

# BOOK OF GENESIS

## GENESIS 37

VERSES 1-4	ADDED TEXTUAL NOTES, QUESTIONS, OTHER
<p><b>1</b> Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.</p> <p><b>2</b> This is the account of Jacob's family line. Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them. <b>3</b> Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him. <b>4</b> When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.</p>	<p><b>V. 1</b> – Jacob lived in Canaan – how does this compare to Genesis 36?</p> <p><b>V. 2</b> - Joseph was 17. Young, inexperienced, perhaps naive. He was tending flocks with his half-brothers (sons of the concubines Bilhah and Zilpah). Why might this detail matter?</p> <p>"He brought their father a bad report." Was Joseph being faithful? Or was he a tattletale trying to curry favor with Dad? The text doesn't explicitly say, but given the family dynamics, how might his brothers have perceived this?</p> <p><i>Remember Family Context:</i> Remember Chapter 34-35? Simeon and Levi massacred Shechem. Reuben slept with Bilhah (35:22). This family is deeply dysfunctional. The oldest three sons have already disqualified themselves through violence and sexual sin. Joseph, son of the favored wife Rachel, is positioned to receive special honor.</p>

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	<p><b>V. 3</b> – "Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons." Notice the text uses the covenant name "Israel" here, not Jacob. <i>Yet Israel is acting like the old Jacob—</i> which cycle is he repeating?</p> <p>Why do we repeat our parents' sins?</p> <p><b>V. 3</b> – It's the kind of robe worn by <i>royalty or those exempt from manual labor</i>. How would this “stir the pot?”</p>
<b>VERSES 5-11</b>	<b>ADDED TEXTUAL NOTES, QUESTIONS, OTHER</b>
<p><b>5</b> Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. <b>6</b> He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: <b>7</b> We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it." <b>8</b> His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said. <b>9</b> Then he had another dream, and he told it</p>	<p><b>V. 5-7</b> – Joseph's first dream. In the Ancient Near East, dreams were recognized as a common means of divine communication. His brothers would have immediately understood the prophetic significance. <i>But why did Joseph TELL them?</i></p> <p><b>V. 7</b> – The imagery: binding sheaves (harvest time, provision, blessing). Joseph's sheaf stands upright, theirs bow down. This is about authority, rule,</p>

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to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." **10** When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" **11** His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

dominion. In an agrarian society, this symbolism is crystal clear.

**V. 8** – How do the brothers respond?

NOTE: Dreams in Genesis: This is actually the first dream in Genesis where God doesn't speak directly. Previous dreams (to Abimelech in Ch 20, to Jacob in Ch 28 and 31, to Laban in Ch 31) included direct divine speech. Here, the message comes through symbolism alone. Joseph will become famous for INTERPRETING symbolic dreams (Ch 40-41).

**V. 9-10** – What does Jacob do that stirs the pot once more?

Even Jacob rebukes him! "Will your mother and I... bow down to you?" Notice the problem: Rachel (Joseph's mother) was already dead (35:19). So who is the "moon"? Perhaps Leah? Or Bilhah, Rachel's servant who raised Joseph? The text leaves this ambiguous.

**V. 11** – "His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind." The brothers feel envy and rage. Jacob feels... curiosity? Pondering?

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VERSES 12-17	ADDED TEXTUAL NOTES, QUESTIONS, OTHER
<p><b>12</b> Now his brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks near Shechem, <b>13</b> and Israel said to Joseph, "As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them." "Very well," he replied. <b>14</b> So he said to him, "Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks, and bring word back to me." Then he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron. When Joseph arrived at Shechem, <b>15</b> a man found him wandering around in the fields and asked him, "What are you looking for?" <b>16</b> He replied, "I'm looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are grazing their flocks?" <b>17</b> "They have moved on from here," the man answered. "I heard them say, 'Let's go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan.</p>	<p><b>V. 12</b> – SHECHEM! Where did we learn of this last?</p> <p><b>V. 13</b> – Israel sends Joseph to check on his brothers. Given the family tension, is this wise? Does Jacob not perceive the danger? Or does he trust that his sons wouldn't harm their brother?</p> <p><b>V. 14</b> – "From the Valley of Hebron" – This is about 50 miles from Shechem! Joseph is making a multi-day journey alone to find his brothers. Jacob is asking a lot of his 17-year-old favorite son.</p> <p>"Go and see if all is well (shalom) with your brothers." What is ironic about this?</p> <p><b>V. 15-17</b> – This seemingly random encounter with "a man" is actually theologically loaded. Who is this man? An angel? A divine messenger? Or just a helpful stranger? What is the significance?</p>

