

GENESIS: Where Grace Begins

What Went Down in Dothan – Genesis 37, Part 2

¹² Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem. 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."

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. 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."

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; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him"—that he might 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, the robe of many colors that he wore. ²⁴ And they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

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?"

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.

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?"

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." Thus his father wept for him.

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

Genesis 37:12-36

Context: Favoritism, Immaturity, Jealousy

Jacob ... "loved Joseph more than any other of his sons" (37:3); and the others knew it: "his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers" (37:4) ... _____ had become a _____ in Jacob's family. Remember, Isaac loved Esau more than Jacob, and remember that Rebekah loved Jacob more than Esau, and recall that Jacob loved Rachel and her children more than Leah and her offspring. His own lifelong experience with favoritism should have made him realize the damage he could (and soon would) inflict.

Joseph ... While not responsible for his father's feelings and actions, nonetheless seems guilty of _____ (or worse): "your sheaves gathered around ... and bowed down to my sheaf" (37:7); "the sun moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me" (37:9) ... Joseph's _____ and _____ was creating an irreparable _____ between himself and his brothers.

The other brothers ... "hated him" and "could not speak peacefully to him" (37:4); "hated him even more" (37:8); "were jealous of him" (37:11) ... This hatred would soon turn to _____.

But this is **critical**:

While each person in the storyline is unequivocally _____ for their own attitudes and actions, and will be judged accordingly, God remains _____ over all.

"Ultimately, and above all, the story of Joseph is about God working his will through the everyday events of life. There are no miracles here. God does not suspend his natural laws to make things happen. The story is about the hidden but sure way of God. God's hidden hand arranges everything without show or explanation or violating the nature of things. God is involved in all events and directs all things to their appointed end.

... As the story begins, God providentially brings about Joseph's rejection so that Joseph himself might ultimately be used to effect his people's salvation. God choreographed Joseph's rejection in two ways: first, by his father's favoring of Joseph over his brothers, and second, by God's giving Joseph a vision of his own future exaltation. Human sin and divine revelation combined to produce a hatred and rejection that ultimately created a way of salvation."

R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, 436.

All the _____ and _____ of man cannot undo the _____ of God. The covenant is secure in His hands as He sovereignly orchestrates the actions of evil men for his good purposes (Gen 50:20).

That's _____.

Some interesting elements in the story:

Israel – Are you seriously sending Joseph on this task? We have to _____!

Shechem – The _____ place these brothers should be!

Dothan – Well ... just because.

The power of **hatred** – “They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him.”

Reuben – Altruistic or self-serving?

The brothers – We already know of the violence of Simeon and Levi (Gen. 34:25ff). Now we see that hateful jealousy has consumed the others as well. In their violence, they _____ Joseph, _____ him, _____ his pleas (Gen. 42:21), and leave him to _____ a horrible death.

Judah – Will later become a better man (cf. Gen. 43:9; 44:33), but for now he seems to be – if possible – _____ than the others. Not only does he care nothing for Joseph’s life, he wants to _____ from his demise.

Irony – Both Reuben’s plan and Judah’s plan are thwarted. Reuben can’t play the _____ and go back and rescue Joseph from what he should have prevented to begin with. And Judah (and the others) lose out on any profit because some traveling Midianite nomads get to Joseph and _____ him before they can.

Jacob – (Israel) ... for so long, he was the _____. Now in a final cruel twist, he is the _____ of the most painful of deceptions. So despondent was Jacob that he was _____.

Egypt – So begins a grand story of _____ that would have been unfathomable to them all at this stage. God has initiated something incredibly miraculous.

Joseph – His life is now in _____. If he survives, only two possible paths await: Will bitterness and thoughts of vengeance consume him, or will he trust God and his ways, be grateful for his protection and provision in his life, faithfully serve God _____, and choose to give amazing grace to his brothers?

Christ* - Not explicitly present, but certainly _____.

“In Joseph we see the seed of Abraham, seed of the woman, whose name has been made great, who has been exalted to the right hand of power, who has been made fruitful in the land of his affliction (Gen. 41:52) to the point of blessing all the families of the earth in the midst of an awful famine: “All the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe over all the earth” (Gen. 41:57). ... in Joseph we have an anticipatory fulfillment of the blessing of Abraham, and when he causes his brothers to feel conviction for their sin, then forgives them, Joseph overcomes (that aspect of) the enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman.” – Dr. James Hamilton

A.W. Pink’s *Gleanings in Genesis* lists _____ ways Joseph foreshadows Jesus!

You & me – “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.” How often have you heard this?

Up till now, Joseph’s life has been ...

But it was about to become ...

And in the end ...

What are some things that that tell us?

Next week: Genesis 38 – The Humbling of Judah