

Joseph

Providence and Forgiveness

By: Matthew Allen

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Published by

Spiritbuilding Publishers

9700 Ferry Road, Waynesville, OH 45068

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ISBN

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Introduction

One Story, Not Thirteen Lessons

No one in Genesis gets a longer unbroken account than Joseph. Fourteen chapters, running from 37 to 50 without a break. Genesis gives it to us comprehensively, and a story that long is meant to be followed, not mined for a moral chapter by chapter. So we will start at the beginning, walk straight through to the end, taking thirteen weeks to do it.

That means a few lessons will end in a dark and sad place. Early in the quarter, we'll leave a seventeen-year-old boy in an Egyptian slave market and go home. A few weeks later, we'll leave him forgotten in a prison for two years. Those lessons will end without resolution, because Joseph didn't get one for years.

Please don't rush ahead to the good part. You already know how this ends; most of us have known since childhood. But feeling it is another matter, and that comes only to people willing to sit in the pit a while first. Joseph waited thirteen years for his story to make sense. We can wait thirteen weeks.

Where We're Going

The whole quarter is built on one sentence, Genesis 50:20. Joseph says it at the end of his life, standing in front of the brothers who sold him:

You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result—the survival of many people.

— Genesis 50:20

Read it once now. Then set it aside until we reach the end of the study. That sentence describes what God finally makes of this family. It is nowhere near where he found them. Genesis 37:4 says Joseph's brothers **could not speak peacefully to him**. *Not would not. Could not.* This is a household where civil discourse has become impossible. This story is all about where God takes from that point, and getting there costs thirteen years and a famine.

The Three Parts

The thirteen lessons fall into three parts.

Part One — Down to Egypt

Lessons 1–4 • Genesis 37–41 • The question: Where is God when everything comes apart?

A family fractures, a boy is sold, and every time he does the right thing he falls further. Four times in chapter 39 Genesis says the Lord was with Joseph, and not once does his situation look like it. Part One is about what God is doing in the years that look wasted.

Part Two — The Brothers Return

Lessons 5–8 • Genesis 42–45 • The question: Can guilty men change?

Twenty-two years later, ten men walk into a room without knowing whose room it is. What follows looks like cruelty and is not. It is surgery, and Joseph handles the knife carefully. Part Two is about buried guilt, severe mercy, and what genuine repentance sounds like when it finally comes out of a man's mouth.

Part Three — Brought Up Again

Lessons 9–13 • Genesis 46–50 • *The question: What does forgiveness build?*

A family moves, an old man blesses a future he won't live to see, and a brother who has every reason to take revenge feeds the men who sold him instead. Part Three is where our theme arrives, and where we find out what holds after the man who did the forgiving is dead.

Five Things to Watch For

Genesis tells this story with a handful of repeated images. Watch for these five. They are the seams that hold fourteen chapters together.

- **Garments.** A robe given, a robe stripped, a robe soaked in goat's blood, a cloak left in a woman's hand, fine linen and a gold chain. Joseph's whole life is marked by what he's wearing.
- **Dreams in pairs.** Joseph's two; the cupbearer's and the baker's; Pharaoh's two. When God says something twice, it's fixed (41:32). Joseph himself never dreams again after chapter 37. He spends the rest of his life interpreting other people's.
- **Bowing.** The dream everyone laughed at in 37:7–10 comes true four times over: 42:6, 43:26, 44:14, and 50:18.
- **Down and up.** *Went down* to Egypt. *Brought up* again. That vocabulary is the skeleton of the plot, and it starts with Jacob's last words in chapter 37: *I shall go down to Sheol in mourning* (37:35).
- **Weeping.** Joseph weeps seven times before Genesis is finished. Not once in the first five chapters of his story. Count them, and watch the second most powerful man in Egypt lose his composure in front of the brothers who sold him.

A Word About Joseph

If you're expecting a flawless hero, this study will surprise you.

The Joseph of chapter 37 is seventeen years old. He carries tales about his brothers to a father who's already too fond of him. He wears the coat. And after the first dream blows up in his face, he tells them the second one anyway. Genesis makes no excuses for him, and neither will we.

That is good news. If Joseph has to be extraordinary for God to work through him, this story has nothing to say to the rest of us. But God took a tactless boy, a broken home, and a family of liars, and used every bit of it to keep a nation alive.

