

Genesis 37 - Joseph's Coat; Joseph's Dreams; Joseph's Brothers Plot Murder; Joseph Sold

II. Epilogue: Patriarchal history (Gen 11:10—50:26)

(4) Life of Joseph (Gen 37:1—50:26)

(A) Sin of Joseph's family (Gen 37:1—38:30)

(a) His brothers (37:1-36)

(i) Jealousy of Joseph's brothers (37:1-11)

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Genesis 37

(4) Life of Joseph (Gen 37:1—50:26)

(A) Sin of Joseph's family (Gen 37:1—38:30)

(a) His brothers (37:1-36)

(i) Jealousy of Joseph's brothers (37:1-11)

1 Now Jacob lived in the land where his father had lived as a **stranger**, in the land of Canaan.

1 Now Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan.

1 Jacob continued to live in the land they were occupying, where his father had journeyed in the territory of Canaan.

1 And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.

- "...stranger" - Jacob, as his father Isaac, although they resided in the Land, they were still resident aliens; they had not yet possessed their inheritance

— In contrast with the powerful Esau, Jacob was dwelling in the Land of the sojournings of his father, the Land of Canaan

— Unlike Esau, Jacob had no "chiefs" or kings (35:11) yet, no lands to govern, and no full tribes. He was a sojourner, a nomad.

— Delitzsch remarks that secular, worldly greatness comes swifter than spiritual greatness

— A promised spiritual blessing demands patience and faith

— Waiting while others prosper is a test of one's faithfulness and perseverance

Introduction to Joseph

The last 14 chapters of Genesis are devoted to the story of Joseph, which is the same number of chapters devoted to Abraham. The story of Joseph completes the story of Jacob. In this last *toledoth*, there is an interaction between free choice of Joseph's brothers, and God's sovereignty. There are three shifts of emphasis within Joseph's story. It begins with Joseph, shifts to the brothers, then shifts again to Jacob. Joseph himself is the link between Jacob's family and the nation of Israel; linking from Israel the family to Israel the nation.

While Joseph is often taken as a type of the Messiah, he is never so used by the NT. In the NT, Joseph is mentioned 4x: John 4:5; Acts 7:9-14; Heb 11:21-22; Rev 7:8; but in none of those four cases is he used as a type of Christ. Furthermore, Joseph is never characterized by sin; not that he was sinlessly perfect—as no one is—but that the biblical record does not mention any lapse of faith in Joseph. The text relates lapses in Abraham, in Isaac, and in Jacob, but no lapse is mentioned in the case of Joseph.

Finally, there is no account of any special revelation to Joseph. While there is special revelation as God appears to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in various forms, there is no such revelation to Joseph. So Joseph's life of faith is lived out based upon what he knew of the Word of God, not based upon any special revelation given to him by God.

2 These are *the records of* the generations of Jacob. Joseph, *when he was* **seventeen years of age**, was pasturing the flock with his brothers, while he was *still* a youth, along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father.

2 These are *the records of* the generations of Jacob. Joseph, when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers while he was *still* a youth, along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father.

2 This is a record of Jacob's descendants. When Joseph was seventeen years old, he was helping his brothers tend their flocks. He was a young man at that time, as were the children of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. But Joseph would come back and tell his father that his brothers were doing bad things.

2 These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.

- "...seventeen years of age" - Joseph suffered for 13 years (41:46)

— He left Paddan-Aram, where he was born, when he was six; thus, 11 years had passed, during which he lived in Succoth, Shechem and Hebron

- Jacob was 77 when he arrived in Haran, 90 when Joseph was born, and 107 when Joseph was sold, making Isaac 167 at this point

- Jacob was 120 at Joseph's elevation (v3), and 130 when he went to Egypt
- Joseph was learning the job of a shepherd, working with his brothers and half-brothers
- Joseph associated with his half-brothers, the sons of Jacob's wives' handmaids, Bilhah and Zilpah
- This made sense because they were closer to his age than the others
- Joseph relayed information to Jacob of some wrongdoing, making him a talebearer
- While talebearer has a bad connotation, there is nothing inherently wrong with it as long as the tale is true; if others were indeed guilty of wrongdoing, there is nothing wrong with reporting it
- The post of chief shepherd might be assigned him either from his being the son of a principal wife or as a "faithful steward" in reporting the scandalous conduct of his brethren

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his *other* sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a **multicolored tunic**.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his brothers, since he was born to him in his old age, so he had made a richly-embroidered tunic for him.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.

