

## Genesis 33-37

### INTRO

We ended last week with Jacob on the eve of the big meet with his estranged brother Esau.

The 2 haven't seen each other for 20 yrs.

& last time they did see each other, Esau had vowed to off Jacob for cheating him out of his inheritance. Jacob fled to his mother's relatives, his uncle Laban, 500 miles away, where over the next 2 decades he managed to acquire 4 wives, a pack of kids, & a lot of wealth in the way of flocks, herds, camels, & servants.

He sent messengers on ahead to Esau to let him know he was returning.

Those messengers returned saying Esau was on his way to meet Jacob with 400 men!

Jacob assumed that meant Esau was going to attack, & thought to soften him up by sending on ahead of them a huge gift of animals.

Actually it was GIFTS; he sent them in successive waves.

It was all meant to soften Esau up; to let him know Jacob wasn't coming to claim anything that belonged to Esau.

God had already blessed him abundant with his own stuff.

Then, on the eve of the big meeting btwn the 2 brothers, God wrestled with Jacob, *literally!*

When Jacob realized he couldn't win, he finally surrendered, & that's when God changed his name from

**Jacob = Conniver, to Israel = The God Who Wrestles.**

### CH 33

#### 33:1-17 – The Brothers Reunite

<sup>1</sup> Now Jacob lifted his eyes & looked, & there, Esau was coming, & with him were 400 men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, & the 2 maidservants.

Those 2 maidservants were Zilpah, & Bilhah, surrogates Rachel & Leah had used for more children.

They're called **servants** here, but they've become **concubines** to Jacob; **almost**-wives / **quasi**-wives.

<sup>2</sup> & he put the maidservants & their children in front, Leah & her children behind, & Rachel & Joseph last.

Ouch! That's not going to go over well later.

If Esau attacks, Zilpah & Bilhah & their kids will get it first, & maybe Leah & Rachel with their children can get away.

If not, then Leah & her boys will get it & Rachel can get away.

This arrangement isn't going to help in the family dynamics in the days to come.

But, Jacob doesn't really care because

<sup>3</sup> Then he crossed over before them & bowed himself to the ground 7 times, until he came near to his brother.

If Esau's going to attack, Jacob's going to be the 1<sup>st</sup> one killed, so what comes later won't matter.

If Esau doesn't attack – well, he'll still have a messy issue to deal with.

<sup>4</sup> But Esau ran to meet him, & embraced him, & fell on his neck & kissed him, & they wept.

Esau for joy at the reunion, Jacob in utter relief.

<sup>5</sup> & he lifted his eyes & saw the women & children, & said, "Who *are* these with you?" So he said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." <sup>6</sup> Then the maidservants came near, they & their children, &

bowed down. <sup>7</sup> & Leah also came near with her children, & they bowed down. Afterward Joseph & Rachel came near, & they bowed down. <sup>8</sup> Then Esau said, "What *do you mean* by all this company which I met?"

The gift of over 500 animals Jacob sent ahead.

8b & he said, "*These are* to find favor in the sight of my lord." <sup>9</sup> But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother;

keep what you have for yourself." <sup>10</sup> & Jacob said, "No, please, if I have now found favor in your sight, then receive my present from my hand, inasmuch as I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God, & you were pleased with me.

He means he couldn't be happier seeing the very face of God Himself than to see Esau's countenance look upon him with this favor & acceptance.

This is kind of a funny thing for Jake to say when we remember that just the night before He'd more than seen God's face; he'd wrestled with Him!

<sup>11</sup> Please, take my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, & because I have enough.” So he urged him, & he took *it*. <sup>12</sup> Then Esau said, “Let us take our journey; let us go, & I will go before you.”

Esau invites Jacob to come with him to Edom located SE of Canaan, on the E’n side of the Jordan River.

Esau’s moved out of Canaan & the land of promise to Abe & Isaac.

It seems that Esau’s matured & realized that all that’s happened is the way it’s supposed to be & that the promise God made to Abe belongs to Jacob & his descendants, not to Esau & his.

So Esau had moved out of the region God promised to his brother.