How to Get the Most Out of This Quarter

1. **Read the chapter before coming to class.** Just once, straight through, without commentary. Twenty minutes a week. It is the difference between listening to a discussion and taking part in one.
2. **Bring a pen.** There's space in each lesson for notes, and the discussion questions are worth answering on paper, not just in your head.
3. **Resist the moral.** When you finish a chapter and think, "So the lesson is: be patient," slow down. Genesis is doing something bigger and slower than that.
4. **Bring your own story with you.** Somewhere during the study you'll be reminded of a season you've lived: a betrayal in the family, years that felt wasted, a forgiveness you haven't managed yet. Read Genesis with that in your hand. This story was preserved for people carrying exactly that.
5. **Be here at the end.** The last two lessons are the ones the other eleven have been building toward.

For whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures. — Romans 15:4

PART ONE

Down to Egypt

Where Is God When Everything Comes Apart?

He had sent a man ahead of them—Joseph, who was sold as a slave. They hurt his feet with shackles; his neck was put in an iron collar. Until the time his prediction came true, the word of the Lord tested him. — Psalm 105:17–19

Part One covers about thirteen years, and none of them look like providence. There is a father's favoritism, a coat, a pit, and a sale to passing traders. Then there is Egypt, where Joseph does everything right and is punished twice for it. Four times in chapter 39, Genesis stops to say the Lord was with Joseph, and each time his circumstances worsen. That tension is where these four lessons live. Where is God when a man does the right thing and keeps falling? Genesis does not answer with a feeling. It answers by repeating one line over a slave, then over a prisoner, until the reader takes it seriously. The chapters ahead work through those years one at a time: the family that broke, the house where he was falsely accused, the prison where he was forgotten, and the morning Pharaoh sent for a man nobody had remembered for two years.

LESSON 1

Joseph the Dreamer

His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

— Genesis 37:11

God is nowhere named in Genesis 37, yet He is at work in every verse of it.

Introduction

THIS STORY STARTS IN THE WORST POSSIBLE PLACE. If you were designing the opening chapter of a book about God's providence, about how the Lord quietly steers history toward good, you would not write Genesis 37. There's no vision, no altar, and no voice from heaven. Nobody prays. Nobody obeys. Nobody is rescued. A father plays favorites, a boy talks too much, and ten men decide to commit murder, then settle for slavery instead. The chapter closes with a teenager standing on an auction block in a foreign country and an old man at home who wants to die.

And **God's name does not appear once in this chapter**. His name is absent from the dreams, from the pit, from the caravan, and from Jacob's grief. Thirty-six verses, and no one so much as mentions Him.

That silence is not an oversight. It's the design. Thirteen chapters from now, Joseph will look back at these days, at the coat and the pit and the silver and the lie and say that God meant it. He does not say God made the best of it or patched it up afterward. He says God intended it.¹

The Lord was in this chapter the whole time, working in every verse, and not one person in it could see Him.

Hold that thought as you go through this study. It is the hardest part of this story to live with, and the most useful. Providence is rarely something you feel at the time. It is something you discover later, looking backward, and usually only if you kept walking when the story stopped making sense.

The Coat and the Hatred (37:1–4)

Verse 2 opens with the phrase Genesis uses to start a new section. The CSB reads *These are the family records of Jacob*. The word underneath it is *toledot*, the hinge Genesis swings on every time a new division opens. And then the section named for Jacob turns and talks about Joseph. The rest of the book belongs to the son, not the father.²

We learn three things about Joseph in two verses, and two of them do not flatter him. He's seventeen. He's working alongside the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, the sons of the secondary wives, the low end of the family ladder. And he brings a bad report of them to their father.

Genesis never tells us whether the report was true. It probably was; this family has no reputation for honesty. But when the favorite son carries a true report to the father who favors him, he is handing over ammunition.³

Then verse 3, and the coat.

Two things are worth knowing about that famous garment. First, the coat of many colors is a guess, an old one inherited from the Septuagint and the Vulgate, but a guess. The CSB prints what the Hebrew most likely means: a *long-sleeved robe*, an ornamented tunic running to the wrists and ankles. The only other place that garment appears in the Old Testament is 2 Samuel 13:18, where it's what the king's daughters wore. It is royal clothing, and it is useless: you cannot herd sheep in sleeves like that. Every morning Joseph walks out in that robe, and ten men in work clothes watch him come.⁴

Second, and more serious: this is birthright clothing. Reuben, the firstborn, had forfeited his claim by sleeping with his father's concubine (35:22; see 1 Chronicles 5:1–2). By dressing Joseph this way, Jacob has made his succession decision and announced it publicly, with fabric, without saying a word.

