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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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## Genesis 37.

(2016)

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But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

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## Genesis 37.

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### Topics.

- Israel loved Joseph and made him a robe of many colors.
- Joseph's first dream of sheaves standing upright and bowing to him.
- Joseph's second dream of the sun, moon and eleven stars bowing to him.
- Joseph's brothers plan to kill him and throw him into one of the pits.
- Reuben persuades the brother's not to kill Joseph, but cast him into a pit.
- Midianite traders sell Joseph to the Ishmaelite's and they take him to Egypt.
- The brothers dip Joseph's robe in goats' blood and take it to Jacob.
- Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on and mourned for his son.
- Twelve lessons that can be learned from this story.
- Seven reasons why Joseph can be seen as a type of Christ.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

**The previous chapter:** chapter thirty-six lists Esau's wives and sons born of Canaanite women; the dukes and sons of Esau born in Edom; the dukes of the Horites, the sons of Seir in the land of Edom; the sons of Dishon and the dukes of the Horites; kings who reigned in the land of Edom; the names of the dukes of Esau and finishes with the the history of Edom and Idumea in prophecy.

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### Israel Loved Joseph and Made Him a Robe of Many Colors.

Genesis 37:1-4 ----- <sup>1</sup>Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan. <sup>2</sup>These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought a bad (evil in KJV) report of them to their father. <sup>3</sup>Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors. <sup>4</sup>But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.

The opening words, "Jacob lived in Canaan," contrasts Jacob with Esau, who moved to Mount Seir (also called the land of Edom). Joseph is now seventeen years old. It should be noted that a lad of seventeen years was generally a far more mature teenager than we think of seventeen year olds in our Western culture in the sense that during these early ancient times children did not spend their teenage years socializing and parting etc.

From their very early years they were mostly learning their fathers trade, how to hunt, shepherd, grow crops and be a soldier and as soon as they were able they were either working with him or fighting on the battle fields.

**The sons of Bilhah and Zilpah:** Bilhah was the handmaid of Rachel her sons to Jacob were Dan (Gen. 30:5) and Naphtali (Gen. 30:7) and Zilpah was the handmaid of Leah, her sons to Jacob were Gad (Gen. 30:10-11) and Asher (Gen. 30:12-13). The sons of these two handmaids would have been nearer to Joseph's own age.

**He was the son of his old age:** (v3) means that Joseph was born when he was ninety-one years old. Benjamin of course was the last son born to Jacob so it perhaps would be better read, "He was one of the sons of his old age," especially since it is not a dogmatic statement, but simply an expression to highlight the fact that he was one of the sons that was born when Jacob was an elderly man. Both Joseph and Benjamin were sons of Rachel (Gen. 30:22-24) (Gen. 35:16-19) the wife Jacob loved which means that it is possible Jacob favoured Joseph over Benjamin because Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin. (Gen. 35:16-19).

**Joseph's character:** the future history of Joseph shows that though he was his father's favourite he was not raised up in idleness, but in godly and worldly wisdom, industry and labour. Parents who do not discipline and train their children in such a manner and instead spoil them run the risk of raising children that are good for nothing.

It is also possible that Joseph was Jacob's favourite son because his other sons had brought him great grief. Levi and Simon had murdered all the men of the city of Shechem (Gen. 34:25-29) and the other sons had plundered all the wealth from it forcing him to leave the land (Gen. 34:30) that he had purchased (Gen. 33:18-19) and Reuben had disgraced him by sleeping with Bilhah.

In contrast to these sons, Joseph was a wise and godly son evidenced by the following two dreams God gave him and by his refusal to sleep with the Pharaoh's wife when she tried to seduce him ((Gen. 39:7-10) and his good rule over Egypt. It is certain his younger years prepared him for God's calling on his life in his later years.

**Joseph brought a bad (evil in KJV) report of them to their father:** (v2) when Jacob's sons were away from the eye of his father they did things that they dared not do when at home with him. Joseph seeing the wrong they would do informed his father of their wrong doings (what the evil was that they were doing we are not told) perhaps in the hope that Jacob would discipline them and guide them from their misconduct.

**A coat of many colours:** (v3) according to the general opinion it was a long robe with the sleeves reaching to the hands and its length to the feet mostly worn by persons that were not generally involved in long hours of physical labour. Following are the three most common ideas concerning the colours: -

1. It was a multi-coloured robe of interwoven loom or of different coloured thread that formed colourful patterns.
2. It was a robe of small pieces of patchwork of different colours sown together to form a complete robe much like many beautiful dresses are made in India by sewing strips of crimson, purple and other colours together to form a beautiful dress.
3. It was a robe distinguished by different figures of a great variety of colours that the craft person had embroidered into it.