&, he’d done quite well there in Seir – becoming a large & powerful tribe himself.

Jacob begs off the offer of Esau to come with him to Edom, another name for Seir.

Jake knows God’s called him back to their ancestral digs in Canaan.

<sup>13</sup> But Jacob said to him, “My lord knows that the children *are* weak, & the flocks & herds which are nursing *are* with me. & if the men should drive them hard 1 day, all the flock will die.

They’ve just made a long haul from Padan Aram in Mesopotamia.

They can’t go at the same pace as Esau & his men.

<sup>14</sup> Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant. I will lead on slowly at a pace which the livestock that go before me, & the children, are able to endure, until I come to my lord in Seir.” <sup>15</sup> & Esau said, “Now let me leave with you *some* of the people who *are* with me.” But he said, “What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord.”

Esau offers to leave a guard with Jacob, but he declines.

He’s got enough of his own men to protect against nay bandits.

<sup>16</sup> So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir.

As Jacob knew he would. // [MAP]

Leaving his own home there in Seir with a group this size was a risky proposition for Esau.

That region was filled with nomadic Bedouin who often turned to raiding.

Settlements around their border were subject to constant harassment.

If word got back to them that Esau had taken a huge force N, they’d take that to mean that his settlements were now left with only a skeleton guard & would be easy pickings.

So Esau was eager to get back before they could strike.

It didn’t take much urging for Jacob to send him on his way – with **ALL** his men.

[Title] // & while Jacob **says** he’ll follow along at an easier pace, he has no intention of going to Seir.

He should have just said so.

<sup>17</sup> & Jacob journeyed to Succoth, built himself a house, & made booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth [**booth**].

Succoth is on E side of the Jordan River, next to the Jabbok Rivera just a few miles directly W of where they’d camped the previous night at Penuel. [Title]

33:18-20 – Jacob Settles in Shechem

<sup>18</sup> Then Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, [**Note this**] which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram; & he pitched his tent before the city.

Jacob is finally home; back in the land of promise.

Please note how his arrival is described.

He came **safely** to Shechem = Just as God promised all the way back in Gen 28:13–15

The Lord ... said: “I *am* the Lord God of Abraham your father & the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you & your descendants. <sup>14</sup> Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west & the east, to the north & the south; & in you & in your seed all the

families of the earth shall be blessed. <sup>15</sup> Behold, I *am* with you & will keep you wherever you go, & will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.”

Then, in PA God appeared to him & told him it was time to head home. Gen 31:3

Then the Lord said to Jacob, “Return to the land of your fathers & to your family, & I will be with you.”

Well—here they are; SAFELY back, just as God said. [Map]

When it says Jacob “pitched his tent before the city” – don’t picture a 2-man backpacking tent.

Don't imagine even a 6-person Coleman.

This is a huge, black wool extravaganza.

With a tribe the size of Jacob's, it would be a camp the size of a village.

<sup>19</sup> & he bought the parcel of land, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for 100 pieces of money. <sup>20</sup> Then he erected an altar there & called it El Elohe Israel [**God, the God of Israel**].  
[Title]

It's interesting Jacob settled at Shechem rather than Bethel.

When God appeared to him in PA, telling him to return, He said He was the *God of Bethel*. [31:3, 13]

Jacob made a vow at Bethel 20 yrs earlier, saying if God blessed & protected him, he'd return & make it a place of worship. [28:10-22]

But Jake didn't go to Bethel.

He went to Shechem & moved to set down roots there.

Even though it was a city teeming with the influences of a corrupt Canaanite culture.

Jacob gets into all kinds of trouble at Shechem.

**Pointless** trouble if he'd just done what God said & even he'd promised.

CH34 Slaughter of the Shechemites // Last Sunday

CH 35 • Returning to Bethel

Vs. 1-7 • The Call & Return to Bethel

<sup>1</sup> Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel & dwell there; & make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother."

Bethel is where Jacob ought to have gone from the start.

Now that he's suffered a humiliating moral defeat & realizes his own weakness & failure is being duplicated in his sons, God calls him back to Bethel, the place of his 1<sup>st</sup> encounter with God.