Jacob of all people should have known better. He grew up in a house where the father loved one son and the mother loved the other, and it cost him his brother, his home, and twenty years of his life. He didn't read about that damage. He *lived* it. And then he did it again to his own children, worse, and to more of them.

Sin runs in families like a trait. It runs until somebody in the line decides to stop it.

Verse 4 tells us the brothers hated Joseph and **could not bring themselves to speak peaceably to him**. They could not speak *shalom* to him. Not *would* not. *Could* not. There is no peaceful word left in that household.⁵

Watch the escalation. In verse 4 they hate him. In verse 5 they hate him even more. By verse 8 they hate him even more than that, and by verse 11 they are jealous. Four rungs, and the ladder only goes one direction.

CHART 1

The Ladder Only Goes One Direction

Verse	What Genesis says	Who is in it
37:2	Joseph brings a bad report of his brothers	The four sons of Bilhah and Zilpah
37:4	They hated him and could not speak peaceably to him	All ten brothers
37:5	They hated him even more	All ten brothers
37:8	They hated him even more than that	All ten brothers
37:11	His brothers were jealous of him	And now his father rebukes him too

Four rungs. And the circle of people who hate him widens at every one.

Two Dreams and Two Reactions (37:5–11)

CHART 3

The Dream Everyone Laughed At

37:7	The sheaves bow down	His brothers laugh at him
37:9	Sun, moon and eleven stars bow	His father rebukes him
42:6	His brothers bow, faces to the ground	They do not know who he is
43:26	They bow again, bringing gifts	They still do not know
44:14	They fall on the ground before him	Judah speaks
50:18	They fall down and offer to be his slaves	Their father is dead

The two dreams are ochre. The four times they come true are not.

The first dream is sheaves of grain in a field: Joseph's stands upright, and the others gather around and bow. Notice how odd that picture is. These men are herdsmen, not farmers, and sheaf-binding is nobody's work in this family. But it is exactly right for where this story ends, in a country where the whole world will come begging for grain.

The second dream escalates. Sun, moon, and eleven stars. Now his father and mother bow as well. Even Jacob has heard enough and rebukes him: *Am I and your mother and your brothers really going to come and bow down to the ground before you?*

Did Joseph have to tell them? No. Did he have to tell them the *second* one, after watching what the first one did? Certainly not. Genesis lets him look like precisely what he is: a boy with no instinct for reading a room.

Notice what the dreams are. Joseph doesn't ask for them. He doesn't invent them. And nothing here suggests he even understands them; he never claims they're from God and never explains what they mean. He just talks. Whatever these dreams are doing, Joseph is not the one driving it.⁶

Two dreams, not one. That is the first pair in a book full of them — the cupbearer's and the baker's next, then Pharaoh's two — and Genesis eventually says out loud what the doubling means: *the matter has been determined by God* (41:32). Notice too that Joseph never dreams again after this chapter. He spends the rest of his life interpreting other people's. And the picture everyone here is laughing at, sheaves and stars bowing down, comes true four separate times before Genesis is finished: 42:6, 43:26, 44:14, and at last 50:18, when ten grown men fall on their faces in front of the brother they sold.

Then comes verse 11, our key verse. In one sentence, it sets two responses to a word from God side by side:

His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

The brothers' reaction is fast, emotional, and certain. Jacob's is slow, quiet, and open. He has been rebuked by this dream too, since the sun is him, but he has lived long enough to know that God gets to choose, and that God's choices have never once respected birth order. Isaac over Ishmael. Jacob over Esau. So, he doesn't argue, and he doesn't dismiss. He files it away and waits.⁷

Luke describes Mary the same way: *Mary was treasuring up all these things in her heart and meditating on them* (Luke 2:19).

Same dream. Two men. One of them files it; the other decides to kill it. **That is still the split, every time God says something we did not want to hear.**

The Road to Dothan (37:12–24)

Verse 13 is one of the saddest verses in Genesis. Israel says, *Get ready. I'm sending you to them.* Joseph answers in a word. The CSB gives it as *I'm ready*; the Hebrew is *hinneni*, **here I am.**

That's the word Abraham said on Mount Moriah. It's what Moses will say at the bush, Samuel in the dark, Isaiah in the temple. It's the answer of a willing man. And it sends this one more than fifty miles from home to Shechem, the town his brothers massacred back in chapter 34, and then fifteen miles farther to Dothan, straight into the hands of men who cannot say a peaceful word to him.⁸

And in between, there's a stranger. Verse 15: *a man found him wandering in the fields.* No name. One line of dialogue. He points Joseph north and disappears from Scripture forever.