- Joseph had his father's affection and a unique status before Jacob. The coat seemed to signify that Jacob favored Joseph above the rest with the intent of granting him all or a larger portion of the inheritance.

— Yet Jacob should have remembered what parental favoritism does to a family

— It had separated him from his loving mother (27:1—28:5), and it would separate Joseph from Jacob

- "...multicolored tunic" - *ketonet pasim*, it does not mean a coat of many colors, but rather a long coat full of sleeves; a long-sleeved robe

— The "many colors" is based on the LXX, which reads "a multicolored frock"; it was followed by the Latin Vulgate

— It was probably a multi-colored royal tunic, with long, flowing sleeves, which set him out from the group as the favored one

— Formed in those days by sewing together patches of colored cloth, and considered a dress of distinction (Judges 5:30; 2 Sam 13:18-19)

— The natural inference was that Jacob had chosen Joseph to be the one through whom the divine blessings would flow, the right of the firstborn, even though he was the 11th son, he was the firstborn of Joseph's favorite wife, Rachel, so Joseph bestowed upon him the rights of the firstborn.

— This was how Jacob communicated to his other sons who was to have preeminence; Joseph would replace Reuben as having the right of the firstborn; this was Jacob's response to Reuben's sin (35:22)
(Jesus also possessed a distinctive robe: Ps 22:18; Matt 2:35; John 19:24)

Coat of Many Colors

In Judges 5:30, we read, "Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey; to every man a damsel or two; to Sisera a prey of *divers colors*, a prey of divers colors of needlework, of divers colors on both sides, *meet for* the necks of them that take the spoil?" Here we learn that such garments were to be worn as a *mark of distinction*. Again in 2 Sam 13:18 we read, "And she had a garment of *divers colors* upon her: for with *such robes* were *the King's daughters* that were virgins appareled." Here again we get the same thought: This was the attire of unmarried princesses; it was a mark of honor, singling out the wearer as one of noble birth. This, no doubt, was Jacob's object to distinguish Joseph (born of Rachel) from his half brothers (born of the slave-wives).

Christ, too, was marked off from all His brethren according to the flesh, as one of noble birth, by outward signs of peculiar distinction and honor. It is blessed to behold what care and pains God took to manifest this coat of many colors, in connection with His blessed Son. The "virgin's" Babe was distinguished from all others born by the Angelic Song "o'er Bethlehem's plains" none other was ever welcomed thus by the Heavenly hosts! So, too, the "star" that appeared to the wise men gave evidence of the Heavenly Origin of the new-born King.

At His baptism we see again the many-colored coat: multitudes presented themselves to John at the river Jordan and were baptized of him; but when the Christ of God came up out of the waters, the Heavens were opened and the Spirit of God descended upon Him in the form of a dove, thus distinguishing Christ from all others!

Behold again the coat of many colors in John 12. In John 13 the feet of the disciples (pointing to their walk) are defiled, and need to be washed with water (type of Word); but in the previous chapter (for in all things Christ must have the pre-eminence) we see the feet of our blessed Lord, not washed with water (for there was no defilement in Him), but *anointed with precious ointment*, the fragrance of which filled the house, telling that the walk of Him (as well as His blessed person) was a sweet smelling savor to the Father. Thus again was Christ distinguished from and elevated above all others. So, too, at the Cross, the distinguishing coat of many colors may be seen. In death, as everywhere, His uniqueness was manifested. He died as none other ever died or could: He "laid down His life." And the uniqueness of His death was divinely attested in the supernatural phenomena that accompanied it: the three hours of darkness, the quaking of the earth, and the rending

of the veil. The “many colors” of the coat also speak to us of Christ’s varied glories and infinite perfections.

4 And his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms.

4 His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms.

4 When Joseph’s brothers realized that their father loved him more than all of his brothers, they hated him so much that they were unable to speak politely to him.

4 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.

- The primary reason the brothers hated Joseph was due to Jacob’s open favoritism toward him

5 Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more.

5 Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more.

5 Right about this time, Joseph had a dream and then told it to his brothers. As a result, his brothers hated him all the more!

5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

- A secondary reason for the brothers’ hatred was the dream that Joseph had, and relayed to his brothers

6 He said to them, “Please listen to this dream which I have had;

6 He said to them, “Please listen to this dream which I have had;

6 “Let me tell you about this dream that I had!” he said.

