



Living Hope Ministries

Bible Study

GENESIS 37

This chapter introduces us to Joseph. He was born to Rachel who was Jacob`s favourite wife. Jacob had many other sons but it became obvious that he had special affection for Joseph.

Jacob and Joseph.

Jacob was so happy to have a child in his old age and especially through Rachel. Joseph brought to his father a bad report about his brothers. It could have been accurate but it was unwise because their relationship was already turning sour. Jacob gave Joseph an ornate robe. When he wore it, his brothers could see favouritism. However understandable, Jacob was creating a considerable irritation in his family.

Joseph's dreams.

Joseph shares two dreams. The first is a picture of sheaves of corn, each one representing Joseph and his brothers. In the dream the sheaves representing the brothers bow down to Joseph`s sheaf. This incenses the brothers who resent the idea greatly.

The second dream includes Jacob and Rachel who also bow down to Joseph. Jacob rebukes Joseph but of course these dreams were indeed from God; they are amazingly prophetic. However is Joseph wise to share them at this time?

Joseph sold into slavery.

Jacob`s decision to send Joseph to see his brothers is questionable. It is possible that he has not picked up how much they hate Joseph. Joseph too may have been naive about the intensity of his brother`s attitude towards him.

The search for his brothers takes time but they see him coming from a distance. They initially plot to kill him. They believe it will put an end to his dreams. Reuben hopes to rescue Joseph but the rest of the brothers strip Joseph of his robe. This shows it is a major factor in their hatred of him. They throw him into a cistern which mercifully for Joseph is dry. Their anger abates a little and they see some travellers and decide to sell Joseph to them. He is sold for twenty pieces of silver.

Joseph's coat is dipped in blood and they travel back home to tell their father Jacob. They lie about the true story and live with that lie for many years.

Meanwhile, the Midianites sell Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard.

Points to consider:

- What lessons can we learn about Jacob's behaviour to Joseph?
- Do we have favourites in our family or church or do we treat everyone the same?
- Do you consider whether Joseph was wise or unwise to share his dreams?
- The brothers stop short of killing Joseph but does this condone in any way their treatment of him?
- How significant is the attitude of Reuben and Judah?
- Do we listen to each other in disputes?
- How do we deal with jealousy?
- Do we see God's sovereignty in all of this? What parallels are there, if any, between Joseph and Jesus?