It's time for a fresh start; a renewal.

God told him to go & make an altar; IOW, to **worship**.

After a season of sin & failure, Jacob needed renewal.

Each of us has a **Bethel**; a place of 1<sup>st</sup> encounter with God, where He 1<sup>st</sup> revealed Himself to us & we promised ourselves to Him.

But life has **many Shechems**; many places where we stumble & fall.

Many times when we realize we've strayed from the path of righteousness into another defeat.

God ever calls us back to Bethel; to the simplicity of worship & service.

The only question for us is, where have we pitched our tent – at Shechem or Bethel?

Are we **living** in defeat or worship?

<sup>2</sup> & Jacob said to his household & to all who *were* with him, "Put away the foreign gods that *are* among you, purify yourselves, & change your garments. <sup>3</sup> Then let us arise & go up to Bethel; & I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress & has been with me in the way which I have gone." <sup>4</sup> So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which *were* in their hands, & the earrings which *were* in their ears; & Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which *was* by Shechem.

Jacob knows he can't build an altar at Bethel when there's idolatry in his home.

Rachel still has her father's teraphim, those little household gods we read about last week.

It seems other members of the family & the servants had pagan trinkets, amulets, charms, & idols they'd brought from PA.

It's time to clean house & get rid of anything smacking of devotion to anything but God.

When we come to Christ, or come *back* to Him after a time of back-sliding, that we jettison anything that links us to the sin & rebellion of our past.

In Mat 3:19, John the Baptist told those coming to be baptized to bear fruit worthy of repentance.

They needed to do more than just get wet.

Baptism is just an outward sign of an inner work of repentance.

If repentance is real, it'll lead to more than getting dunked; it'll result in a change of behavior.

We see that kind of repentance-fruit in Acts 19 when new converts in Ephesus, brought hundreds of occult books and burned them.

That's how they demonstrated severing ties to their pagan past.

Eph 5:11 tells us to have no *fellowship* with unfruitful works of darkness.

We're not to traffic with, no participation with that which is wicked.

Christian, are there things around your house, in your car, or at your work that are simply *incompatible* with a holy walk with God?

God called Jacob back to Bethel, back to a heart of simple worship.

Jacob knew the route back to Bethel was more than a road thru the land.

It was a pathway of purging all that which would render worship false.

Worship must be offered with clean hands & a pure heart.

<sup>5</sup> And they journeyed, & the terror of God was upon the cities that *were* all around them, & they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.

After the massacre of the Shechemites, Jacob worried the Canaanites would band together & attack him.

But the moment he turned back to God, He protected him.

Question: Did Jacob DESERVE this blessing and protection?

NO WAY!!! Jacob's whole story is 1 long testimony to God's amazing grace.

<sup>6</sup> So Jacob came to Luz (that *is*, Bethel), which *is* in the land of Canaan, he & all the people who *were* with him. <sup>7</sup> And he built an altar there & called the place El Bethel, because there God appeared to him when he fled from the face of his brother.

Vs. 8-15 • God Renews the Covenant

<sup>8</sup> Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, & she was buried below Bethel under the terebinth tree. So the name of it was called Allon Bachuth [**Oak of Weeping**].

Rebekah was Jacob's mother. By this time she'd passed on & Deborah, the woman who had served as the nursemaid in raising her sons, Esau & Jacob, had moved from Isaac's camp at Mamre to live with Jacob at Bethel.

She was a beloved figure & when she died they gave her a special place & memorial.

<sup>9</sup> Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, & blessed him. <sup>10</sup> And God said to him, "Your name *is* Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name." So He called his name Israel.

Time has passed since the events of ch32 when God wrestled Jacob to the end of himself.

Things have happened that have muddied the waters of the revelation that happened there.

So God comes to refresh and renew the covenant with Jacob, now Israel.

Israel has acted more like Jacob than Israel.

So God reminds him who he REALLY is.

This is the route many of us take as we walk with God.

There's a kind of honeymoon period in our walk when we first come to faith.

