

Joseph--Genesis 37:1-11

Joseph's Coat and Dreams

I. Additional Scriptures...

1. The Abrahamic Promise (Gen 12:1-3).
2. Names of Jacob's 12 sons with mothers (Gen 35:22b-26).
3. God changed Jacob's name to Israel (Gen 32:28).
4. Stephen spoke to the Council in Jerusalem concerning Joseph (Acts 7:8-16).

II. Chronology.

Events of this chapter take place in the third Bible Period: *Patriarchy*.

They attach on to the purpose line of the Bible in that these events represent the first stage of the descendants of Abraham developing into a large body of people--a great nation.

III. Summary.

This chapter begins to focus in on the life of Joseph, one of the greatest role models to be found in the Bible. We learn about where Joseph lived. We learn that he was born when his father was old. We see that he was highly favored by his father and that favoritism was openly shown and observed by others of the family. The favoritism was demonstrated by the giving of a special coat to Joseph, which seemed to serve as a constant reminder of his favored status. We see that this favoritism had caused tension within the family among the sons of Jacob. Two dreams of Joseph are given in the text, both of which only add fuel to the fires of jealousy in the hearts of Joseph's brothers. Both of the dreams were easy to understand and involved having Joseph ruling over the other family members. The second of the dreams was told to his father. Jacob questioned Joseph about the dream, but we also are told that Jacob kept the interpretation in mind. This is very similar to the description of Mary's response to Jesus' statement in Luke 2:49-51 that He must be about His Father's business.

IV. Outline of the Text.

1. Introduction to Jacob's family (1-2).
2. The special feeling Jacob had toward Joseph (3-4).
3. Joseph's first dream (5-7).
4. Joseph's brothers respond to the dream (8).
5. Joseph's second dream (9).
6. Joseph discusses the second dream with Jacob (10-11).

V. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ Rachel, the mother of Joseph, was offended by the second of Joseph's dreams and rebuked him (cf., Genesis 35:16-19).
02. _____ Abraham was Jacob's father.
03. _____ The use of the word OBEISANCE in this text means that the sheaves of Joseph's brothers bowed down to Joseph's sheaf.
04. _____ The second dream Joseph dreamed was very difficult to interpret.
05. _____ Joseph was rebuked by his father in this text.

Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. _____ Whereas Jacob “observed the saying” regarding Joseph’s second dream, his brothers: (a) did not hear it; (b) envied him; (c) were rebuked by Jacob.
07. _____ The age of Joseph at the time of this text is: (a) about 30; (b) not given; (c) 17.
08. _____ The number of stars in Joseph’s second dream was: (a) innumerable; (b) 20; (c) the same number as the number of brothers he had.
09. _____ After the first dream, the reaction of the brothers of Joseph was that they hated him even more for his dreams and his: (a) words; (b) smile; (c) attitude.
10. _____ The reason given for Jacob’s special love for Joseph was that Joseph was: (a) so handsome; (b) the son of his old age; (c) no reason is stated.

Fill in the Blanks

11. Gen 12:____ “And I will make of thee a great _____, and I will bless thee, and make thy name _____; and thou shalt be a _____.”
12. Gen 35:23 “The sons of Leah; _____, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, and _____, and _____, and Issachar, and _____.”
13. Gen 32:28 “And he said, Thy name shall be called no more _____, but _____: for as a prince hast thou _____ with God and with men, and hast _____.”
14. Acts ____:8 “And he gave him the _____ of circumcision: and so Abraham begat _____, and circumcised him the _____ day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve _____.”
15. “And when his brethren saw that their father loved him _____ than all his brethren, they _____ him, and could not speak _____ unto him.”

Each Question is worth 7 points

My Score is: _____

Answers will appear in next week’s handout.

VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. *And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger...(Gen 37:1).* The Lord had promised this land to Jacob’s grandfather, Abraham (Gen 12:7). However, the land would be given for their possession according to the timetable of the Lord. Here we see the connection of family and more importantly the connection to the promise made to Abraham.
2. *...and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives...(Gen 37:2).* There seem to have been many sad consequences of the multiple wives of Jacob. There was much jealousy and misconduct in this family. It was Rachel who requested Jacob to father children with her handmaid, Bilhah (Gen 30:3). It was Leah who requested Jacob to father children with her handmaid Zilpah when she had finished bearing her children (Gen 30:9). We can see from the problems of this family the wisdom of one man and one woman for life.
3. *...and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report (Gen 37:2).* Some have tried to charge Joseph with being a troublemaker and tattler because of this passage. It seems to me that everything else that is revealed about Joseph would cause us to discount such ideas. His righteous heart must have been stirred by the misdeeds (which are not detailed for us here) of his step-brothers and wanted correction. This could have been done out of a very sincere sense of love for his brothers. Who can read Genesis 42:24 and not see the love Joseph felt for his brothers?
4. *Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children,...(Gen 37:3).* This ought not so to have been (cf., Ps 127:3-5). His tragic mistake in openly showing favoritism resulted in his separation from his beloved son for more than 20 years. There is no doubt that this same mistake is repeated many times by parents in our day.

