

Genesis 37:1-36 **Joseph sold into slavery in Egypt**

¹ Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. ² This is the history of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father. ³ 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. ⁴ But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

⁵ Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. ⁶ So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: ⁷ There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf." ⁸ 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 and for his words.

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

¹² Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. ¹³ 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." ¹⁴ Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem. ¹⁵ Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?" ¹⁶ So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks." ¹⁷ 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 and found them in Dothan.

¹⁸ Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. ¹⁹ Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming! ²⁰ Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!" ²¹ But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him." ²² And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"--that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.

²³ 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. ²⁴ Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it. ²⁵ And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt. ²⁶ So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? ²⁷ Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brothers

listened. ²⁸ Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

²⁹ Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes. ³⁰ And he returned to his brothers and said, "The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?" ³¹ So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. ³² Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?" ³³ And he recognized it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces." ³⁴ Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. ³⁵ And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." Thus his father wept for him. ³⁶ Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard. NKJV

Facts revealed:

- ✧ Jacob and his family dwelt in the land of Canaan where his father Isaac had stayed.
- ✧ Bilhah and Zilpah, the handmaids of Rachel and Leah, are clearly identified as wives of Jacob and mothers of Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. [\[Genesis 30:6-13\]](#)

God uses human nature and human responses to set the stage for God's plan to be fulfilled

- ✧ When Joseph was 17 years old he was feeding the flock with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah and brought Jacob a bad report about them.
- ✧ Jacob showed favoritism toward Joseph and made him a tunic of many colors which aroused hatred in the hearts of all his brothers.
- ✧ God compounded the problem by giving Joseph a dream of sheaves in the field indicating that his brothers would come and bow down to him.

Joseph told the dream to his brothers. This infuriated them all the more and they said, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him more because of the dream.

- ✧ God increased the problem by giving him another dream of the sun, moon, and 11 stars. Joseph told the dream to his brothers and then to his father.

Jacob interpreted the dream to indicate that Jacob, his wife, and the eleven brothers would come and bow down to Joseph.

I believe Jacob's interpretation explains the woman of Revelation clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. It is the same symbolism and numbering, and therefore would apply to the nation of Israel from whom was born the male child (Jesus) who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron and who was caught up to God and to His throne. [\[Revelation 12:1-2, and 5\]](#)

This also added to the fuel of his brothers hatred toward Joseph. So his brothers envied Joseph, but his father Jacob pondered the matter in his mind.

- ✧ Joseph's brothers went to feed the flock in Shechem.
- ✧ Jacob was staying in the valley of Hebron and sent Joseph to see how his brothers and the flock were doing, So Joseph went and found them in Dothan,

When his brothers saw Joseph coming afar off, they said, “Look, the dreamer is coming,” so they conspired to kill him, but Reuben sought to rescue him and suggested that they cast Joseph into a pit.

When Joseph had come to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe of many colors and cast him into a dry pit, then they sat down to eat.

☆ It is interesting to see how the names change through this story.

They saw **Ishmaelites** coming from Gilead on their way to do business in Egypt. **Midianite** traders passed by, so they pulled Joseph from the pit and sold him to the **Ishmaelites**.

When they arrived in Egypt the **Midianites** sold him to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and Captain of the Guard. [\[Genesis 37:36\]](#) Yet Potiphar bought him from the **Ishmaelites** who had taken him down there. [\[Genesis 39:1\]](#)

Ishmaelites are descended from Ishmael the son of Abraham and Hagar. [\[Genesis 16:15\]](#)

Midianites are descended from Midian the son of Abraham and Keturah. [\[Genesis 25:1-2\]](#)

This proves that the Angel of Yehowah was right in saying about Ishmael, “And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.” [\[Genesis 16:12\]](#)

This was clearly a reference to the coming sons of Abraham and Keturah and when Esau moved to Mount Seir he also was among the others so Ishmael was indeed living among all his brethren except for Jacob and his descendants the Children of Israel.