Being a Christian is a little awkward, but glorious & we have so much to learn. It's exciting.

Then, we settle in for the long haul and realize walking WITH GOD means *not* walking in some of the things we used to do; that used to identify us & quite frankly we were comfortable in.

Hardest of all, is dying to self.

It's been the experience of many Christians that there comes some crisis, a moment of enlightenment when they realize being a Christian is more than just fire-insurance; more than a way to avoid hell.

It's not really about going to church & reading the Bible.

It's a new identity, & whole new way of living encompassing all we are.

Being a Christian isn't so much *something you do*, as it is *someone you are*.

Jacob was given a new name to match his new nature.

And in Rev 2 we find that e also will have new names when we arrive in Heaven.

We don't know what they name is now – but the new ID is already ours in Christ.

The key to our growing into our new name is found in what God says next

<sup>11</sup> Also God said to him: "I *am* God Almighty. Be fruitful & multiply; a nation & a company of nations shall proceed from you, & kings shall come from your body. <sup>12</sup> The land which I gave Abraham & Isaac I give to you; & to your descendants after you I give this land."

My comments inserted a break btwn vs10 & 11 that disconnect an important truth.

So let's read them together.

<sup>10</sup> And God said to him, "Your name *is* Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name." So He called his name Israel. <sup>11</sup> Also God said to him: "I *am* God Almighty. Be fruitful & multiply. Let's remove Moses' commentary and look at JUST GOD'S words.

"Israel shall be your name. ... I *am* God Almighty."

Hear this: The key to Jacob's growth OUT OF who & what he **used** to be INTO his new identity as Israel was knowing God.

The great secret to spiritual growth, to wholeness and health in every realm, is to know God.

It's not the latest self-help best-seller.

It's not a weekend seminar on self-actualization.

It's not in breathing exercises to focus your chi.

It's not meditation in front of a gohonzun.

God **declares** Israel's new name, then announces HIS Name: El Shaddai = God Almighty.

Israel is to root himself in Who God is.

Israel is linked to El Shaddai.

Israel = God wrestles // El Shaddai = God Almighty.

Almighty God wrestles.

Since He's almighty, the outcome of the wrestling is already determined, He wins.

Yet He wrestles! So that wrestling must be for our benefit.

That means – surrender, yielding, giving in must be the wisest course for us.

And indeed, when we do, Look at what God says next in v11

"Be fruitful & multiply"

A fruitful life is entered by taking God AS God.

Of totally yielding to Him.

Of giving up all attempts to rule ourselves or obtain even a particle of independence from God.

This is so hard for us because everything in us tied to Adam aims for self-sufficiency.

& that's why we must **die to self** & become utterly Christ-sufficient.

Well, God again renews the covenant He made with Abe & Isaac, with Jacob.

<sup>13</sup> Then God went up from him in the place where He talked with him. <sup>14</sup> So Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, a pillar of stone; & he poured a drink offering on it, & he poured oil on it. <sup>15</sup> And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel.

Israel renews his vow; recommitting himself to serve Yahweh.

Vs. 16-20 • The Death of Rachel & Birth of Benjamin

<sup>16</sup> Then they journeyed from Bethel. & when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel labored *in childbirth*, & she had hard labor. <sup>17</sup> Now it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said to her,

"Do not fear; you will have this son also." <sup>18</sup> And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-oni [**son of my sorrow**]; but his father called him Benjamin [**son of my right hand**]. <sup>19</sup> So

Rachel died & was buried on the way to Ephrath (that *is*, Bethlehem). <sup>20</sup> And Jacob set a pillar on her grave, which *is* the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day.

Benjamin is Jacob's last child.

Complications from his delivery caused Rachel's death.

She lived long enough to peg him with a name that would be hard to bear, so Israel graciously changed.

Rachel was Jacob's real love. // Burying her was crushing.

Vs. 21-26 • Jacob's Sons Listed

<sup>21</sup> Then Israel journeyed & pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder.

We have no idea where that was.

<sup>22</sup> And it happened, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went & lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; & Israel heard *about it*.

