U F E Y D S S E
 U R J E D H U N Y G M G I G S T E D A S
 D T K R P I T B U H I H O H S R O F Q O
 A Y L I F O R V I J D O T H A N P G W I
 H U T T G P E C O K O J P J A E L H E U
 O O P Y H L W X P L P K L T H E F T S Y
 P I O U J K Q Z A B H O R K Q W K J R T

[The following names and words come from the text of this lesson or from the list of additional Scriptures.]

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|-------------|-----------------|
| 01. Shechem | 02. Hebron |
| 03. Dothan | 04. Reuben |
| 05. Joseph | 06. Ishmeelites |
| 07. Gilead | 08. Egypt |
| 09. Judah | 10. Midianites |
| 11. Jacob | 12. Potiphar |
| 13. Pharaoh | 14. abhor |
| 15. defile | 16. pride |
| 17. thefts | 18. foolishness |