If that man says nothing, if he shrugs, if he is half a mile east that morning, Joseph goes home to Hebron. There is no Egypt. No grain in the famine. No Israel in Goshen, no Exodus, no nation. In a chapter with no God in it, an anonymous man in a field changes world history by giving directions.⁹

Then the ambush. Verse 19: *Oh, look, here comes that dream expert!* Verse 20: *Then we'll see what becomes of his dreams!* They believe they're killing a prophecy, and all the while they are fulfilling one. Every step they take to prevent those dreams is a step that brings them to pass. That's the irony this whole book runs on.¹⁰

Reuben tries. He's the eldest, he's already in disgrace with his father, and he knows a brother's blood cries out from the ground. So he proposes the pit instead, planning to come back later and pull Joseph out. It is a half-measure, the kind of courage that objects but never confronts, and it fails the way half-measures usually do.

They strip him. The Hebrew verb is the one used for skinning an animal, and they use it for the robe and for Joseph. Then they throw him into a pit, empty and without water.¹¹

And then verse 25: **They sat down to eat a meal.**

Think about that. The brothers, having lunch, a few feet from their brother in a hole in the ground.

Genesis tells us nothing about what Joseph did down there. We only find out twenty-two years later, in 42:21, when the brothers finally say it out loud in a panic: *We saw his deep distress when he pleaded with us, but we would not listen.* They heard every word. They ate anyway.

Sold for Silver; the Robe Comes Home (37:25–36)

Judah's contribution is the coldest line in the chapter: *What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood?*

He does not say this is wrong, or that he's our brother, or that this will kill our father. He asks what it means for them. Kidner catches the sting in the word: *profit* here is a hard commercial term, closer to loot than to anything a brother ought to be saying. Twenty shekels of silver was the standard price for a male slave of that age (Leviticus 27:5), about two and a half times what a hired shepherd earned in a year.¹² Remember that speech. In a few lessons, we will meet Judah again, and he will be a different man.

CHART 4

What Joseph Is Wearing

37:3	A long-sleeved robe, given	Loved above his brothers	Genesis 37
37:23	The robe, stripped off him	Sold to passing traders	Genesis 37
37:31	The robe, soaked in goat's blood	Declared dead	Genesis 37
39:12	His garment, left in her hand	Sent to prison	next week
41:42	Fine linen and a gold chain	Second man in Egypt	later

Three of the five happen in this chapter. You can tell where Joseph stands by what he has on.

Then the brothers do what closes the circle. They kill a goat. They take the garment. They use a slaughtered animal and a piece of clothing to convince an old man that his son is dead. Which is *precisely* what Jacob did to Isaac in Genesis 27. A goat. A borrowed garment. A father who cannot tell his own children apart.

Watch what the robe has done. Jacob gives it in love. The brothers tear it off him in hatred. Now it is soaked in blood and carried home as evidence. One garment, three uses, and Joseph is not finished losing clothes — there is a cloak still to be left in a woman's hand, and after that, fine linen and a gold chain.¹³

And their words in verse 32 are cruel in their carefulness: *We found this. Examine it. Is it your son's robe or not?* They never lie. They hand him the evidence and let the old man do the work himself. Hold on to those two words, *examine it*. Somebody is going to say them back to Judah, and it will not take long. Jacob tears his clothes, refuses every comfort his children offer, and says *I will go down to Sheol to my son, mourning*.¹⁴ Notice the word *down*. It runs through the rest of this story. The chapter ends in verse 36 with Joseph sold in Egypt to an officer of Pharaoh. No rescue. No explanation. No promise. No word from heaven.

That's where the first lesson leaves us. Genesis intends it to.

Looking to Christ

We'll build this connection slowly as we go through the study, so it doesn't need to carry much weight yet. But it begins here.

A father has a beloved son. He sends that son out to his brothers. They see him coming from a distance and say to one another, *here comes the heir — come, let us kill him*. They strip him, they conspire against him, and they hand him over for silver.