Reuben is Jacob's firstborn.

The next 2 oldest sons were Simeon & Levi, who'd slaughtered the Shechemites.

This incident is reported so we'll understand why these sons are passed over in inheriting the major share of the blessing.

Now the sons of Jacob were 12: <sup>23</sup> the sons of Leah *were* Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, & Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, & Zebulun; <sup>24</sup> the sons of Rachel *were* Joseph & Benjamin; <sup>25</sup> the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maidservant, *were* Dan & Naphtali; <sup>26</sup> and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, *were* Gad & Asher. These *were* the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Padan Aram.

Actually; Benjamin was born in Canaan, but it's possible he was **conceived** in PA.

Vs. 27-28 • The Death of Isaac

<sup>27</sup> Then Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kirjath Arba (that *is*, Hebron), where Abraham & Isaac had dwelt. <sup>28</sup> Now the days of Isaac were 180 yrs. <sup>29</sup> So Isaac breathed his last & died, & was gathered to his people, *being* old & full of days. & his sons Esau & Jacob buried him.

Isaac was buried in the family plot Abraham had secured there in Hebron.

CH 36 • The Family & Descendants of Esau

Vs. 1-19 The Chief Descendants of Esau

They came to be called the Edomites after the nickname of Esau "Edom = Red/ Carrot top / Ginger"

Vs. 20-30 • The Descendants of Seir

These verses give the names of the originals inhabitants of Edom with whom the descendants of Esau intermixed.

Vs. 31-43 • Rulers of the Edomites

Ch 37 • Joseph Sold into Slavery

37:1-4 • Joseph, Jacob's favorite

<sup>1</sup> Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. <sup>2</sup> This *is* the history of Jacob.

That phrase that opens v2 recurs repeatedly in Gen.

It marks the end of 1 story & begins another.

This seals the story of Jacob & turns to his 11<sup>th</sup> son Joseph.

Joseph, *being* 17 years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. & the lad *was* with the sons of Bilhah & the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; & Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.

Joseph was the 1<sup>st</sup> son of Jacob's favorite wife, Rachel.

He had 4 brothers from his father's 2 concubines, Zilpah & Bilhah.

It's to be expected that as Jacob had multiple wives their sons would tend to hang out with each other & that there was probably a bit of rivalry between them all.

After all, they each wanted to be Jacob's favorite and receive the family blessing.

Levi & Simeon were pretty much out of the running since they'd massacred the Shechemites and Reuben had bedded one of his dad's concubines.

That just opened the field wider to the **other** brothers who all thought they now had a **better** shot at it.

The flocks of Jacob were so vast, they had to be grazed separately.

So as we'd expect, the sons of each mother made a team that headed out with their portion of the herd.

Joe's brother Ben was too young to be a shepherd, so while he stayed home, Joe headed out with the sons of the 2 concubines **Dan, Naphtali, Gad & Asher**.

Boys will be boys, and when they returned home, Joe ratter his brothers out for some shenanigans they pulled.

When Jacob confronted them, they knew Joseph had tattled.

Joseph stands out as one of the Bible's true heroes and a man of amazing moral courage and godliness.

Here, in his teen years, there's a bit of relational immaturity & lack of wisdom.

Finking on his brothers wasn't a good idea.

Especially because

<sup>3</sup> Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of *many* colors. <sup>4</sup> But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him & could not speak peaceably to him.

Jacob's favoritism toward Joseph was obvious to all.

They all realized he intended to pass the family blessing on to him.

We've already seen how the contest in obtaining the birthright can bust up a family in the story of just 2 brothers; Esau & Jacob.

Imagine when **12** brothers are involved!!!

1 of the ways Jake showed his favoritism was by giving Joe, what's called here "a tunic of many colors."

That translation is a hold-over from earlier attempts to translate an archaic Hebrew phrase the translators had no clue about.

We now know the garment referred to was 1 reaching to the wrists & ankles.

It was worn by rulers & those exempt from manual labor.

Regular laborers wore short-sleeved garments with a hem at the knees.

