

Genesis 37 New American Standard Bible

Joseph's Dreams

Now Jacob lived in the land where his father had lived as a stranger, in the land of Canaan. ²These 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. ³Now 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. ⁴And 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.

⁵Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. ⁶He said to them, "Please listen to this dream which I have had; ⁷for 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." ⁸Then 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.

⁹Then 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." ¹⁰He 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?" ¹¹And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter *in mind*.

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

¹³And 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, "[^h]I will go." ¹⁴Then 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.

¹⁵A man found him, and behold, he was wandering in the field; and the man asked him, "What are you looking for?" ¹⁶He said, "I am looking for my brothers; please tell me where they are pasturing *the flock*." ¹⁷Then 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.

The Plot against Joseph

¹⁸ [l] When they saw him from a distance, and before he came closer to them, they plotted against him to put him to death. ¹⁹ They said to one another, “[k] Here comes this dreamer! 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!” ²¹ But Reuben heard *this* and rescued him out of their hands by saying, “Let’s not take his life.”

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. ²³ So it came about, when Joseph reached his brothers that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the multi-coloured tunic 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.

²⁵ Then they sat down to eat a meal. But as they raised their eyes and looked, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelite’s was coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying labdanum resin, balsam, and myrrh, on their way to bring *them* down to Egypt. ²⁶ And Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is it for us to kill our brother and cover up his blood? 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*.

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.

²⁹ Now Reuben returned to the pit, and behold, Joseph was not in the pit; so he tore his garments. ³⁰ He returned to his brothers and said, “The boy is not *there*; as for me, where am I to go?” ³¹ So they took Joseph’s tunic, and slaughtered a male goat, and dipped the tunic in the blood;

³² and they sent the multi-coloured 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.” 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!” ³⁴ So Jacob tore his clothes, and put on a sackcloth *undergarment* over his waist, and mourned for his son many days. 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. ³⁶ Meanwhile, the Midianites sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, Pharaoh’s officer, the captain of the bodyguard.

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

1. What questions were provoked within you?
2. Did anything confuse you?
3. Did anything move you emotionally?
4. Did God instruct you to do something?
5. Did you gain any insight into God's character?

Paul's observations and insights

1. We get a synopsis of Israel's life as a father.
2. Jacob settled in Canaan where his dad had settled and so keeps the promises of God.
3. Joseph at 17, with his half-brothers, were caring for the cattle.
4. He was bit of a trouble maker, telling his dad what his brothers were like. No-one likes a grass!
5. Joseph was loved by his father and spoilt – set apart. Why?
6. He was the son of Rachel, who Israel loved, she conceived him at an old age.
7. Jacob gave to Joseph a present, a coat of many colours, that stood out among the crowds.
8. His brothers saw this favouritism and received the spirit of rejection 'dad loves you more than us'.
9. Their rejection manifests itself through the spirit of hatred, they could not even befriend their brother - such was their soulish rejection.
10. Joseph's dream accelerated their hatred as it elevated him and dismissed them - the dream 'Lorded' it over them.
11. So why did he tell them? Did he not know it would 'Lord' it over them?
12. The brothers could not see the dream was from God, forewarning them what was to come one day.
13. All this drove a wedge between them and Joseph, God was at work stirring the nest.
14. Joseph, not satisfied with the outcome of the first dream, comes at his brothers with a second dream, reiterating the meaning of the first dream.
15. Joseph tells his dad who reprimands him, Israel knew the inappropriateness of the dream because he could not see either, God was stirring the nest.
16. His brothers were jealous of him but his dad held what he had said to mind. What does this mean?
17. When Israel sent Joseph to his brothers little did he know, it would be the last time he would see his son for a long time.

18. Out in the field Joseph is lost but is helped by a man. Who is the man with no name?
19. The man says 'the brothers were here but now they are there.'
20. When God is here it is 'Emmanuel', when God is there it is 'Shammah'.
21. The brothers saw him from a distance and made plans to do him wrong. How do they know it is Joseph?
22. Their rejection/jealousy found release by giving Joseph a nickname – 'the dreamer'.
23. A nickname comes from 'old nick' – a name given to satan.
24. Their hatred of their brother drove them to plot and kill Joseph even though their father loved him.
25. God was in all these plans, 'all things work together for good for those who love the Lord' – Methodist Church.
26. Reuben seeks to protect his brother, why?
27. He suggests an alternative plan so as to rescue him later.
28. Joseph ends up in a pit, imprisoned by his brothers.
29. How must Joseph have felt being imprisoned by his brothers.
30. The tunic coat was the evidence his father would need to convince him Joseph was dead – the skeleton in the cupboard.
31. Godly interventions – things sometimes get worse before they get better.
32. Remorse/reject stabilised Judas emotions, he made an alternative suggestion and everyone was in agreement - so Joseph was sold into slavery.
33. Reuben attempts to save Joseph but he was gone from the pit. How was Reuben feeling?
34. Did the brothers not tell Reuben what had happened? All of them plot to deceive their father, Jacob.
35. They ask 'is this your son's tunic?' As if they didn't know. And Jacob jumps to the conclusion his son is dead.
36. How can the brothers sit back and watch their father suffer in agony and say nothing.
37. There are times in life when you will not be comforted, when the pain is so great. He says 'I will die in mourning for my son'. His father wept for him, but Joseph is sold to Potiphar in Egypt.