That's Genesis 37. It is also, in outline, the parable Jesus told about Himself in Mark 12:1–8.

Stephen made the connection early. Standing before the council in Acts 7:9, he reaches for this exact story: the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt, *but God was with him*. Stephen's whole argument was that God's people have a long pattern of rejecting the deliverer God sends them, and that God has an even longer pattern of using that rejection to accomplish deliverance.¹⁵

Don't press every detail. Joseph is not a picture of Christ in every particular; he's a seventeen-year-old with a tin ear and an expensive coat. But the *shape* is unmistakable, and it runs through the whole Bible: **the rejected one becomes the rescuer.**

Applying the Text

When God's name doesn't appear, He hasn't left the chapter. Nobody in Genesis 37 knows they're standing in the opening act of a rescue. If you're living through a stretch where you can't find God's fingerprints anywhere, that is not evidence He isn't working. It may only be evidence that you're still in chapter 37.

Ask what you're passing down. Jacob repeated his parents' worst mistake on a larger scale, apparently without ever noticing. The patterns we grew up inside do not break by accident. They break when somebody decides, deliberately, to be the last one to carry them.

Objecting is not the same as acting. Reuben said the right words and made a decent plan and then walked away, and Joseph went to Egypt anyway. Ask where you have settled for objecting to something you should have stopped.

Take the long view of your own story. At the end of this chapter there is a boy who has been declared dead and is not, a father who refuses to be comforted, and ten men learning to live with a secret. Every bit of that is true, and none **of it is final.**

For Discussion

1. Genesis 37 never mentions God. Why do you think Moses wrote it that way? What would be lost if verse 28 added "*but the Lord was with him*"?
2. Verse 11 gives us two reactions to the same dream — jealousy and pondering. What accounts for the difference between those two men?

3. Joseph is not blameless in this chapter. Does that make the story harder to apply to your life, or easier?
4. Reuben objected and then left. When have you settled for objecting to something you should have stopped?
5. Jacob repeated the favoritism that had nearly destroyed his own life. What pattern from the home you grew up in are you most at risk of repeating?
6. Have you ever looked back at a season of your life and seen God's hand in it that you couldn't see at the time? What changed how you read it?

Looking Ahead

Lesson 2: The Lord Was with Joseph (Genesis 39, with Genesis 38)

Joseph goes down to Egypt. Judah goes down to Adullam. Genesis sets the two of them side by side on purpose, and the comparison is not kind to Judah. Borthwick points out that Joseph's endurance over twenty-two years finally lets him witness his brother's transformation. Set Judah's speech in Genesis 44:18–34 next to his words here in chapter 37, and the distance between them measures what God did.¹⁶

Before you come: read Genesis 38 and 39 together, in that order, and watch for how differently two men handle a descent.

¹ Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967). In his introduction to chapters 37–50 Kidner calls the Joseph narrative a classic instance of providence, and argues that placing the dreams at the very outset makes God, not Joseph, the hero of the story. It is not a tale of human success but of divine sovereignty.

² R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004). Hughes identifies this as the ninth and next-to-last occurrence of the *toledot* formula in Genesis, and notes that Jacob's section is largely taken up with the life of his son. Michael R. Grigoni, Derek R. Brown, Miles Custis, Douglas Mangum, and Matthew M. Whitehead, *Joseph: Understanding God's Purpose*, Studies in Faithful Living (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012). They explain *toledot* as the structural marker Genesis uses throughout to open major divisions.

³ Kidner, *Genesis*. On 37:2 he cautions that Joseph's report should not be judged by the standard of family solidarity, since his first duty may well have been to his father (cf. Leviticus 5:1). Paul Borthwick, *The Life of Joseph*, LifeGuide Bible Studies (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000). Borthwick raises the same possibility from the other side, asking whether the brothers were cheating Jacob and Joseph could not stomach watching it.

⁴ Hughes, *Genesis*. On 37:3 he notes that the “many colors” rendering comes from the Septuagint and the Vulgate, and that the term more likely describes a sleeved coat reaching to the wrists and ankles. Kidner, *Genesis*. On the same verse Kidner compares the garment named in 2 Samuel 13:18, worn by royal daughters, and calls Joseph's robe ostentatious and provocative. Borthwick, *Life of Joseph*. Borthwick adds that the long sleeves signal a wearer exempt from manual labor and that the coat functioned as a mantle of authority, citing John H. Walton and Victor H. Matthews, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Genesis–Deuteronomy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 70.