5. Joseph's brothers *could not speak peaceably unto him* (Gen 37:4). How sad when relationships sour to such a point as this, especially among family members! It is even sadder when these kinds of feelings develop among spiritual brethren in the church. Our Lord instituted the very finest method for the prevention of such circumstances in Matthew 18:15-17.
6. *And Joseph dreamed a dream...* (Gen 37:5). Some believe that this dream of Joseph was not a revelation from God. This was, of course, one of the ways God communicated with men in this dispensation of time. I am inclined to believe that it was a revelation from God in that it passes the test of a prophet of Deuteronomy 18:22. What Joseph dreamed DID COME TO PASS (Gen 42:6).
7. *And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words* (Gen 37:8). The jealousy of Joseph's brothers had so enflamed them that they could not even stop to consider whether this dream might have been a revelation from God. There are many people today who hear God's word proclaimed and they are angered at the messenger, not knowing he is merely delivering God's truth to them which they will some day face (2 Cor 5:10). Preachers are sometimes wont to use Paul's response to the Galatian churches--Gal 4:16 *Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?* (cf., John 8:31-47). What Joseph revealed to them was the truth, but it was not what they wished to hear.
8. *And his brethren envied him...* (Gen 37:11). Envy can cause such tremendous problems. From the envy of these brothers came the further mistreatment of Joseph which brought wasted years of deep grief to Jacob (Gen 37:33-35). It was for envy that the brothers sold Joseph in to Egypt (Acts 7:9), just as Pilate knew that it was for envy that the Jews had brought our Lord to be crucified (Mt 27:18). No wonder then about the graphic warnings the Bible gives regarding envy's results (cf., Job 5:2; Prov 14:30; 27:4).
9. *...but his father observed the saying* (Gen 37:11). There seems to have been some bit of wisdom in the heart of the older Jacob. There is a distinction drawn here between the way that Jacob received the dreams of Joseph and the way the brothers did. At first, Jacob rebuked Joseph, but he must have been thinking that perhaps this was a revelation from God. He was not willing to close the door on what he had heard and was more receptive of what it might mean. The NCV has here... "his father thought about what all these things could mean."
10. **Joseph the Patient Sufferer** [Points taken from *Handfuls on Purpose*]. Joseph is a well-known and fruitful type of Jesus Christ. He was indeed despised and rejected; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Like our blessed Lord, when cast out by man, He was exalted by God to be a prince and a saviour.
 1. He was despised by his brethren, but beloved of his father (37:3,4).
 2. He was hated for his words, but honored with visions (37:8,9).
 3. He was cast into a pit, but there was no water in it (37:24).
 4. He was sold as a slave, but he was a prosperous man (37:28; 39:2).
 5. He was falsely blamed, but the Lord was with him (39:7-23).
 6. He was neglected by the butler, but remembered by the master.

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

Q A W D R K H U J O S E P H Q S A H G B
 W S E F A A B E N J A M I N W D Q J F V
 E D R G J L C Y J A Z P L E E F Z K N C
 R F T H A M G H K S X O M R R G E L A X
 T G Y J C N F T E D C J U D A H B K P Z
 Y H U K O B D R L L V I N H T H U M H A
 U J I L B V S E M F B U A T Y J L N T S
 I K O M Q C A W N G N N B Y U K U B A D
 A S H E R X Q Q B H I Y V U I L N V L F
 O L P N L E V I V D M T C I O M W C I G
 P M L B W E W A C J L R R E U B E N D H
 G N S V E Z A S X K K E X O P N E X S J
 A B I C R A E H Z L D W Z P L B R Z A K
 D V M X T S R D A P J A A L K V T A Q L
 L C E Z Y D T F Q O H Q N K J C Y S W B
 K X O A U F Y I S S A C H A R X U D E I
 J Z N S I G U H W I G A S J H Z I F R L
 H A K D O H I J E U F S D H G A O G T H
 G S J F P J O K R Y D D F G F S P H Y A
 F D H G L K P L T Z I L P A H D L J U H

[Below we have listed family members in Jacob's household. See how many you can find above]

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| 01. Jacob | 02. Leah |
| 03. Rachel | 04. Zilpah |
| 05. Bilhah | 06. Reuben |
| 07. Simeon | 08. Levi |
| 09. Judah | 10. Issachar |
| 11. Zebulun | 12. Dinah |
| 13. Gad | 14. Naphtali |
| 15. Asher | 16. Joseph |
| 17. Benjamin | 18. Dan |