Judges chapter five speaks of Israel dividing their enemies' spoil of embroidered and dyed materials and of materials of dyed and embroidered work. (Judges 5:30). Even today the passion for various colours still reigns among the Arabs and other people of the East, who are fond of dressing their children in this type of colourful attire.

Jacob made an outward show of his love by dressing Joseph in finer clothing than the rest of his children. It was very clear to Jacob's brothers that Joseph was the favourite son of his father and not them. It is an unwise parent that shows one child favour above all others since it creates an environment for jealousy and quarrels to breed in.

**Joseph's First Dream of Sheaves Standing Upright and Bowing to Him.**

Genesis 37:5-8 ----- <sup>5</sup>Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. <sup>6</sup>He said to them, "Hear this dream that I have dreamed: <sup>7</sup>Behold, we were binding sheaves in

the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf." <sup>8</sup>His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

This is no random dream, but one that is fully under the control of God. The events are fixed by God who will bring it about in every detail in the not too distant future. Though the prophetic historical future events come to Joseph in symbolical form it is very clear as to what the dream means. He sees in his mind himself and his brethren working together binding up sheaves of corn that were reaped in the fields of Egypt during harvest time.

**We were binding sheaves in the field:** (v7) the sheaves are an allusion to the sheaves of the corn of Egypt when Joseph was ruling at the right hand side of the Pharaoh during the seven years of famine throughout the land. Symbolically they are symbols of the twelve sons of Jacob.

**My sheaf arose and stood upright:** (v7) the picture here is of Joseph and his brothers binding the sheaves of corn in the fields and laying them on the ground after which his sheaf arises up of itself and stands upright then not only do his brothers sheaves rise up, but so do all the sheaves that they had bound and they all bow to his sheaf. The symbolism is of course of Joseph rising up and ruling over his brothers and all the people of Egypt and of them making obeisance to him.

The sheaves of corn are a perfect emblem of the brothers coming to Joseph in Egypt for corn and bowing to him when their barns were empty and his was full. This was wonderfully fulfilled when they appealed to him for corn and bowed themselves down before him with their faces toward the earth.

- Now Joseph was governor over the land. He was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground. (Gen. 42:6).

After Joseph had told the dream to his brothers they not only considered his words to be extremely prideful, but were also highly offended that their seventeen-year old brother would dare to exalt himself above them which further increased their hatred and hostility toward him.

**NOTICE:** God clearly showed Joseph his exaltation, but he did not show him his imprisonment. This teaches that just because God calls a person to ministry it does not mean that it will be free of hardships.

### **Joseph's Second Dream of the Sun, Moon and Eleven Stars Bowing to Him.**

Genesis 37:9-11 ----- <sup>9</sup>Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." <sup>10</sup>But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?" <sup>11</sup>And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind (observed the saying in KJV).

This second dream confirms the first dream as it relates to the same subject. Even though the emblems and symbols are different and more detailed it is a repetition of the same thing in another shape. This second dream serves to interpret the first dream and should have taught them that it was certain to come to pass.

**The sun:** (v9) being the brightest of all signifies Jacob the father the head and ruler of his household.

**The moon:** (v9) the moon being of lessor light signifies the mother. As to which of the four mothers the moon actually refers to has caused some problems throughout the years for the following reasons. Rachel, Joseph's mother and the woman recognised as the true mother of Israel has already died, which leaves Leah as the most likely, but it is also possible that she was not alive at the time they entered Egypt since she died at Hebron. (Gen. 49:31).

This leaves only Bilhah and Zilpah as the mothers to bow down to Joseph. This seeming apparent dilemma can be resolved if the moon is taken to signify all four mothers of the twelve sons of Israel. There is no need to limit the moon to one mother or to separate the mothers. The vision embraces all four mothers collectively as one complete whole symbolised by the moon.

With this in mind the interpretation would be as follows, should all four mothers be alive they would all willingly bow down to Joseph, but in actual reality only those that are alive at the time of the fulfilment actually do. It should also be remembered that this is a vision that the eternal God is giving to Jacob in a dream so in His eternal mind and from heavens perspective Rachel and Leah would not be seen as being dead, but rather as being eternally alive.

**Jacob and the mother are not** mentioned in the first dream, because, in the actual event it was only his brothers that went at first to Egypt and there did him obeisance and it was not until afterward that his father and all his household went with them.

