



Genesis 37

# ENVY & HATRED ACCORDING TO GOD

*Joseph is the patriarch with which modern readers can identify most easily. He is the spoiled brat who through adversity develops into a mature, competent leader... He is the one despised and rejected by his family who ultimately is the agent of their salvation and countless others. More than that, the story of Joseph shows how God's secret providence is behind the darkest deeds of men and works to their ultimate good. It is thus both a very realistic story and also profoundly optimistic... Christian exegetes have often seen Joseph as a type of Christ, the innocent man who through his suffering brings reconciliation to his human brethren and life to the world. It is possible to go further and view him as a model for all believers, who like him must die to self, if they are to make peace with their neighbor.*

—Gordon J. Wenham

Whereas Esau and his descendants grow rapidly in power and wealth in Edom, outside of Canaan (36:1-43), Jacob is still a sojourner in the Promised Land (37:1). God's promises move slowly because He seeks to transform our character as we learn to wait and to trust in Him.

## A The brother's envy and hatred toward Joseph (37:1-28)

B Jacob mourns the "death" of Joseph (37:29-36)

C Interlude: The birth of Judah's sons (38:1-30)

D Unexpected reversal: the righteous Joseph in prison (39:1-23)

E Joseph: the savior of Egypt (40:1-41:57)

F Journey of the brothers to Egypt (42:1-43:34)

G Joseph tests his brothers (44:1-34)

H Joseph reveals his identity (45:1-15)

G Joseph provides for his brothers (45:16-28)

F Journey of the family to Egypt (46:1-27)

E Joseph: the savior of Israel (46:28-47:21)

D Unexpected reversal: the younger blessed over older (48:1-22)

C Interlude: The blessing of Jacob's sons (49:1-28)

B Joseph mourns the death of Jacob (49:29-50:14)

## A Joseph's forgiveness and grace toward his brothers (50:15-26)

## THE BROTHER'S ENVIOUS HATRED OF JOSEPH

The brothers' hatred and envy of Joseph is emphasized in 37:2-11. Their hatred of him is not entirely without cause or provocation.

- Joseph is \_\_\_\_\_ (37:2).
- Joseph is \_\_\_\_\_ (37:3-4).
- Joseph is \_\_\_\_\_ (37:5-8).
- Joseph is \_\_\_\_\_ (37:9-11).

*A firm faith in the universal providence of God is the solution of all earthly troubles.* —B. B. Warfield

*Providence is God's orchestrating all events and circumstances in the universe for His glory and the good of His people (Rom. 8:28).*

—Jerry Bridges

*[In Gen 37-50], the only direct encounter with God is the revelation to Jacob in 46:2-4... The narration only occasionally indicates God's presence, implying that behind the scenes is the hand of God.*

—Kenneth A. Mathews

**Many colors.** Heb., *passim*, "long-sleeved tunic; embroidered."

*The robe was a mark of distinction. It implied exemption from labor which was the peculiar privilege of the heir or prince of the Eastern clan.* —W.H. Griffith-Thomas

*This is the first dream in the Bible in which God does not speak. It forms a transition in the dominant means of God's revelation from theophany in Gen 1-11, to dreams and visions in Gen 12-35, and now providence in Gen 36-50.*

—Bruce K. Waltke

Though Joseph may be a spoiled brat, his brothers' jealous hatred of him reveals their corrupt, sinful hearts and leads them down the path of desiring his death (cf. Proverbs 14:30; 29:10; James 3:16).

## THE BROTHERS' MURDEROUS HEART TOWARD JOSEPH

- Joseph obeys his father (37:12-14).
- A man directs Joseph to his brothers (37:15-17).

Who is this man and why is he in the story?

- His brothers \_\_\_\_\_ to take his life (37:18-20).
- Reuben \_\_\_\_\_ to save his life (37:21-22).
- His brothers attack him with fierce animosity (37:23-25).
- Judah \_\_\_\_\_ them to sell him as a slave (37:26-28).

A key repeated word in Genesis 37: \_\_\_\_\_.

## THE BROTHERS' DEVIOUS HIDING OF THEIR SIN

- Reuben \_\_\_\_\_.
- The brothers \_\_\_\_\_.
- Jacob \_\_\_\_\_.

The sin patterns of one generation impact future generations (cf. Ex. 34:7). Abraham's deception leads to Isaac's deception, leading to Jacob's deception, leading to his sons' deception. Just as Jacob, out of sibling rivalry, deceived his father with a garment and goats (ch. 27) so now his sons, out of sibling rivalry, deceive him with the same. But, praise God, His grace extends to a thousand generations!

*A heart at peace gives life to the body but envy rots the bones.*

—Proverbs 14:30

*Envy is the art of counting the other fellow's blessings instead of your own.*

—Harold Coffin

*Jewish tradition considered him [in 37:15] an angel in the form of a man.*

—Kenneth A. Mathews

*That random, nameless man matters. He reminds us that the God we worship is a God who accomplishes His plans. Here is young Joseph, wandering around in some field. Suddenly this man shows up and points him in the right direction. Joseph was probably sitting in the bottom of that pit, with his brothers eating lunch and plotting his demise, thinking, "I wish I had never met that man in the field!" But that encounter was not some random meeting. Everything is under God's control, including every little detail in the universe.*

—John Samson

*It is ironic that they had planned to say that an evil beast had devoured Joseph, and after they attacked him, they sat down to eat. The text thus signifies what "evil beasts" attacked Joseph.*

—Allen Ross

*Hatred darkening to murder is bad enough; but hatred which also has an eye to business and makes a profit out of a brother is a shade or two darker.*

—Alexander MacLaren

*God chooses a family divided by favoritism, immaturity, jealousy, and vengeance. Yet He will bring about His purposes through them and in the process will bring about their radical transformation.*

—Bruce K. Waltke