

# The Selling and Captivity of Joseph

## *Genesis 37:1-36*

- I. THE BIRTH AND MANNERS OF JOSEPH (Genesis 37:1-2; Genesis 30:22-24)
  - A. Joseph's Birth (Genesis 30:22-24)
    1. The son of Jacob and Rachel
    2. The first son of Rachel and 11<sup>th</sup> son of Jacob (Genesis 30:22-24)
  - B. Joseph's Name (Genesis 30:24)
    1. His name declared – *“she called his name Joseph”*
    2. His name meaning – *“The LORD shall add to me another son”*
      - a. *Increaser*
      - b. *May He add*
  - C. Joseph's Industrialness (Genesis 37:2)
    1. His brief years – *“Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren...”*
    2. He was busy – This young man is busy, though only a teenager he was in the fields working. He wasn't allowed to sit around doing nothing (Proverbs 19:15; 1 Timothy 5:13). Hard work builds the body and character. It is healthful and helpful for a young person to learn to work hard while they are young in order to build the right character in them.
    3. He was beneficial – Not only was he busy, but he was also helpful. One can be busy without being helpful. No doubt Joseph had done this for some time; therefore, he would likely have gotten proficient at it.
  - D. Joseph's Integrity (Genesis 37:2)
    1. His fellowlabourers – *“and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah [Dan and Naphtali], and with the sons of Zilpah [Gad and Asher], his father's wives.*
    2. His findings – *“and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.*
      - a. Despite working with unsavory men (basing this upon the report of their evil), Joseph remained upright in conduct.
      - b. While we need to be careful of our associates, yet if you have worthwhile character, it will survive evil associations which you may have to come in contact within this life. Character that changes with the conditions is not worth much.

3. His fearlessness
  - a. The family dwelt in Canaan (see Genesis 37:1)
    - (1) In the land wherein Jacob's father was a stranger
    - (2) The last known place of Jacob's dwelling was Mamre or Hebron (Genesis 35:27; Genesis 37:14).
  - b. The lad's labour with his brethren (Genesis 37:2)
    - (1) Joseph was seventeen years old and called a lad.
    - (2) Ishmael was at least fourteen years old when he was called a lad (Genesis 16:16; Genesis 21:5; Genesis 21:12).
    - (3) A lad was old and big enough to carry a grown child (2 Kings 4:18-20).
    - (4) This could give light on the age of the boy at the feeding of the 5,000 (John 6:8-13).
  - c. Joseph informed Jacob, his father, of the brethren's evil report (Genesis 37:2).

## II. THE MANTLE FOR JOSEPH (Genesis 37:3, 4)

### A. The favour for Joseph (Genesis 37:3)

1. The higher love for Joseph – *“more than all his children”*
2. The reason for the higher love – *“because he was the son of his old age.”*
3. The demonstration of higher love – *“he made him a coat of many colours.”*

### B. The rejection of Joseph (Genesis 37:3, 4)

1. The greatness in the rejection – *“Israel loved Joseph more than all his children” (Genesis 37:3).*
  - a. Joseph was the favourite of Jacob's.
  - b. This of course will bring about jealousy and rejection on the part of his brethren as we will well see.
2. The goodness of the rejection (Genesis 37:3)
  - a. *“Because he was the son of his old age.”*
  - b. *“he made him a coat of many colours.”*
3. The guile because of the rejection
  - a. *“And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him” (Genesis 37:4).*
  - b. The seeing – The “saw” refers to them seeing the *“coat of many colours”* on Joseph.
  - c. The speaking – What they “saw” affected them in such a way that produced a bad outcome. There are two ways to look at their reaction...
    - (1) Obviously, they would be resentful of Joseph since their father was showing more affection for him and not as much for them.

- (2) However, it is just as an important truth that men of small character react in a bad way when one is elevated in their midst. Consider the resentment of the Pharisees against Jesus when the people followed Him. Carnal nature has trouble when another succeeds and does well. The Christian is told to weep with them that weep and to rejoice with them that rejoice (Romans 12:15). The chapter goes on to tell us that we should be “of the same mind” (Romans 12:16-18).
- d. The side effect – the outcome of their jealousy
  - (1) They hated him.
  - (2) They could not speak peaceably unto him. Note: The comment in scripture of them not being able to speak peaceably is an indicator of bitterness on the part of him brethren. When one “flies off the handle” at one comment from a person there is a good possibility of bitterness in that individual(s) heart(s).

### III. THE MESSAGES FOR JOSEPH (Genesis 37:5-11)

#### A. The Dream of the Sheaves (Genesis 37:5-8)

1. Joseph told the dream (Genesis 37:5-8).
  - a. Joseph and his brothers were binding sheaves in the field.
  - b. Joseph’s sheaf arose and stood upright.
  - c. The brothers’ sheaves stood up before Joseph’s sheaf and made obeisance.
  - d. Note: In this case, a sheaf is a bundle of cut stalks of grain.
2. Joseph’s brothers hated him more (Genesis 37:5, 8). The problem for Joseph’s brothers was not that they could not understand his dream, but that they understood enough of the dream not to appreciate its intended message.