**The eleven stars:** (v9) here we are given far more specific detail, the eleven stars clearly signify Jacob's eleven sons making the application of Joseph's dream plain.

**He told it to his father:** (v10) there is no doubt Joseph being only seventeen years old was filled with tremendous excitement when the dream had finished and couldn't wait to tell his father who had great love for him. However, much to his surprise and shock he did not get the warm and happy response that he was expecting, but instead was rebuked.

It is difficult to understand why his father would have responded to him in such a manner, especially since he had experienced many amazing dreams and vision himself and we are told, "he kept the saying in mind," (observed the saying in KJV) (v11) meaning he kept all Joseph's sayings in his heart. (Luke 2:51) which implies that he believed what his son was telling him.

Following may help explain Jacob's reason for responding to Joseph in such a harsh manner. We are told that Joseph told this second dream to his father and his brothers (v10). Jacob seeing his young son's enthusiasm and being fully aware of the other sons already festering resentment choose not to show Joseph favour, because he was aware it would only fuel the fires of hatred Joseph's brothers already had toward the son he loved.

In an attempt to dispel their hatred, he rebukes Joseph in front of his brothers in the hope it might calm the tension that is already very high in the household. Should this reasoning be correct it would also explain why we are told that Jacob kept what Joseph had said in his mind, meaning he kept it to himself, he didn't go speaking about it to others for fear it would only fan the flames of hatred amongst his sons.

#### **Jacob sends Joseph to Shechem to see if all is well with His Brothers.**

Genesis 37:12-17 ----- <sup>12</sup>Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. <sup>13</sup>And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." And he said to him, "Here I am." <sup>14</sup>So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock, and bring me word." So he sent him from the Valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. <sup>15</sup>And a man found him wandering in the fields. And the man asked him, "What are you seeking?" <sup>16</sup>"I am seeking my brothers," he said. "Tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock." <sup>17</sup>And the man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.

**Joseph is sent to Dothan:** (v14) Jacob had purchased a certain part of the land of Shekem (Gen. 33:18-19) and the rest he acquired by conquest. He sends Joseph to inquire of the well-being of his brothers. Joseph with obedient promptness leaves Hebron and goes to Shechem where he learns that they had moved onto Dothan which was a town about twelve miles north of Shechem situated in a small, but fertile valley.

It is very likely that the sheep and cattle had consumed the grass of the larger fields around Shechem and therefore Jacobs sons had moved their livestock from the fields of Shechem to the fresh fields of Dothan.

Since it had been many days, and maybe even months, since Jacob had heard anything of them it is probable that Jacob was concerned for his sons, because of the danger they were exposed to from the neighbouring tribes and nations of the Canaanites, on account of their having (some time ago) slaughtered the men of the city of Shechem (Gen. 34:25-30), because of this horrific event some paraphrase Jacob saying, "I am afraid, lest the Horites (the people of Shechem) come and smite them, because of their smiting Hamor and Shechem, and the inhabitants of that city.

Jacob was a man of a timid spirit whereas his sons were fierce by nature and would have no such fear. It is also possible that they were compelled to leave the neighbourhood of Shechem, because they were abhorred and loathed by the people of Shechem, because of Simeon and Levi's evil murderous massacre of all the men of the city of Shechem. (Gen. 34:25-30).

#### **Joseph's Brothers Plan to Him Kill Him and Throw Him into One of the Pits.**

Genesis 37:18-20 ----- <sup>18</sup>They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. <sup>19</sup>They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. <sup>20</sup>Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams."

To make false pretensions to having received a message from God whether by a dream, a vision or some other way was highly detested by the people of Israel and considered a blasphemy.

It seems likely that Joseph's brothers considered his dreams to be dreams of his own imagination rather than a true vision of God and considered him to be a pretender. This would also explain some of the extreme distain they had toward him.

**Come now, let us kill him:** (v20) we are not told who began this evil and murderous discussion, but based upon the fact that Joseph when his brothers came before him in Egypt bound Simon before his brother's eyes and held him in custody while he allowed his other brothers to freely return to Jacob with their donkeys loaded with sacks of grain (Gen. 42:22-23), some feel that Simon was the leader of this evil plot.

**We will say that a fierce animal has devoured him:** (v20) this would be feasible since Joseph did not have the fierce nature that his brothers did and wild beasts such as lions and bears did dwell in those regions.