6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:

- God used dreams when His people were leaving or outside the Land, that is, in the lands of pagans:

— God had announced the Egyptian bondage to Abraham in a dream (15:13)

— God promised protection and prosperity for Jacob in his sojourn with Laban (28:12,15)

— And, by two dreams God predicted that Joseph would rule over his family

7 for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf stood up and also remained standing; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf.”

7 for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf."

7 "We were tying sheaves together out in the middle of the fields, when all of a sudden, my sheaf stood up erect! And then your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf!"

7 For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.

8 Then his brothers said to him, "Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?" So they **hated him even more** for his dreams and for his words.

8 Then his brothers said to him, "Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

8 At this, his brothers replied, "Do you really think you're going to rule us or lord it over us?" So they hated him even more because of his dreams and his interpretations of them.

8 And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

- "...hated him even more" - in v5, they hated him for who he was; in v8, they hated him for what he said

— In the gospels, Jesus' brothers hated Him according to the flesh in this same twofold way: they hated Him because He was the beloved Son of the Father, and they also hated Him because of His teaching; Who He was (John 5:18; 6:41; 10:30-31); His teaching (Luke 4:28-29; John 7:7; 8:40)

- The scene of the first dream was agricultural: this may be a hint of the manner in which Joseph's authority over his brothers would be achieved (Cf. 42:1-3)

— His ostensible destiny wasn't missed by the envious brothers

9 Then he had yet another dream, and informed his brothers of it, and said, "Behold, I have had yet *another* dream; and behold, **the sun** and **the moon**, and **eleven stars** were bowing down to me."

9 Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, "Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

9 But then he had another dream, and he proceeded to tell his brothers about that one, too. "I had another dream," he said. "The sun, moon, and eleven of the stars were bowing down before me!"

9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.

- "...the sun" - represents Jacob
- "...the moon" - represents Leah (Rachel has died); Cf. Rev 12:1-5
- "...eleven stars" - the other 11 sons of Jacob, Joseph's brothers

This dream becomes significant in understanding the imagery in Rev 12: the woman there is Israel, by Israel's own interpretation! This also is suggestive evidence that the "signs in the heavens" perceptions have some validity.

10 He also told *it* to his father as well as to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have had? Am I and **your mother** and your brothers actually going to come to bow down to the ground before you?"

10 He related *it* to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?"

10 When Joseph told his father about this, his father rebuked him and asked him, "What kind of dream is that? Will I, your mother, and your brothers really come to you and bow down to the ground in front of you?"

10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

- "...your mother" - didn't refer to Rachel because she was dead so it probably refers to Leah

11 And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter *in mind*.

11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying *in mind*.

11 As a result, his brothers became more envious of him. But his father kept thinking about all of this.

11 And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

- The scene of the second dream was celestial

— The sun, the moon, and 11 stars bowed down to him

— The dream, then, symbolically anticipated the elevation of Joseph over the whole house of Jacob

— Jacob himself acknowledged the implied interpretation

It is interesting that in Scripture, Jews never need someone else to interpret their dreams. There is no record of one Jew interpreting the dream of another Jew. Any kind of revelatory dream by a Jew is understood by Jews. However, individual Jews interpret the dreams to

Gentiles: Joseph explains Gentile dreams to Gentiles; Daniel explains Gentile dreams to Gentiles. The reason for this may be found in Rom 3:2.

(ii) Plot against Joseph (37:12-22)

12 Then his brothers went to pasture their father's flock in Shechem.

12 Then his brothers went to pasture their father's flock in Shechem.

12 Some time later, his brothers left to tend their father's flock in Shechem.

12 And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.

- Shechem was where Simeon and Levi slaughtered every male in revenge for the rape of Dinah

— However, there was no opposition to these brothers being there because, in keeping with the custom and laws of the day, it was now recognized as their by right of conquest

13 And Israel said to Joseph, "Are your brothers not pasturing *the flock* in Shechem? Come, and I will send you to them." And he said to him, "I will go."

13 Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing *the flock* in Shechem? Come, and I will send you to them." And he said to him, "I will go."

13 And Israel instructed Joseph, "Your brothers are tending the flock in Shechem. Come here, because I'm going to send you to them."

"Here I am!" he responded.

13 And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I.

14 Then he said to him, "Go now and see about the welfare of your brothers and the welfare of the flock, and bring word back to me." So he sent him from the **Valley of Hebron**, and he came to Shechem.