⁵ Hughes, *Genesis*. On 37:4 he cites Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989). Sarna's sense is that the brothers could not abide a friendly word from Joseph; they rebuffed every approach he made.

⁶ James E. Smith, *The Pentateuch*, 2nd ed., Old Testament Survey Series (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1993). On 37:5–11 Smith points out that the text itself never presents either dream as a revelation from God; that is a conclusion the narrative leaves the reader to reach later. Grigoni et al., *Joseph*. They note that the ancient world nonetheless took dreams seriously as messages from the gods, freighted with omens about the future, which is why the brothers treat these as a threat rather than as nonsense.

⁷ Kidner, *Genesis*. On 37:11 he calls these the two attitudes that always divide people in their reactions to news from God: the brothers' skepticism is emotional and hasty, while the father's open mind is the product of some humility. Israel had learned by now to allow for God's hand in affairs, and for his right of choice among men.

⁸ Hughes, *Genesis*. On 37:12–17 he reckons the distance from the Hebron Valley to Shechem at roughly fifty miles, with Dothan another fourteen beyond that, putting Joseph some sixty-four miles from home and well outside his father's protection. Grigoni et al., *Joseph*. They give approximately fifty and fifteen miles for the same two legs.

⁹ Kidner, *Genesis*. On 37:12–24 he observes that everything — the ill-conceived errand, the chance meeting with the stranger — combined to deliver Joseph into his brothers' hands, and yet God proved as watchful in his hiddenness as in any miracle. Kidner notes that the two extremes of God's methods meet at Dothan: here Joseph cried out and went unheard (cf. 42:21), and here Elisha's servant would later find the hills full of horses and chariots of fire (cf. 2 Kings 6:13–17). Hughes, *Genesis*. Hughes follows Kidner and presses the point further — the angels were as present for Joseph at Dothan as they later were for Elisha.

¹⁰ Kidner, *Genesis*. On 37:19 he cautions that the older rendering “master of dreams” over-translates what is a common Hebrew way of denoting a characteristic. The CSB's “dream expert” catches the mockery in it.

¹¹ Hughes, *Genesis*. On 37:23–24 he notes that the verb translated “stripped” is the one used for skinning an animal (cf. Leviticus 1:6). Kidner, *Genesis*. On 37:24 Kidner explains that the absence of water is worth the narrator's comment, because

these pits were cisterns. Grigoni et al., *Joseph*. They add that cisterns doubled as hiding places and temporary prisons (cf. 1 Samuel 13:6; Jeremiah 38:6).

¹² Kidner, *Genesis*. On 37:26–28 he observes that “profit” is a harshly monetary word, and identifies twenty shekels as the going slave price in the early second millennium (cf. Leviticus 27:5). Grigoni et al., *Joseph*. They supply the wage comparison: a hired shepherd could expect about eight shekels a year, which puts the sale at roughly two and a half times a year's wages. They also note that Dothan sat on the caravan route running from Gilead down into Egypt, and that Egyptian records confirm the traffic in slaves along it.

¹³ Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis, Interpretation* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982). Quoted in Hughes, *Genesis*. Brueggemann traces the robe's career: given in deep love, torn in deep hate, and now the instrument of a deep deception.

¹⁴ Kidner, *Genesis*. On 37:32 he notes the coldness of “your son,” which disdains the personal name, and compares the same chill in the elder brother's “this son of yours” in Luke 15:30. On 37:35 he prefers “Sheol” to “the grave,” observing that the foreboding may include the idea of finding no rest in death, and that Jacob's words left a deep impression on the family; his sons quote them back years later (cf. 44:29, 31, 34). Hughes, *Genesis*. Hughes adds that Jacob was vowing to mourn publicly to his dying day, against a conventional mourning period of a week.

¹⁵ Kidner, *Genesis*. In his introduction to chapters 37–50 he argues that this story exhibits a human pattern running through the Old Testament to its culmination at Calvary — the rejection of God's chosen deliverers through the envy and unbelief of their own kin, a rejection finally made to play its own part in bringing about the deliverance. Kidner notes that Stephen was the first to draw it out.

¹⁶ Borthwick, *Life of Joseph*. In his closing notes Borthwick points to Joseph's endurance of more than twenty-two years as what allowed him to witness the transformation of Judah, and recommends setting Judah's speech in Genesis 44:18–34 against his words in Genesis 37.