**Let us throw him into one of the pits:** (v20) one of the waterless pits (v24) that are dug to catch and hold the rain water. In summer they are often dry and should a man be thrown into one there would be very little chance of escaping since they are very deep. Their plan at this stage was to murder Joseph and throw him into a pit to hid their villainous crime and to put him out of their sight and minds forever.

**We will see what will become of his dreams:** (v20) the brothers rightly reasoned that if Joseph was killed his dream would also be killed. This of course would be a true statement since if Joseph ceased to exist none of the events seen in his dream could come to pass.

#### **Reuben Persuades the Brother's not to Kill Joseph, but Cast Him into a Pit.**

Genesis 37:21-24 ----- <sup>21</sup>But when Reuben heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." <sup>22</sup>And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; cast him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him"— that he might rescue him out of their hand to restore him to his father. <sup>23</sup>So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore. <sup>24</sup>And they took him and cast him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

Reuben had a more compassionate heart and consciousness toward Joseph than the others and realised he could not save Joseph from the evil intent of his brothers while they were present so in a hidden attempt to save him he persuades his brothers not to murder Joseph, but instead cast him into a waterless pit in the hope that he could return by himself later and rescue him.

**They stripped him of his robe of many colors:** (v23) it is certain Joseph had some idea of his brother's attitude toward him, but it is very unlikely he fully comprehended how much they hated him. It is easy to imagine how astonished and terrified he must have been at the heartless and cold reception of his brothers when they began to forcefully strip him of his robe and throw him into the pit. A vivid picture of Joseph's state of agony and despair is later spoken of in the following verses by the brothers themselves.

- Then they said to one another, "In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he begged us and we did not listen. That is why this distress has come upon us. (Gen. 42:21).

How shocked and stunned Joseph must have been when they laid their hardhearted and cruel and violent hands upon him.

**Judah suggests Selling Joseph to the Ishmaelites.**

Genesis 37:25-27 ----- <sup>25</sup>Then they sat down to eat. And looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. <sup>26</sup>Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? <sup>27</sup>Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers listened to him.

**They sat down to eat:** (v25) how black was their heart, how deep their resentment, how seared their conscience and how dead their emotions that they could sit down to eat a meal. Their minds were so seared by hatred and darkened by jealousy and lacking in empathy that the gross evil that they had committed did not impact upon their conscience.

**They saw a caravan of Ishmaelite's:** (v25) while eating the meal they see a caravan of Ishmaelite's coming from Gilead and Judah immediately sees a way to make a profit out of his brother and makes a cold-blooded calculation to sell him.

**Midianite traders sell Joseph to the Ishmaelite's and they take Him to Egypt.**

Genesis 37:28 ----- <sup>28</sup>Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt.

**Twenty pieces of silver:** probably twenty shekels of silver which was the price for a male slave under twenty. (Lev. 27:5) (Exod. 21:32).

These verses have raised the age old question, "who purchased Joseph, the Ishmaelite's or the Midianites?" Critics of the Bible have used the following verses to support their claims that the Bible contradicts itself, because at first glance they appear to do so since they state that Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelite's and then state that the Midianites sold Joseph to Potiphar and that Potiphar purchased Joseph from the Ishmaelite's.

- Then 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. (Gen. 37:28).
- Meanwhile, the Midianites sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, Pharaoh's officer, the captain of the bodyguard. (Gen. 37:36).
- Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard, bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him down there. (Gen. 39:1).

The confusion may be explained and the verses harmonised in the following two ways: -

1. The Midianites were descendants of Midian who was a son of Abraham by Keturah (Gen. 25:1-2) and even though they were a distinct people from the Ishmaelite's the following verses show that they are called both Ishmaelite's and Midianites. Either because they were mixed together by marriage and the land in which they dwelt or because they are here travelling together as one caravan of merchants.
  - The men of Ephraim said to him, "What is this that you have done to us, not to call us when you went to fight with Midian? (Judges 8:1).
  - Gideon said to them, "Let me make a request of you: every one of you give me the earrings from his spoil." (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.). (Judges 8:24).
  - So Midian was subdued before the people of Israel, and they raised their heads no more. (Judges 8:28).
2. The Ishmaelite's and the Midianites were near neighbours so for greater safety they travelled in a company together trading in merchandise, and are therefore sometimes referred to as one company and at other times as the two.

After making the sale the brothers went back to their meal with as sense of prideful satisfaction and relief because they had achieved their evil goal without bloodshed, and gotten rid of Joseph forever (or at least they thought so) and been paid money for him. The brother's determination to sell Joseph was so that they themselves would be exalted and loved by their father, but by their evil plot they became the instruments of accomplishing Joseph's royal exaltation over the entire land of Egypt.

