

Genesis 37:1-36

"Haters Gonna Hate"

It's the *history* of *Jacob*, but the *focus shifts* to *Joseph*. Up to this point Joseph has been mentioned 5 times. From this point forward, though Jacob/Israel will be mentioned 62x's; Joseph will be mentioned 133x's.

Now that should say something to us. Why would God devote nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ of this *entire book* to the developing & divulging of the story of 1 man? Think it through, God gave 1 Ch to divulging the information of *all creation* & only *5 words* to the creation of the universe beyond our planet. Remember that back in Ch 1? It's mentioned (almost in passing) in the 16th Vs. "He made the stars also..." Do you realize the *magnitude* of that statement? To refresh your memory, the neighborhood that you live in (we call it the Milky Way Galaxy) contains an estimated *300 billion* stars. (That's just in your neighborhood); however scientists estimate that there are (conservatively) some 1-200 *billion* galaxies in the universe, each containing billions if not 100's of billions of stars.

The largest known star in our galaxy is VY Canis Majoris. To give you an idea of its size over 9.3 *billion* of our suns could fit inside it. To give you an idea of the size of our sun; 1.3 *million* earths could fit inside the sun. So if you multiplied 9.3 billion times 1.3 million, that's how many earths could fit inside the 1 star VY Canis Majoris... But don't forget, there are some 300 billion stars in our galaxy, which is but 1 of hundreds of billions of galaxies. If you'd like to fly to our nearest suburb (Andromeda) at the speed of 186,000 miles per second ([that's not stopping to smell the roses] the speed of light), it would only take you 2.5 *million yrs* to get there ☺. If you feel that's too long you could just check out the Milky Way, it'd only take you 100,000 yrs... "He made the stars also" (& the psalmist tells us that He counts the # of them & calls them all by name Ps 147:4). I don't even know all of *your* names ☺!

But to all this stuff God only contributes 5 words; yet to the life of Joseph He gives us 12 Ch's, virtually $\frac{1}{4}$ of the entire book of Genesis. Why? I'd suggest 3 potential reasons.

#1 Because it takes more from God (if you'll allow me that phrase) to create a godly man than it does to create the entire universe. W/the universe God simply spoke & it was done. To make you & me like Jesus it takes yrs & yrs (a lifetime & we still won't get there) of working *on* us, pleading *w/us*, placing circumstances *around* us, placing His word *in* us... all these things in order to make us men & women who will emulate Christ.

#2 It shows us that human life is infinitely more valuable to God than is material creation. Some of you have listened to the lie of the wicked one & think you're worthless.

Listen, that couldn't be further from the truth. God says you're worth more to Him than all of creation put together. 1 soul, is worth more to God than is all of creation. Jesus said, *"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"*¹ In other words, even if you had all the power, all the wealth, all the pleasure that this planet could render, but it cost you the eternal loss of your soul, you would wind up the loser in the deal. You (personally/individually) are of greater value than all of material creation.

#3 I believe it's because we will see in Joseph (perhaps more clearly than any other individual in scripture) a picture of Christ. He will foreshadow (again & again) things that will be fulfilled in Christ. Joseph will give us insight into Jesus. *We'll see him loved of his father, hated by his own, sold for silver, falsely accused, unjustly punished, elevated from a place of suffering to a powerful throne bringing salvation to his nation (& in certain respects) to the world (saving many from death)...* We'll point things out along the way but realize that Joseph becomes a profound picture of Jesus & for that God gives him a lot of real estate in His word because in the volume of the book it's written of, points to & revolves around... Christ.

Vs 1-4

The practical picture is this: Joseph has 10 older brothers & they can't stand him because he's dad's favorite. Now he didn't do anything that earned him that position, but that doesn't matter to them, they hate him. *& I'm sure they did their best to make life miserable for him. I had 1 older sister growing up & she tortured me relentlessly 😊. I can't imagine the anguish of 10 older brothers 😊!*