This allowed for greater freedom of movement and didn't get soiled as quickly.

The longer the hem and sleeves, the higher the rank.

Some of the Egyptian art form that time shows such long-sleeved & hemmed garments as having a band colored fabric at the cuff & hem; like they're placed there purposefully to say, "Look at me.

Look how long my sleeves and hem is. I get to wear this because I'm an important person."

It was a status symbol.

Jacob's gift of this special garment to Joseph told the family he was being groomed as the next patriarch & ruler of the household.

Imagine how the other brother's felt about that!

And Let's remember whose sons these are = Jacob's.

Can you see trouble brewing?

37:5-11 • Joseph's Dreams of Greatness

<sup>5</sup> Now Joseph had a dream, & he told *it* to his brothers; & they hated him even more.

Even before telling us what the dream was, Moses tells us their hatred was enflamed.

<sup>6</sup> So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed:

Here again we see Joe's immaturity.

It would have been wiser for him to just sit on this.

It was for him; not for his brothers.

<sup>7</sup> There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose & also stood upright; & indeed your sheaves stood all around & bowed down to my sheaf." <sup>8</sup> And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams & for his words.

As the unfolding story makes clear, this dream was *prophetic*.

But that doesn't mean Joseph ought to have told it to his brothers.

Just because God speaks to YOU, doesn't automatically mean it's something you have to share with others – it may be just for you.

As we look at the Bible, we see that consistently when God wants his people to speak His message to others, He tells them to.

Joseph received no such command & ought to have kept this to himself.

It will serve him well later and that's why God gave it to him, so he could look back over the events of his life, including the bad things, and see that God had ALWAYS been with him.

<sup>9</sup> Then he dreamed still another dream & told it to his brothers, & said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. & this time, the sun, the moon, & the 11 stars bowed down to me." <sup>10</sup> So he told *it* to his father & his brothers; & his father rebuked him & said to him, "What *is* this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother & I & your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" <sup>11</sup> And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter *in mind*.

Yet another mark of his ***relational ineptitude***.

Joe hadn't learned from the earlier error of sharing his dream.

So he repeats it with another - to the same effect.

And this time, as the dream's included imagery of his parents, he ropes them into the sphere of who he tells it to.

Jacob rebuked Joe for his breach of domestic etiquette, but filed the dream away as something to keep in mind.

Jacob had had his own prophetic dreams & knew God reveals Himself in special ways to His chosen instruments.

This 2<sup>nd</sup> dream is prophetic in more than just what it foretells about Jacob's family showing deference to Joseph as the ruler of Egypt.

This dream forms the basis for 1 of the Apostle John's visions in Rev 12.

37: 12-36 • The Brothers Plot Against Joseph

<sup>12</sup> Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. <sup>13</sup> And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding *the flock* in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am." <sup>14</sup> Then he said to him, "Please go & see if it is well with your brothers & well with the flocks, & bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, & he went to Shechem.

Ah – SHECHEM! You remember that place.

That's where Simeon & Levi Jake's boys proved to be Jake's boys.

They decide to head back to the scene of their previous crime.

When Jacob hears where they've gone, he sends Joseph to go check on them.

Remember that he's already tattled on 4 of them for shenanigans they'd pulled while they were on one of these shepherding forays.

Jacob suspects his sons are up to no good slouching around Shechem & he wants to know what they're up to.

Well, they're up to no good alright.

<sup>15</sup> Now a certain man found him, & there he was, wandering in the field. & the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?" <sup>16</sup> So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding *their flocks*." <sup>17</sup> And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers & found them in Dothan.

When Joseph arrived in the region of Shechem, his brothers were nowhere to be found.

One of the locals found him searching the area & asked him if he could be of assistance.

He told Joseph that Jacob's flocks had been taken to pasture in Dothan, a few miles N.

<sup>18</sup> Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. It wasn't hard to tell it was him, what with his special garment.

It was like a neon sign over his head with an arrow point at him saying, "I'm Joseph, Dad's Fave."