#### **The Brothers Dip Joseph's Robe in Goats Blood and take it to Jacob.**

Genesis 37:29-33 ----- <sup>29</sup>When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes <sup>30</sup>and returned to his brothers and said, "The boy is gone, and I, where shall I go?" <sup>31</sup>Then they took Joseph's robe and slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. <sup>32</sup>And they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, "This we have found; please identify whether it is your son's robe or not." <sup>33</sup>And he identified it and said, "It is my son's robe. A fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces."

The previous verses show us that Reuben's motive were good, he wished to save Joseph's life and as soon as the other brothers were out of the way he returned to bring Joseph up and out of the pit and get him safely back to Jacob. Naturally he was devastated when he found the pit empty and tears his clothes, in a token of anguish of mind for the loss of his brother and the grief he knew his father would be struck with.

**They sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father:** (v32) some maybe confused by this statement since the first part says they sent it to Jacob and the second part states they brought it to Him. This can be explained by the fact that it was not an uncommon practice for others to be said to do what others have caused them to do.

This principal applies to those who assist in murder, they are considered to be as guilty as the actual murderer themselves.

The sons, most likely feeling far too guilty to face their father and witness his heartfelt agony and grief when he sees Joseph's bloodstained robe for the first time send it by the hand of a messenger. The messenger asks Jacob to recognise the robe and he immediately supposes Joseph had been devoured by a wild beast. It is certain that the sons had told the messenger to tell Jacob Joseph had been devoured by wild beast as he handed the torn and bloodstained robe to Jacob.



This was a natural conclusion from the condition the coat was in and because the country he was sent into did have wild beasts dwelling in it which was the very thing the messenger would have told him to conceal the wickedness of the brothers.

**Jacob's extreme sorrow:** (v33) the sight of the bloody coat convinces Jacob at once that Joseph had been devoured by a wild beast. When one sin is committed it often leads to other sins to conceal it and the more sins and secrets the greater the hardness of heart, such is the deceitfulness of sin.

Joseph's brothers kept their sinful secrets for some time; but their wickedness later came to light and it is here published to the world. This story highlights the truth that one sin leads to another to conceal it. In this story Jacob's great grief was the consequence of the atrocious crime his sons had committed.

### **Jacob Tore His Garments and put Sackcloth on and Mourned for His Son.**

Genesis 37:34-36 ----- <sup>34</sup>Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. <sup>35</sup>All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father wept for him. <sup>36</sup>Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.

As great as Jacob's affliction was, it was unworthy of the man who wrestled God and prevailed (Gen. 32:24-29). His grief was beyond the measure it should have been and unfitting for a father of many children and a man of faith. Whether Jacob knew it or not, his own conduct in showing such extreme favouritism toward Joseph was the underlying cause that his son's evil had risen up from.

He allowed himself to indulge himself in his sorrow more than one who believed in the Almighty, Sovereign, Eternal God the God of everlasting life. Jacob allowed himself to indulge in his sorrow more than is becoming of one who believed in the government of an eternal supreme and all-wise God.

**All his daughters rose up to comfort him:** (v35) Dinah is the only daughter of Jacob mentioned by name, the daughters here are probably his daughters-in-law since several of his sons were married. There is no doubt the daughters comfort would have been sincere, but this cannot be said of the sons who by their diabolical actions brought about all his grief and sorrow

**I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning:** (v35) Sheol is the Hebrew word for grave. Based upon the fact that Jacob believed that Joseph had been devoured by wild beasts which means he would not have been buried some reason that he could not have gone down into the grave to his son, but this is foolish reasoning for the following two reasons.

- 1 Had Jacobs body been torn by wild beasts it is certain Jacob would have supposed that his brothers had buried what remained of his body.
- 2 Biblically, when people die on the battle field or at sea they are still spoken of as being in the grave. It matters not how one dies or where they die it is common language to speak of them as being in a grave.

During the Old Testament thousands could be killed on a battle field in one day, so to prevent disease, and wild animals and birds eating the decaying corpses they would be buried in a mass pit. The same thing is done today when there is a plague or too many bodies and not enough men to bury them all in separate graves. From heavens perspective these dead bodies are still seen as being in their own graves and the Bible still speaks of them being in their own grave.