To make matters worse Jacob made Joseph a tunic of many colors; more accurately it should probably be rendered "a coat w/sleeves". What it amounted to is that Jacob gave Joseph a management position over his older brothers even at a young age. More than likely it was Jacob's way of making known the fact that he intended to give Joseph the birthright because Reuben had forfeited the birthright when he slept w/Bilhah his father's concubine. *Simeon & Levi mass murdered a city & since Joseph was technically the 1st born of Rachael (whom he wanted to marry in the 1st place) he probably rationalized it in that fashion & placed Joseph in the prominent position over his brothers. You see, the common worker would have a tunic that came down to about the knees & it would be sleeveless, so that it wasn't getting in the way.*

¹ *The New King James Version*. (1982). [Mt 16:26]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The guy w/the ornamental tunic that had long sleeves & it went down to the ankles; this guy was the foreman on the job site, the one who reports to the head honcho himself... So these guys hated him already because he was dad's favorite, then compound that w/giving him authority over *them* & they report to *him*, it makes for a bad combination.

But that gives you an understanding as to why Joseph gave his dad a "bad report" concerning his brothers. People wonder if he was just tattling vindictively, or if he was simply upholding his job w/integrity. I lean toward the latter because the bible never points to Joseph as being a vindictive, or spiteful kind of character, it's actually just the opposite. So even though he knew that the truth would not win him any points in his already problematic relationship w/his brothers, he cared *about* his father, was in harmony *with* his father & stayed accountable *to* his father.

Sound like anyone else you know? Jesus said things like, "*...I must be about My Father's business?*" Luke 2:49 Even when it was contrary to the will/want of others... He said, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.*"² Here's the point, it didn't matter what others thought of Him, or said *about* Him, it didn't matter what they might do *to* Him, He would be true to His Father's will. He was not here to fulfill *His own* desires, but the will of His Father.

Here's the question; what about me? What about you? Are you going to worry about what others think, how others act, or what others say? Or are you going to be busy about your heavenly Father's business, walking w/Him, staying true & accountable *to* Him & let the chips fall where they may? You see, I can be a man pleaser or I can be a God pleaser, but I can't be both. I'll be worried about what God thinks, or about what people think; there's nothing in between...

Now it won't win us any points w/people in the world, but my prayer is that we would be a people who stay true *to* the Lord & walk intimately w/& in integrity *before* the Lord, come what may... Should you choose to honor the Father w/your life I can guarantee you there will be those who will hate you & who refuse to speak peaceably w/you, just as Joseph... But here's the awesome thing about his life. He was loved and hated, favored and abused, tempted and trusted, exalted and abased.

² The New King James Version. (1982). [Jn 5:19]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

He lived 110 yrs & we never see him get his eyes *off* God or cease to trust *in* God. Adversity didn't harden him, prosperity didn't ruin him. He was the same guy in private as he was in public, he was genuine in his love for God & God used his life in an incredible way. Be true to Jesus; & God will use your life.

Vs 5-8

Again I would say that though he may not have demonstrated great wisdom in sharing this dream, he really didn't do anything to them to deserve their hatred. We might say, "They hated him w/out a cause". Write it down, look it up Jn 15:25.

The bible says that hatred stirs up strife (Prov 10:12); Jesus taught that hatred in the heart was the moral equivalent of murder (Matt 5:21-26) John said, "*Whoever hates his brother is a murderer,*" 1 John 3:15 Why? Because you've cut them off in your heart, they're dead to you... These guys hated Joseph for no real reason. (It's no real surprise then that they'll conjure up plans of murdering him). Interesting those who hated Jesus conjured up plans to murder Him as well.

Joseph comes to them & is all, "Hey guys, check out this dream I had! We were all out in the field binding sheaves & then all the sudden my sheave stood upright & all of your sheaves bowed down to my sheaf! What d'ya think?!" 😊

They already hated him, now they *really* hate him. They didn't need anyone to interpret this. They're all, "Do you really think you're going to rule over us?" "It's never gonna happen you little punk!" Write it down, look it up (Luke 19:14, Jn 19:15). What did the nation say of Jesus? "We will not have this man to reign over us! We have no king but Caesar."

Vs 9-11

Ok, so maybe he wasn't the sharpest tool in the shed, yet. He still seemingly had some practical wisdom to obtain. Be that as it may, he dreams again & this time it's an even larger revelation than the previous dream. Now it's not just the sheaves bowing before him, it's the sun, the moon & 11 stars.