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	<p><b>V. 17</b> – Dothan is about 15 miles north of Shechem. Joseph obediently continues his search. <i>His faithfulness to his father will lead him into the pit.</i> Sometimes obedience leads to suffering.</p>
<b>VERSES 18-24</b>	<p><b>ADDED TEXTUAL NOTES, QUESTIONS, OTHER</b></p>
<p><b>18</b> But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him. <b>19</b> "Here comes that dreamer!" they said to each other. <b>20</b> "Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams." <b>21</b> When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. "Let's not take his life," he said. <b>22</b> "Don't shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don't lay a hand on him." Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father. <b>23</b> So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing— <b>24</b> and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The</p>	<p><b>V. 18</b> – "Before he reached them, they plotted to kill him." What previous story does this sound like?</p> <p><b>V. 21-22</b> – Reuben intervenes. As the oldest brother, he had some authority. But how does he handle the situation? Analyze Reubin's behavior here.</p> <p><b>V. 24</b> – "The cistern was empty; there was no water in it." What do you think this detail highlights?</p>

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<p>cistern was empty; there was no water in it.</p>	<p><b>Note: Joseph in the pit as a type -</b> Joseph's descent into the pit and later ascent to power in Egypt is a "type" (foreshadowing) of Jesus: innocent suffering, betrayal by his own people, descent into death (pit/grave), and exaltation to rule.</p>
<p><b>VERSES 25-28</b></p>	<p><b>ADDED TEXTUAL NOTES, QUESTIONS, OTHER</b></p>
<p><b>25</b> As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt. <b>26</b> Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? <b>27</b> Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood." His brothers agreed. <b>28</b> So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.</p>	<p><b>V. 25</b> – The Ishmaelites appear. Who are they again?</p> <p><b>V. 25</b> – The goods they carry: spices, balm, myrrh. What do these foreshadow?</p> <p><b>V. 26-27</b> – JUDAH speaks up. But what is his purpose?</p> <p><b>The 20 shekels of silver:</b> What does this seem to foreshadow?</p>

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VERSES 29-36	ADDED TEXTUAL NOTES, QUESTIONS, OTHER
<p><b>29</b> When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes. <b>30</b> He went back to his brothers and said, "The boy isn't there! Where can I turn now?" <b>31</b> Then they got Joseph's robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. <b>32</b> They took the ornate robe back to their father and said, "We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son's robe." <b>33</b> He recognized it and said, "It is my son's robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces." <b>34</b> Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days. <b>35</b> All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. "No," he said, "I will continue to mourn until I join my son in the grave." So his father wept for him. <b>36</b> Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard.</p>	<p><b>V. 29</b> – Explain Reuben's behavior here.</p> <p><b>Reuben's tragedy:</b> He tried to do the right thing, but halfheartedly. His weak intervention wasn't enough. There's a lesson here: sometimes compromised obedience or partial righteousness still results in disaster. What could Reuben have done differently?</p> <p><b>V. 31</b> –The deceiver is now the deceived!</p> <p><b>V. 32</b> – "Examine it to see whether it is YOUR SON'S robe." The Hebrew is pointed: not "your son Joseph" but just "your son." Distancing language. They can't even say his name.</p> <p><b>V. 35</b> – "All his sons and daughters came to comfort him." The SAME sons who caused his grief now try to comfort him! More deception!</p>

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**Note:** God is working behind the scenes, weaving together human choices (good and evil) to accomplish His purposes. This man appearing at just the right moment shows divine providence guiding the story toward Egypt—which sets up the Exodus, the ultimate salvation story that points to Jesus.

Humans can resist, rebel, and reject God's purposes, but they cannot ultimately stop them. What Satan and humans mean for evil, God uses for good (50:20). The cross is the supreme example—killing Jesus was meant to stop Him, but became the means of salvation.