It matters not if a person is killed on a battle field and left to die on the surface of the earth; killed in a fire and only ashes remain or killed at sea so that the body can never be recovered, the Bible still speaks of them as being in their own grave and from heavens perspective they are viewed in this way. For further information, see the titles: -

- Hell or the Grave (Final destination of Humans).
- In Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

When this story is viewed as a complete whole we see the wonder in the way in which God's sovereign purpose was brought about through the natural affairs of mankind despite their sinful deeds. The wicked brothers achieved their ends, the merchants also obtained theirs and Potiphar gained a wise young slave obtained his. Now here is the wonder: it was these events that prepared the way for Jacob's family to go down to Egypt (when the famine came) which ends in their deliverance by Moses which leads to the establishing of the true faith in the world and the spread of it amongst all nations by the Gospel.

**The Midianites sold him in Egypt to Potiphar:** (v36), for information concerning this verse see the notes under the title: -

- Midianite traders sell Joseph to the Ishmaelite's and they take Him to Egypt," following (v28) (above).

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### **Twelve Lessons that can be Learned from this Story.**

This is an ugly story of jealousy and cruel hate that shines a vivid light upon the following ten truths: -

- 1 The wickedness of mankind's afflictions is often the direct path to the fulfilment of God's purposes
- 2 Mankind in their rebellion and sin often act as blind instruments to bring about God's sovereign purposes.
- 3 God's great purposes are worked out and come to pass even through the wicked acts of unconscious men.
- 4 The poisonous fruit of family hatred if left to fester has the potential to bring about the evillest of crimes.
- 5 Corruption amongst God's children is the worst corruption.
- 6 Showing open partiality for one child has the potential to bring about jealous and envious passions in the other children.
- 7 Outward manifestations of sin are connected to the inmost passions that dwell on the inside and stem up from them.
- 8 The smallest seed of hate has the potential to dispel from the heart and mind all forms of compassion, empathy and mercy.
- 9 The heart and mind must be guarded from the beginnings of envy, jealousy and greed.
- 10 God's choice that Israel would be His chosen nation was not grounded on any merit in them, but on His sovereign purpose.

The stories undisguised openness in revelling such sins is the tone of Scripture throughout the Bible. It never attempts to hide the faults even of God's best men. It tells its story with open honesty and without showing any favouritism by covering the sins of its great kings and prophets. Whether a heavenly man or an earthly man the faults and flaws of neither are hidden. The Bible tells its story as it is in reality with all mankind's goodness and all their ugliness to bring out into the open the hidden and unseen inward nature of humanity, both the good and the bad. It does this to shine a light upon the truth that no one is without sin and that we all need a Saviour.

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### **Seven reasons why Joseph can be Seen as a Type of Christ.**

1. Joseph's words, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today," (Gen. 50:20), perfectly fit the crucifixion of Jesus, those who took part in bringing about such a murderous crime and those who actually did it meant it for evil, but, God meant it for good, to bring it about the path and the way in which many should be saved to eternal life.
2. Though Joseph was the beloved son of his father, he was hated by those of his own household, yet his father sent him out to enquire of their well-being and all the while murderous plots were being laid against him. Likewise, Jesus was the beloved Son of his heavenly Father who sent him out to those of his own household (i.e., the Jews) to seek and save them and all the while they hated him and schemed murderous plots against him.
3. The hatred of Jacob's sons toward Jacob brought about their brother's advancement, their blessing and the saving of the population of Egypt and the saving of the offspring of Jacob. Likewise, the Jews hatred toward Jesus and murderous plots against him brought about their eternal salvation and the salvation of men and women from all nations of the world.
4. From an envious heart Joseph's own turned against him with murderous intent, likewise Jesus own from a jealous spirit turned against him with the same murderous intent.
5. The powerful motives of jealousy, envy, betrayal and greed which are all powerful fruits of the flesh that were manifested in the sons against their brother are the same fruits of the flesh that brought about the crucifixion of Jesus.
6. Joseph's brothers plotted to kill him so that he would not rule over them, but by their evil plot they became instruments of accomplishing Joseph's royal exaltation. Likewise, the Jews plotted to kill Jesus so that he would not reign over them, but by their evil plot they became the very instruments that made way for the highest exaltation and honour God has bestowed upon any man.
7. Joseph was first humbled and then exalted to the right hand side of the Pharaoh the king of Egypt to rule over his kingdom, likewise, Jesus was first humbled and then exalted to the right hand side of his heavenly King to rule over His Kingdom.

The lesson to learn from the story of Joseph is that the sin of evil-doers does not hinder God's plan, they carry on their sin with no conscious of God and yet His sovereign and eternal plan continues to come to pass despite their wicked works.

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