<sup>19</sup> Then they said to 1 another, "Look, this dreamer is coming!" <sup>20</sup> Come therefore, let us now kill him & cast him into some pit; & we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"

Some of the brothers suggest they get rid of the troublesome little fink.

Most of them agree to it.

As we read on in Joseph's story, it seems pretty clear it was the treacherous Simeon who came up with the original plan to off Joe.

But Reuben, the eldest, balks

<sup>21</sup> But Reuben heard *it*, & he delivered him out of their hands, & said, "Let us not kill him." <sup>22</sup> And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, *but* cast him into this pit which *is* in the wilderness, & do not lay a hand on him" — that he might deliver him out of their hands, & bring him back to his father.

Reuben's been looking for a way to get back into his father's favor ever since bedding Bilhah.

He sees this as his opportunity.

He suggests it would be easier on all their consciences to not actually kill Joe, but to just stick him in a deep hole and let him die of the elements.

Reuben's real plan was to sneak back, rescue Joseph, & bring him home to Papa.

Just look at all the conniving going on here folks!

<sup>23</sup> So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph *of* his tunic, the tunic of *many* colors that *was* on him. <sup>24</sup> Then they took him & cast him into a pit. & the pit *was* empty; *there was* no water in it.

This was a pit, not a well with water in it.



<sup>25</sup> And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes & looked, & there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, & myrrh, on their way to carry *them* down to Egypt.

<sup>26</sup> So Judah said to his brothers, “What profit *is there* if we kill our brother & conceal his blood? Judah voice what no doubt they were all thinking What difference was there in killing Joseph outright & leaving him to die of exposure & thirst in a hole in the ground?

Either way it’s *murder* & something they’d have to live with for the rest of their lives.

Why not make at least profit of what they were doing by **selling** Joseph to these traders passing by?

<sup>27</sup> Come & let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, & let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother & our flesh.” & his brothers listened. <sup>28</sup> Then Midianite traders passed by; so *the brothers* pulled Joseph up & lifted him out of the pit, & sold him to the Ishmaelites for 20 *shekels* of silver. & they took Joseph to Egypt.

Think about how brutal all this is.

They first plot to kill him.

Then agree to let him die in a pit.

Once they’ve tossed him in, they take a seat, pull out their PBJ sandwiches & have lunch.

How do you eat when your brother is pleading with you to not do this?

Then Judah says, “Hey, instead of leaving him her to rot, let’s **sell** him!”

If these guys loved their father, wouldn’t they stop to think about what losing him would do to him?

It seems Reuben wasn’t there for this part of the tale.

After he persuaded them to just drop Joe in the pit, he took off, probably rounding up some straying sheep.

<sup>29</sup> Then Reuben returned to the pit, & indeed Joseph *was* not in the pit; & he tore his clothes. <sup>30</sup> And he returned to his brothers & said, “The lad *is no more*; & I, where shall I go?”

The brothers then told him what they’d done and that Joseph was on his way to the Egyptians salve market.

<sup>31</sup> So they took Joseph’s tunic, killed a kid of the goats, & dipped the tunic in the blood. <sup>32</sup> Then they sent the tunic of *many* colors, & they brought *it* to their father & said, “We have found this. Do you know whether it *is* your son’s tunic or not?” <sup>33</sup> And he recognized it & said, “*It is* my son’s tunic. A wild beast has devoured him.

Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces.” <sup>34</sup> Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, & mourned for his son many days. <sup>35</sup> And all his sons & all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, & he said, “For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning.” Thus his father wept for him.

From here out, Jacob is a broken man.

This loss & the grief it brought was a crushing weight from which he never recovered.

Jacob’s favoritism **of** Joseph ended up costing him his son.

<sup>36</sup> Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh & captain of the guard.

When the Ishmaelites arrived in Egypt, they set up shop & began trading.

One of their prizes was Joseph who was quickly sold to Potiphar, the chief commander of Pharaoh’s personal bodyguard.

Later in Joseph’s story we’ll see the brothers reunited.

It’s the highest form of drama& a great tale.

It’s clear that the conscience of most, if not all, of them suffered badly after they sold Joseph into slavery.