14 Then he said to him, "Go now and see about the welfare of your brothers and the welfare of the flock, and bring word back to me." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

14 "Go and see how things are with your brothers," Israel ordered him. "And see how things are with the flock. Bring back a report for me." Then he sent Joseph from the valley of Hebron.

When Joseph reached Shechem,

14 And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

- "...Valley of Hebron" = fellowship, communion; the place where Joseph dwelt in happy fellowship with his father; there he was at home, known, loved, understood

— But from this he was sent to a place characterized by strife and bloodshed, unto those who appreciated him not, yea, to those who envied and hated him
- From Jacob's home in the Valley of Hebron north to Shechem was about 50 miles (and Dothan was another 15 miles north)
— The vale of Shechem was, from the earliest mention of Canaan, blessed with extraordinary abundance of water
— That's why they traveled from Hebron to this place, though it must have cost them near 20 hours travelling—that is, at the shepherd rate, a little more than 50 miles.

15 A man found him, and behold, he was wandering in the field; and the man asked him, "What are you looking for?"

15 A man found him, and behold, he was wandering in the field; and the man asked him, "What are you looking for?"

15 a man found him wandering around in a field. So the man asked him, "What are you looking for?"

15 And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou?

16 He said, "I am looking for my brothers; please tell me where they are pasturing *the flock*."

16 He said, "I am looking for my brothers; please tell me where they are pasturing *the flock*."

16 "I'm searching for my brothers," he responded. "Tell me, where are they tending the flock?"

16 And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks.

17 Then the man said, "They have moved from here; for I heard *them* say, 'Let's go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at **Dothan**.

17 Then the man said, "They have moved from here; for I heard *them* say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.

17 "They've already left," the man answered. "I heard them saying that they were headed to Dothan." So Joseph followed his brothers to Dothan and found them there.

17 And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

- "...Dothan" = law, custom

— It was another day's journey north of Shechem

— It was located both on the north-south trunk route, and on the east-west trade route between Gilead and the Coastal Plain, where it connected with the *Via Maris* that went

south to Egypt

— Joseph, in obedience to his father, “went after” his brethren, whom he found dwelling under bondage to the Law, and slaves to the religious customs of the Pharisees (Cf. Mark 9:8)

18 When they saw him from a distance, and before he came closer to them, they plotted against him to put him to death.

18 When they saw him from a distance and before he came close to them, they plotted against him to put him to death.

18 Now as soon as they saw him approaching from a distance, before he arrived they plotted together to kill him.

18 And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.

- This shows their degree of hatred toward Joseph

19 They said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer!

19 They said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer!

19 “Look!” they said. “Here comes the Dream Master!

19 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.

- This confirms the primary source of their hatred: the dreams that Joseph told them about, which implied that he would be their ruler

— Joseph’s dreams seemed to already have been verified by Jacob giving him the royal coat

20 Now then, come and let’s kill him, and throw him into one of the pits; and we will say, ‘A vicious animal devoured him.’ Then we will see what will become of his dreams!”

20 Now then, come and let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; and we will say, ‘A wild beast devoured him.’ Then let us see what will become of his dreams!”

20 Come on! Let’s kill him and toss him into one of the cisterns. Then we’ll report that some wild animal devoured him and wait to see what becomes of his dreams!”

20 Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

- The brothers devised a plot to kill that dreamer in order to prevent his dreams from being fulfilled

— Earlier, they plotted to kill many Shechemites in revenge for their sister (34:24-29)

— Now, by contrast, they plotted to kill their own brother! (Cf. 1 John 3:12-13)

21 But Reuben heard *this* and rescued him out of their hands by saying, “Let’s not take his life.”

21 But Reuben heard *this* and rescued him out of their hands and said, "Let us not take his life."

21 When Reuben heard about it, he tried to save Joseph from their plot. "Let's not do any killing,"

21 And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.

22 Then Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood. Throw him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him"—so that *later* he might rescue him out of their hands, to return him to his father.

22 Reuben further said to them, "Shed no blood. Throw him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but do not lay hands on him"—that he might rescue him out of their hands, to restore him to his father.

22 Reuben told them. "And no blood shedding, either. Instead, let's toss him into this cistern that's way out here in the wilderness. But don't lay a hand on him." (Reuben intended to free Joseph and return him to his father.)

