

## Joseph – part 1

*Joseph brings an evil report against his brothers*  
by Victor Torres

Last time we ended the story of Jacob as we saw some big events happening in his life. First, he commanded his family and his servants to destroy the foreign gods that they have worshiped for years. This is in preparation to entering Bethel, the place where God appeared to Jacob when he was running away from Esau.

Gen 35:1 (ERV) God said to Jacob, "Go to the town of Bethel. That is where I appeared to you when you were running away from your brother Esau. Live there and make an altar to honor me as El, the God who appeared to you."

Gen 35:2 So Jacob told his family and all the other people with him, "Destroy all these foreign gods that you have. Make yourselves pure. Put on clean clothes.

What is the lesson we learned from this part of the story? We learned that this is about us giving up the teachings of false churches including the traditions that they have taught us for years.

We also saw last time that Jacob lost his beloved wife Rachel when she gave birth to Benjamin. Rachel wanted to name her second son Benoni, which means "son of sorrow". But Jacob called him Benjamin which means "son of the right hand". What did we learn from this part of the story? We learned that the life of the elect is indeed full of sorrows because of the rejection we will suffer from our family. But the reward awaiting for the elect is well worth it, as Christ gave us an example of looking forward to that reward.

Heb 12:2 (CEV) We must keep our eyes on Jesus, who leads us and makes our faith complete. He endured the shame of being nailed to a cross, because he knew that later on he would be glad he did. Now he is seated at the right side of God's throne!

Heb 12:3 So keep your mind on Jesus, who put up with many insults from sinners. Then you won't get discouraged and give up.

We also saw last time how Jacob was reunited with his father Isaac although only for a short time as Isaac died shortly.

Let us start the story of Joseph:

Gen 37:1 (KJV) And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.

Gen 37:2 These *are* the generations of Jacob. Joseph, *being* seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad *was* with the sons of Bilhah, and with the

sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.

So the story of Joseph starts with him taking an "evil report" against his brothers from the two concubines, the sons of Zilpah (Dan and Naphtali) and the sons of Bilhah (Gad and Asher).

Like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Joseph is a symbol of our Lord Jesus Christ and His elect. The four brothers is a symbol of the whole world.

Joh 7:1 (ERV) After this, Jesus traveled around the country of Galilee. He did not want to travel in Judea, because the Jewish leaders there wanted to kill him.

Joh 7:2 It was time for the Jewish Festival of Shelters.

Joh 7:3 So his brothers said to him, "You should leave here and go to the festival in Judea. Then your followers there can see the miracles you do.

Joh 7:4 If you want to be well known, you must not hide what you do. So, if you can do such amazing things, let the whole world see you do them."

**Joh 7:5 Jesus' brothers said this because even they did not believe in him.**

Joh 7:6 Jesus said to them, "The right time for me has not yet come, but any time is right for you to go.

**Joh 7:7 The world cannot hate you. But the world hates me, because I tell the people in the world that they do evil things.**

So Joseph, like our Lord Jesus Christ, has an evil report against his brothers to their father. Obviously, the brothers who got reported are mad at Joseph as the Jewish leaders hated Jesus when He witnessed against them.

We are not told what those brothers actually did, but we are told that Joseph and his brothers were feeding their father's flock during that time when he decided to tell the bad things his brothers were doing. Feeding the flock is symbol for teaching the church, so what Joseph did is a symbol of what Christ did when He exposed the false teachings of the church leaders in His day.

Let's go back to Joseph's story:

Gen 37:3 (ESV) