

## Jsph 01 – The Life of Joseph - Gen 37

In our 6 yrs here together (*last Sun was our anniversary*)  
we've studied TWO great lives from the O.T.

**First** – we studied the **Life of Joshua**  
& then - A few yrs ago – we studied the **Life of David**

& **both** of **those studies** hold a special place in many of our lives  
(*& you can get them both from W-B-M*)

One of the absolute 'wonders' of the O.T.  
is that it teaches "**by illustration**"  
what the N.T. teaches "**by theology**"

It's like God **first** paints a picture in the **O.T.**  
& then He **describes** those truths in detail in the **N.T.**

It's my prayer - as we 'live thru' the **Life of Joseph** . . .  
that God would paint another fabulous, real life picture for us  
of some of the **greatest truths** found in the Bible

& **IF** we'll "**take hold**" of these truths - thru the life of Joseph  
then they won't be just "spiritual theory"

But **as we Apply** these truths  
from Joseph's life - to our own lives

God will use them to continue to transform ea of us  
Thru His **Living Word** - & the **Power of His Spirit**

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## **In the Life of Joseph we're going to see;**

- 1) how God **works in ALL THINGS** for Good!
- 2) the **Crucible** God uses - to mold us for His service
- 3) **the miracle** of "**Divine Forgiveness**" –  
*not just **WHAT** it is, but **HOW** we can develop it !*

Finally – *on top of all that* – we're going to see the  
**'scarlet thread'** of **the Gospel** of Jesus Christ - *thru-out the story*

**Let's Pray** that God would  
start His work in ***our Lives - thru the Life of Joseph***

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Before we jump in - I just want to **read two quotes** to you  
to **share** my **excitement** about this series

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**Chuck Swindoll** (in the intro to his great biography) **says;**

*Here is one on the list of God's "greats" . . . a life lived for [God's] glory and, equally significant, though he was terribly mistreated, [Joseph] lived high above the all-too-common reactions of rage, resentment, and revenge. Here is one who deliberately chose to overlook unfair offenses, to overcome enormous obstacles, and model a virtue that is fast becoming lost in our hostile age – forgiveness."*

**Joseph** (the hero of our story) – was terribly mistreated

& yet – **he was able to :**

*"overlook the unfair offenses"*

*"overcome enormous obstacles"*

**model** the **Godly virtue** of **Divine Forgiveness**

& **on top of that** – his life reads like a good suspense novel

**Naomi Rosenblatt** says (*in Wrestling with Angels*)

*"Joseph's story is a finely wrought and self-contained novella, describing in vivid detail the development of his character from charismatic and arrogant youth to compassionate middle age . . . Genesis reaches a melodramatic peak in these climactic last chapters: a riches-to-rag-to-riches tale replete with every human passion – love and hate, ambition and glory, jealousy and fury. Tears of joy and grief are shed. Garments are rent in anguish. It's a gripping saga of treachery and deception, betrayal and forgiveness."*

All that saga & intrigue - **PLUS**, we get to have God **speak** to our lives;

- 1) That He is **At Work** - for our Good
  - 2) That He is **Preparing us** - so that He can use us
  - 3) He is creating in us - Divine **Forgiveness**
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**OK** – w/ all that – *we better get started*

In **Gen 37** (for today) – the **first character** we need to meet,  
is **NOT** Joseph – but his **father JACOB**

### **Gen 37:1-2A**

*I'm reading out of the **ESV** today (word-for-word translation) -  
& inserting the **NLT** (thought-for-thought) for explanation.  
(Get Nick's Msg - How we Got Our Bible)*

### **Gen 37:1-2A - ESV**

***1 Jacob lived in the land of his father's [Isaac] sojournings, in the land of Canaan.***

***2 These are the generations of Jacob*** [NLT - This is the account of Jacob and his family]

**Jacob** – was the **Third Great Patriarch** of the Jewish people  
*Abraham – Isaac - Jacob , **the father's** of the *nation of Israel**

**Jacob's** birth name meant "**Heal-catcher**" or "**Deceiver**"  
& it was a name **that fit him** very, very well

**But finally** a time came - when this "**shifty patriarch**" wrestled w/ God  
(**Gen 32**) - & God changed his name to . . . **ISRAEL**

**ISRAEL** – means **LIT** "**God Strives**" or "**God Contends**"  
& came to be known as – *the People God Governs*

**These people** (the nation of Israel) were the **12 tribes** of the **12 sons of Jacob** – whom God renamed **Israel**

& it's **interesting to note** –

as we begin to look at **Jacob's Favored Son - Joseph**

That the **Tribe of Joseph** ended up with a "**Double Portion**" when **Joshua** divided the **Promised Land** among Israel's 12 sons

the **Tribe of Levi** did not get a portion of land  
*they were the **Priestly Tribe** - their inheritance was **the Lord***

& so a **Double Portion** went to **Joseph's** tribe  
thru his sons **Ephraim** & **Manasseh**

**Well** – that '**Favored Status**' of Joseph  
**started** long before the **Promised land** was divided

**Way back here** – in **Gen 37**  
it all begins **to unfold** - & **FALL APART**

**Jacob** actually made **MANY, many mistakes** with his **12 sons**

& some of **Jacob's** most series mistakes  
involved the "**favoring**" of **Joseph** over his **other 11 sons**

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& so – **On this Father's Day**

**Fathers** – make sure you're not making  
the **same mistake** - **Jacob** made with his 12 sons

**All your children** have been given **equally** to you by God

& God wants to **bless each one** of them **individually**  
in the **specific way** He chooses

& if you **make Jacob's mistake** of **favoring** one over the other  
Not only are being a **poor example** of God's **unconditional love**

But you're probably **setting your family up** for some **serious problems**  
**just like** we're going to see that **Jacob did**

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starting again in **Gen 37:2 – ESV**

**2 These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with [NLT - He was working with] the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. [NLT = he reported to his father some of the bad things his brothers were doing]**

So – **we meet Joseph** when he's just 17 yrs old

**He's working** with his brothers – and he brings back to his father  
some "**bad reports**" about what his brothers were doing

Joseph was actually - the Next to youngest son  
he was "Daddy's Favorite"  
he was the classic "Tattle-Tell" little brother  
& he probably never got in trouble himself

**Gen 37:3 – ESV**

**3 Now Israel [Jacob] loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe [coat] of many colors.**

Ooooo, the 'Coat of many Colors'

Given to the **spoiled little brother** - by the father who was **actually causing the trouble** that was **about to come**

**Dads** - we must understand - **our actions** can cause **serious consequences** in the lives of our children

& we must **filter every decision** we make **thru that knowledge**

**Jacobs** actions (which **he meant** to be "**extra love**") made Joseph a **spoiled brat**

who was always **running to Daddy** to point out **how bad** his **brothers** were

**Yes** – Joseph was **going to be used** mightily by God

**BUT** – His father's '**favoring**' of him **didn't help** him it **hurt him** – (*& that's a lesson we need to remember*)

& we **see the pain dad caused** in the next Vs.

### **Gen 37:4 - ESV**

***4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him [Joseph] and could not speak peacefully to him. [NLT - They couldn't say a kind word to him.]***

**Joseph's troubles** - started **Right Here** **because** of a **father who was simply** "**favoring him**"

But **THAT spelled** "**serious trouble**" in this family

**God Did** Have a "**Plan For Good**" that was "**In Process**" **But 1<sup>st</sup>** – things were going to go from **bad** - to - **worse**

& **it really started** - when Joseph became - **A Dreamer**

## **Gen 37:5 – ESV**

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

**Joseph** had been given a **gift from God** -  
that **eventually** would be a "**Key**" in God's Plan

But initially - In **immaturity** & **spoiled-rottenness**  
Joseph's "**Gift**" becomes the **final straw** for his brothers

## **Gen 37:6-8 - ESV**

***6 He said to them, “Hear this dream that I have dreamed:  
7 Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf.”  
8 His brothers said to him, “Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?” So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.***

**MAN** - these brothers have **Had it** w/ "**Mr. Coat of many Colors**"

This **IS** a vision from God - & it **IS** going to come true

But sometimes – **the very gifts** that God gives us  
can actually be our "**Downfall**" . . . WHY?

**because** we start "*thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought*"

But **Joseph doesn't stop** at just **offending** his **brothers**  
now **he's even** going to **get under** his **father's** **skin**



## Gen 37:9-11 – NLT

**9 Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, “Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.”**

**10 But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, “What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?”**

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

we see another mistake here - in this "Dysfunctional First Family" of the nation of Israel

This mistake - is the mistake of INACTION - PASSIVENESS

Jacob Could Have acted here - & diffused the situation  
But instead - he did nothing (*a common problem today*)

Notice again V.11 - *his brothers were jealous of [Joseph], but his father kept the saying in mind.*

In other words - he thought about it - Until he FORGOT it

& THAT - sets up - the "Kick Off Crisis" in Joseph's life

Gen 37:12-17 → →

## **Gen 37:12-17 - ESV**

**12** [NLT - soon after this] **Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem.** [a place of much tragedy back in Gen 34]

**13** **And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." And he said to him, "Here I am."** [NLT - I am ready to go]

**14** **So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock, and bring me word." So he sent him from the Valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.**

**15** **And a man found him wandering in the fields. And the man asked him, "What are you seeking?"**

**16** **"I am seeking my brothers," he said. "Tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock."**

**17** **And the man said, "They have gone away, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.**

We **can't help but see** another **Father Mistake** here from Jacob ;

*Hey Joseph - your brothers, who hate you & are mad jealous of you,  
& who are working hard while your laying around here in a fur coat,*

*I think you better go check on them, you don't have to work or anything  
but why don't you go just check on them & let me know*

**Jacob** has now (in essence) - **thrown** his favorite son - **to the wolves**  
(*which happen to be his brothers*)

**Joseph** doesn't find his brothers in the **infamous valley** of Shechem  
so he **follows them** to **Dothan**

& - **unfortunately** - he **finds them** there

## **Gen 37:18-20 - ESV**

**18 They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him.**

**19 They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer.**

**20 Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams."**

So - - it's "Pay-Back" time

& **the fact** - they were going to **Murder** Joseph  
(I think) shows **the level of** "Dysfunction" in Jacob's family

Fortunately - **Ruben** (the oldest)  
who had actually committed incest back in **Gen 35**

God has Ruben "Step-Up" for Joseph's good here

## **Gen 37:21-25A - ESV**

**21 But when Reuben heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life."**

**22 And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; cast him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him"— that he might [NLT - Reuben was secretly planning to] rescue him out of their hand to restore him to his father.**

**23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe [NLT - ripped off], the robe of many colors that he wore.**

**24 And they took him and cast him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.**

**25 Then they sat down to eat. . .**

**Did I mention "Dysfunctional" . . .**

Hey, let's "rip off" that stupid coat, throw our brother into a pit to die  
& then get something to eat, sound good? . . . **YIKES !**

**THAT** - is a dysfunctional family !

so - - if you come from a dysfunctional family - take heart !

**GOD IS AT WORK - IN YOUR LIFE**

Now - apparently Ruben - who'd protected Joseph

in the 1<sup>st</sup> round of "getting even" - was gone temporarily

& so now God uses Judah (4<sup>th</sup> oldest) to save Joseph this time

again in **Gen 37:25-28 - ESV**

***25 Then they sat down to eat. And looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt.***

***26 Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? [NLT adds - His blood would just give us a guilty conscience.]***

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

***28 Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt.***

Again - God intervenes

You may think that getting beat-up, thrown in a pit,

& sold as a slave doesn't sound much like God intervening -

***BUT IT IS . . . IT IS !***

Not only did God just save Joseph's life . . .

but He did it in a way that "Set the Stage"  
to bring about God's purpose & plan for Joseph

**But** please hear me - Joseph DIDN'T KNOW THAT !  
He had no way of knowing that

Certainly Joseph felt Abandoned - by his family - & by God

How about YOU ? - Have you ever felt like everyone & everything -  
even God - has abandoned you ?

If so - Then THIS is your story !!

God wants to use the Life of Joseph - to convince you . . .  
that He HAS NOT - Abandoned you - or Forgotten you

You may FEEL - like you've just been Beaten Up, Stripped,  
& Sold Out - by people who were supposed to love you  
& you may even be blaming God

But pls hear me (if you belong to God) - GOD IS WITH YOU !  
He will never leave you  
He will never forsake you (Heb 13:5)  
Nothing can ever separate you from His love (Rom 8:38)

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Now - pls allow me to make another "father's day" application

certainly Joseph figured out (later) - it was his dad's actions  
that caused his brother's hatred - & his own suffering

& it would've been easy for Joseph  
to blame his own father - & his brothers

for the events that led up to his many years of suffering in Egypt

**But had he** "blamed" them - & **become** Bitter & Resentful  
he **would've been blind** - to the **Great Purpose** God had for him  
& **many of us** must come to that **same conclusion**

We can **so easily blame** our parents (or others)  
for what **WAS** Done - or **NOT** Done – either **FOR** us - or **TO** us

& so often - we **USE THAT**  
as an **Excuse** to live **Self-Destructive** lives

**But please listen** – we must release **ALL** of that to God  
**Trusting** His love for us - & **His** plan for our lives

**Most of our parents** were doing what they **thought was best**  
Or **maybe** they were **acting** out of their own **Self-Interest**

but because **they are sinful humans** like us  
they may've **made some mistakes** . . .

**Maybe** some pretty serious mistakes

**Maybe** some mistakes that have negatively impacted our lives

**But Pls Listen** – God was with us - during those times

Altho **He had to allow** the choices to be made  
it **wasn't** because He didn't care  
it **wasn't** because He wasn't there with us

He **WAS** there - & He **was at work** in the Midst of that suffering

& He **has been at work** in our lives -  
to prepare us - for what **He has for us** today (& *in the future*)

& **as God** prepares us - for **the Great Plan** He has for us . . .

**Part** of His preparing - ***is taking those events*** - -  
and using them for **GOOD**

It is **ACTUALLY** - God working ***in the midst*** of those Trials  
that has shaped our lives **FOR God's use** today

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SO - - - **if you're a Father** here today  
let's **make every decision count** - for the **good** of our children

AND – **if you're a son or daughter** here today –  
Please - **RELEASE** your parents **from the mistakes** they've made

You **must forgive** them – ***totally & completely***  
**just as** (*in the same way*) Jesus Christ has Forgiven you

& **because God** has been **at work** - for **your good**  
in **every** situation

you **CANNOT Give-In** to the **devil's desire** . . .

to have **those mistakes** cause you to **Permanently Live**  
in **Defeat** & **Self-Destruction** - - in your own life

**If** you **Love God** today - then God is **AT WORK**  
to bring **GOOD** - out of **every trial**, & **every suffering**,  
you have **ever experienced**

**God is at work** - **BUT** - you must **join Him**  
**in the good** He desires to bring about in your life

**THAT** - is what the Life of Joseph is about !

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**But for today** - Joseph's troubles are **Just Beginning**,

& Now - **it's time** for his father Jacob - to bear the fruit  
of his **out-of-balance love** & **favoritism** to his **favorite son**

### **Gen 37:29-35 - ESV**

***29 When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes***

***30 and returned to his brothers and said, "The boy is gone, and I, where shall I go?" [NLT - what will I do now?]***

***31 Then they took Joseph's robe and slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood.***

***32 And they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, "This we have found; please identify whether it is your son's robe or not."***

***33 And he identified it and said, "It is my son's robe. A fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces."***

***34 Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days.***

***35 All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning [I will go to my grave still mourning my son]." Thus his father wept for him.***



**But - In the mean time**

while Jacob mourns over what he actually **caused**

**God's Plan** - *in the midst of all this family tragedy* - **is Just Beginning**

**NOT** "*in spite of*" all this family tragedy

**BUT** "*in the midst of it*"

**As PART** of all these tragic events - **God was AT WORK** !

**Gen 37:36 - ESV**

***36 Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him [Joseph] in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.***

**& so begins** - one of the **greatest Biographies** in the O.T.

**I pray** this introduction has **grabbed your attention**

because God **has many things** to teach us  
***thru the Life of Joseph!***

**Let's Pray**