In other words, he'll have authority over his whole family & not only will he be over world resources (the sheaves) but over world rulers as well. They knew exactly what this dream meant & it caused his brothers to envy him, his dad to rebuke him... but way down deep inside Jacob kept the matter in the back of his mind. Why? Because God had spoken to him a time or 2 by way of dreams as well, remember Jacob's ladder & God telling him it was time to leave Laban? So though it sounds preposterous to him, he's not counting it out altogether...

Question; does God speak through dreams today? The bible (Joel 2:28) supports that He certainly can. However I would urge caution when it comes to God's communication through dreams. The common way that God communicates to us today is through His word, by His Spirit. **Again it doesn't rule out God speaking through a dream, but He won't ever lead us in a way contrary to His written word. Certain foods, various medications, all kinds of things can impact our dreams (even the enemy at times) however God's word is consistent.**

Having said that, in Joseph's day *there was no* written word, Moses would record these things hundreds of yrs later as God led him. So God was revealing Himself at this time in this way (dreams/visions).

Joseph would be over world resources & world rulers; they would bow before him. Of course the bible says of Jesus that the government will be upon His shoulders & at the name of Jesus every knee will bow & every tongue will confess (in heaven, on the earth, under the earth) that J.C. is Lord, to the glory of the Father. He is the King of kings & the Lord of lords & all things will be placed under His feet/His authority. To confess J.C. as Lord now is to receive everlasting life. To wait till we see Him face to face will be too late, you'll still bow, you'll still confess, but it won't be for *your benefit*, it'll be for *His glory*.

Now I found something interesting here & that is this. God gave Joseph the promise of His word in advance & this would be something he could hold on to during the lean years. During times of struggle & strain, problems & pain. God had given him the promise of a future & a hope. Even so God has given you the promise of a future & a hope as well. **"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."³** In Christ you're headed for heaven, you're bound for glory, it's not a matter of "if", it's only "when". **God has given you that promise in advance; hang on to it in times of trials & tribulation. Tough times await you; there are some things you're gonna have to endure in this world, but be of good cheer. Christ has overcome the world, God is going to use those things to transform you from glory to greater glory in making you like Jesus. Hang on to the promise of His word.**

You see, God gave Joseph a word about what His plan involved for him *ultimately* but He didn't tell him the means through which he would arrive at that place *practically*. The bible says, **"Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, And before honor is humility."⁴**

³ The New King James Version. (1982). [Je 29:11]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ The New King James Version. (1982). [Pr 18:12]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

If you're going to be taken high, you will inevitably be brought low. God was going to use Joseph greatly therefore he would be greatly humbled. Listen to me: God has a great plan for you *presently* & you will reign as kings & priests unto Him in *eternity* (Rev 5:10)... However you're only deceiving yourself if you think you're going to arrive there apart from humility. God enlists us all (though it may be to varying degrees depending upon His own sovereignty) into the school of suffering.

The bible teaches that even Jesus learned obedience through the things He suffered. Obedience isn't learned through things always going the way we want it to, it's when our own will is challenged that we learn obedience. **It's then that we have the opportunity to humble ourselves & say "If there be any other way than take this cup from me, nevertheless not my will but Your will be done, father glorify your name."** If it was necessary for Jesus personally, how much more for you & me? I'm not saying that God orchestrates your suffering, but I'm saying that He will use it for your benefit & for His glory, eternally.

1 last thing. If this picture of the sun & moon & stars is ringing a bell it's because it comes up again in the book of Rev Ch 12:1. There you find a woman clothed w/the sun, w/the moon under her feet & on her head a garland of 12 stars & being w/child, she cried out in labor & in pain to give birth... **Now it's always best to use the bible as commentary on the bible. It's because of Gen 37:9-10 that we know that the passage of Rev 12 is speaking of the nation of Israel giving birth to the Messiah.** Jacob tells us right here that this was a picture of his family & when this same picture comes up again in prophecy it's not difficult to see the continuity of scripture in the reference being to the nation of Israel & Messiah coming forth from this nation whom the dragon (Satan) sought to devour/destroy but failed.

Vs 12-17

Though he was despised & rejected by his own yet he still did the will of his father in going to *them* though he knew they hated *him*. You guys Jesus is in the same category. John 8:29, He said, "I *always* do those things that please My Father." Not occasionally, not, "if it's convenient for Me" "always". Wouldn't it be great to have that testimony?