#### B. The Dream of the Sun, Moon, and Stars (Genesis 37:9-11)

1. The dream (Genesis 37:9)
  - a. Joseph dreamed yet another dream.
  - b. The sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to Joseph.
2. Jacob’s reaction to the dream (Genesis 37:10-11)
  - a. Jacob rebuked Joseph for the dream (Genesis 37:10).
  - b. Jacob questioned Joseph concerning the dream (Genesis 37:10).
  - c. Jacob observed the words of Joseph (Genesis 37:11).
3. The interpretation of the dream (Genesis 37:10)
  - a. It was understood by Jacob.
  - b. The representations explained
    - 1) The sun—Jacob
    - 2) The moon—Rachel; This is interesting especially considering that Rachel died in Genesis 35:18-19.

## 3) The eleven stars—Joseph’s brethren

## C. The Disapproval of the Dreams (Genesis 37:10)

1. The telling of the dreams – *“He told it to his father, and to his brethren...”*
2. The rebuke of the dreams – *“and his father rebuked him”*
  - a. As bad as it must have been to be hated by his brethren, even worse must have been the rebuke at the voice of his father.
  - b. Joseph and Jacob obviously had a good relationship and this rebuke by the latter must have hurt Joseph greatly. Opposition and rebuke from unexpected places always hurts more than from obvious ones.

## D. The Fulfillment of the Dreams (Genesis 37:5-11)

1. The dreams are fulfilled – Much later these dreams would be fulfilled – *“Joseph’s brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him”* (Genesis 42:6).
2. The dreams repeated – Again in Genesis 43:26, 28; Genesis 44:18; and Genesis 50:18 a similar incident is recorded with his brethren bowing themselves before him. God’s word was true. Joseph the dreamer may have been hated and his dreams despised, but that did not stop the fulfillment of said dreams. The further fulfillment of the dreams occurred when the family moved to Egypt and placed themselves under his rule.

## II. THE OBEDIENCE OF JOSEPH (Genesis 37:12-17)

## A. The Sending to Shechem (Genesis 37:12-14)

1. The brethren went to feed the flock in Shechem (Genesis 37:12).
2. Jacob asked Joseph to check on his brethren and the flocks (Genesis 37:13-14).
3. Joseph went out of the vale of Hebron and came to Shechem (Genesis 37:14).
  - a. Note: Shechem is where Simeon and Levi had slaughtered all the males (Genesis 34:25).
  - b. Note: Shechem had been a place of defilement, yet this is where the brothers went. Wickedness tends to migrate to wicked places (Proverbs 1:14; cp. Nehemiah 4:7-9).

## B. The Continuation to Dothan (Genesis 37:15-17)

1. A certain man found Joseph wandering in the field (Genesis 37:15).
2. The man asked Joseph what he was seeking (Genesis 37:15).
3. Joseph asked of the location of his brethren (Genesis 37:16).
4. The man told Joseph his brethren had moved into Dothan (Genesis 37:17).
5. Joseph went to Dothan and found his brethren (Genesis 37:17).

## III. THE MEANNESS TO JOSEPH (Genesis 37:18-36)

## A. The Conspiracy of the Brothers (Genesis 37:18-20)

1. The premeditation of their conspiracy (Genesis 37:18)

- a. The brethren saw Joseph afar off.
  - b. Before he came near them, they conspired together to slay him.
  2. The cooperation of their conspiracy (Genesis 37:19)
    - a. Their unity—*“they said one to another”*
    - b. Their mockery—*“Behold, this dreamer cometh.”*
  3. The plans of their conspiracy (Genesis 37:20)
  4. The cover-up of their conspiracy (Genesis 37:20)
    - a. We will say some evil beast devoured him.
    - b. This cover-up worked without them saying a word (Genesis 37:31-33).
  - B. The Stalling by Reuben (Genesis 37:21-22)
    1. Reuben spared Joseph’s life (Genesis 37:21).
    2. Reuben’s plan for Joseph (Genesis 37:22)
      - a. The appearance of Reuben’s plan
        - 1) To cast Joseph into a pit
        - 2) To leave Joseph for dead
      - b. The reality of Reuben’s plan
        - 1) Reuben would return later to get Joseph out of the pit.
        - 2) Reuben would safely deliver Joseph into the hands of his father.
  - C. The Casting of Joseph into the Pit (Genesis 37:23-24)
    1. Joseph’s brethren stript him of his coat (Genesis 37:23).
    2. Joseph’s brethren cast him into a pit with no water (Genesis 37:24).
  - D. The Bartering of Joseph into Slavery (Genesis 37:25-36)
    1. The selling to the Ishmeelites (Genesis 37:25-28)
    2. The disappointing of Reuben’s purpose (Genesis 37:29-30)
    3. The deceiving of Jacob (Genesis 37:31-35)
    4. The selling of Joseph to Potiphar (Genesis 37:36)
- IV. JOSEPH, AS A TYPE OF JESUS CHRIST

- A. This is Only a Small Sampling and Covers Only Up to This Time of His Life.
  5. Both were shepherds (Genesis 37:2; John 10:11).
  6. Both exposed evil (Genesis 37:2; John 7:7).
  7. Both were loved of their fathers (Genesis 37:3; Matthew 3:17; John 10:17).
  8. Both were hated of their brethren (Genesis 37:4; John 15:18).
  9. Both were sent by their fathers (Genesis 37:13; 1 John 4:10) for the welfare of their brethren (Genesis 37:14; John 1:11).
  10. Both were conspired against (Genesis 37:18; Matthew 12:14; John 11:47-50), stripped of their garments (Genesis 37:23; Matthew 27:27-28), and cast into a pit (Genesis 37:24; Matthew 12:40).
  11. Both were sold (Genesis 37:28; Matthew 26:14-16).
- B. The Remainder of the Similarities of Joseph and Christ Will be Mentioned Later.