22 And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

- Reuben, the first-born, was directly responsible for the lad to his father

— He refused to endorse outright murder; instead, proposed throwing him into a pit to die of starvation, thirst or exposure

— The result of this approach would be that no single brother would be guilty of murder

— However, Reuben was trying to gain an opportunity to restore Joseph to Jacob

— Although Reuben knew how much Jacob loved Joseph and that Jacob intended to replace Reuben with Joseph as the firstborn, with firstborn rights, he did not allow this to motivate him to murder Joseph or let him die.

— Thus, Reuben did fulfill some firstborn responsibilities to his father

(iii) Selling of Joseph (37:23-28)

23 So it came about, when Joseph reached his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the multicolored tunic that was on him;

23 So it came about, when Joseph reached his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the varicolored tunic that was on him;

23 As it was, when Joseph arrived where his brothers were, they stripped off the tunic that Jacob had given him—that is, the richly-embroidered tunic that he was wearing.

23 And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him;

24 and they took him and threw him into the pit. Now the pit was empty, without any water in it.

24 and they took him and threw him into the pit. Now the pit was empty, without any water in it.

24 They grabbed him and tossed him into the cistern, but the cistern was empty. (There was no water in it.)

24 And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.

- A pit with no water is another name for Hades (Zech 9:11; Cf. Matt 12:40)

- This event in Dothan is described again later (42:21)

25 Then they sat down to eat a meal. But as they raised their eyes and looked, behold, a caravan of **Ishmaelites** was coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying labdanum resin, balsam, and myrrh, on their way to bring *them* down to Egypt.

25 Then they sat down to eat a meal. And as they raised their eyes and looked, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing aromatic gum and balm and myrrh, on their way to bring *them* down to Egypt.

25 After this, while they were seated, eating their food, they looked around and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead with camels carrying spices, balm, and myrrh for sale down in Egypt.

25 And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.

- The brothers sat down to eat bread while Joseph was pleading for mercy (42:21)

— They ate and drank and had no care for the affliction of Joseph (Amos 6:6)

- "...Ishmaelites" - descendants of Abraham by Hagar (16:15) and the Midianites (37:28) descended from Abraham by his concubine Keturah (25:2)

— The term Ishmaelites became a general designation for desert tribes, so that even Midianite traders were also known as Ishmaelites

— They are called Midianites (37:28; Judges 8:22-26), and Medanites, in Hebrew (37:36), being a travelling caravan composed of a mixed association of Arabians. The Ishmaelites and Midianites were allies; the Midianites were eventually absorbed by the Ishmaelites.

— These were North Arabian caravaneers who branched off through Gilead to the main route to Egypt, the *Via Maris*, from the King's Highway

26 And Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it for us to kill our brother and cover up his blood?

26 Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it for us to kill our brother and cover up his blood?

26 Then Judah suggested to his brothers, "Where's the profit in just killing our brother and shedding his blood?

26 And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?

- Ironical how, of the 12 sons of Jacob, Judah had the idea to sell Joseph just as Judas, one of the 12 apostles

27 Come, and let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our *own* flesh." And his brothers listened *to him*.

27 Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our *own* flesh." And his brothers listened *to him*.

27 Come on! Let's sell him to the Ishmaelites! That way, we won't have laid our hands on him. After all, he's our brother, our own flesh."

So Judah's brothers listened to him.

27 Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content.

- This shows that Reuben's intercession did have some effect on the brothers; what he said they should not do, they now also say they really should not do

28 Then some Midianite traders passed by, so they pulled *him* out and **lifted** Joseph out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for **twenty shekels of silver**. So they brought Joseph into Egypt.

28 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.

28 As the Midianite merchants were passing through, they extracted Joseph from the cistern and sold Joseph for 20 pieces of silver to the Ishmaelites, who then took Joseph down to Egypt.

28 Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

- "...lifted" - a type of the resurrection

- "...twenty *shekels* of silver" - the average price of a slave at the time

- The brothers' intent was to render Joseph's dream null and void, but in fact they rendered the fulfillment of the dream certain. They were creating a situation that would cause the

fulfillment of them, proving a principle of Scripture: even the wrath of men will end up praising God.

(iv) Brothers deceive Jacob (37:29-36)

29 Now Reuben returned to the pit, and behold, Joseph was not in the pit; so he tore his garments.

29 Now Reuben returned to the pit, and behold, Joseph was not in the pit; so he tore his garments.

29 Later, when Reuben returned to the cistern, Joseph wasn't there! In mounting panic, he tore his clothes,

29 And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes.

- Although absent at the time of the sale, he would be held responsible and thus joined in the coverup

30 He returned to his brothers and said, "The boy is not *there*; as for me, where am I to go?"

30 He returned to his brothers and said, "The boy is not *there*; as for me, where am I to go?"

30 returned to his brothers, and shouted, "He's not there! Now what? Where am I to go?"