Joseph goes down to Shechem, they're not there. He starts looking for His brothers. Of course Jesus came to seek & to save that which was lost. He's wandering around out in the field (probably looking for tracks) & man tells him the way they headed, to Dothan.

They're around 60-65 miles from home...But Joseph (faithful to his father) pursues them.

Vs 18-22

Being the oldest he knew he'd be accountable & so Reuben says, "Let's not kill him, but let's throw him in this pit" & he thought he'd come back later & get him. We commend him for his intentions, but intentions didn't save Joseph. **He could've acted decisively, but he let the fear of his brothers hold him back & he'll live to regret it.** A lot of times we intend to share the gospel w/that co-worker or friend at school, we intend to make things right w/that person, we intend to give our lives to Christ one day. Listen, now is the time. Good intentions apart from follow through will only lead to the misery of regret.

They see Joseph on the horizon & they're all, "Here comes the dream expert! Let's kill him & see what becomes of his dreams then!" Wait... The father sends his beloved to his own & rather than receive him, because of envy/hatred the conspired against him & came up w/a plan to murder him? Why does that sound familiar? Write it down, look it up Matt 21:33-42.

Joseph's dreams are about to be put to the ultimate test. If they're of God, you can't stop them, if not they'll die right here, right now, literally.

Vs23-28

Joseph was stripped of his robe, Jesus was stripped of His robe. Joseph was sold for silver, Jesus was sold for silver. Joseph was handed over because of envy (Vs 11), Jesus was handed over because of envy (Matt 27:18).

Later on we'll see that Joseph was pleading w/them; that his soul was in anguish as they were mistreating him & selling him off as a slave. He was begging them not to do this... But they just sat down & enjoyed a meal while he was begging for his life... This is the shocking demonstration of the depravity of the human heart.

Now don't miss this; they would try to *kill him* but God would turn their actions into a chain of events that would ultimately *save them*... Even so Jesus was put to death in an effort to destroy *Him*, but God turned those actions into a chain of events that would ultimately *save* them & all who would believe upon Him by faith.

Vs 29-35

Jacob had deceived his dad by means of killing a goat & using its skins. Now he's deceived by his sons through the killing of a goat & using its blood.

Jacob's deception would cost 20 yrs of separation, it'll be 20 yrs before he sees Joseph again. Don't be deceived, God is not mocked, whatever a man sows, that will he also reap.

Now Joseph wasn't dead, but as long as Jacob believed he was, as far as Jacob was concerned, he was dead. Even so, in Christ we've been set free from sin, but if Satan can persuade us we are under the tyranny of sin, we'll lead our lives in bondage to it. Don't buy the lie; rest upon the promises of God's word.

Vs 36

Question; did the fact that Joseph was righteous keep him from suffering unjustly? No. Would God use it for good ultimately & through it gain glory? Yes.

Things will get worse for Joseph before they get better; but God is w/him, He will not leave him nor forsake him & though he's suffering/being brought low presently, God will lift him up & use him radically. Joseph becomes the suffering servant of God whom He will exalt in due time to save many alive...

It is ours to walk by faith, to trust in the promises of God's word. Enoch showed the *walk* of faith, Noah showed the *perseverance* of faith, Abraham showed the *obedience* of faith, Isaac showed the *power* of faith, and Jacob showed the *discipline* of faith, & Joseph will show the *triumph* of faith. He won't complain and he won't compromise, he commits his life to the Lord & though He may slay me, yet will I trust Him. God has given you a future & a hope, trust Him through the trials & He will be glorified in your life. Amen? Amen.

Prayer Points:

God we want to be like Jesus. & We know that there are things we have to go through, things we have to learn through trials & tough times, but we trust in You. God have Your way in us, we submit ourselves under Your loving & compassionate hand. We can get consumed w/things that are earthly, but You're tending to us w/a view to eternity, be glorified in our lives.

Joseph would suffer & in the end save many, Jesus was slain, He shed His blood that we, (you & me) might be saved. He was nailed to the cross, laid in the tomb & rose again from the dead. He defeated death so that you might have everlasting life. Turn from your sin, humble yourself *before* Him, believe *in* Him, & you will be saved.