30 And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?

- Reuben lamented that he would be held liable for fratricide; he also believed he had failed in his responsibility as the firstborn

31 So they took Joseph's tunic, and slaughtered a male goat, and dipped the tunic in the blood;

31 So they took Joseph's tunic, and slaughtered a male goat and dipped the tunic in the blood;

31 So they took Joseph's coat, slaughtered a young goat, and dipped the coat in the blood.

31 And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood;

- This begins the cover-up...

32 and they sent the multicolored tunic and brought it to their father and said, "We found this; please examine *it* to see *whether* it is your son's tunic or not."

32 and they sent the varicolored tunic and brought it to their father and said, "We found this; please examine *it* to see whether it is your son's tunic or not."

32 Then they stretched out the richly-embroidered tunic to dry, and brought it to their father.

"We've found this," they reported. "Look at it and see if this is or isn't your son's tunic."

32 And they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no.

33 Then he examined it and said, "*It is my son's tunic. A vicious animal has devoured him; Joseph has surely been torn to pieces!*"

33 Then he examined it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him; Joseph has surely been torn to pieces!"

33 Examining it, he cried out, "It's my son's tunic! A wild animal has no doubt torn Joseph to pieces."

33 And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.

- Based on the coat, Jacob concluded that Joseph was dead

34 So Jacob tore his clothes, and put on a sackcloth *undergarment* over his waist, and mourned for his son many days.

34 So Jacob tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days.

34 So Jacob tore his clothes, dressed himself in sackcloth, and then mourned many days for his son.

34 And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.

- Jacob was convinced that his favorite son was dead.

— Irony of retribution here: Jacob had deceived his own father Isaac using his brother's tunic, and the skins of a goat (27:16); now Jacob was being deceived with goat's blood

— Jacob deceived Isaac with Esau's clothes (27:15); now Jacob was deceived by the use of Joseph's clothes

35 Then all his sons and all his daughters got up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, "Surely I will go down to **Sheol** in mourning for my son." So his father wept for him.

35 Then all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, "Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son." So his father wept for him.

35 All his sons and daughters showed up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. He kept saying, "Leave me alone! I'll go down to the next world, still mourning for my son."

So Joseph's father wept for him.

35 And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.

- Jacob's sons tried to comfort him, although they knew the truth
- Jacob's daughters are mentioned in 46:7,15; this could also include his daughters-in-law and his grand-daughters
- "...Sheol" - not the grave: the region of departed spirits; the center of the earth. 1st use of term in OT
- Before the death of Christ, all souls descended there upon death, the faithful and unfaithful entered into different compartments (Cf. Luke 16)
- Jacob assumes his son was still conscious after death, and he expects to see him there
- This usage could not mean the "grave" because he believed Joseph was eaten by an animal (v33)
- Joseph was still Jacob's son; he retained his identity
- "go down" implies a geocentric metaphor
- The deceiver of Isaac (27:18-29) was deceived by his own son's lie. Sin's punishment is often long delayed.

36 Meanwhile, the Midianites sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, Pharaoh's officer, the captain of the bodyguard.

36 Meanwhile, the Midianites sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, Pharaoh's officer, the captain of the bodyguard.

36 Meanwhile, down in Egypt, the Midianites sold Joseph to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's court officials, who was also Commander-in-Chief of the imperial guards.

36 And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard.

- Joseph was first sold to the Midianites (Ishmaelites); they then sold him to Potiphar
- Cf. Heb 5:8-9

Gen 37 closes with an account of Jacob's sons selling their brother Joseph unto the Midianites, and they, in turn selling him into Egypt. This speaks, in type, of Christ being rejected by Israel, and delivered unto the Gentiles. From the time that the Jewish leaders delivered their Messiah into the hands of Pilate they have, as a nation, had no further dealings with Him; and God, too, has turned from them to the Gentiles.

Hence it is that there is an important turn in our type at this stage. Joseph is now seen *in the hands of the Gentiles*. But before we are told what happened to Joseph in Egypt, the Holy Spirit traces for us, in typical outline, the history of the Jews, while the antitypical Joseph is *absent from the land*. This is found in Gen 38.

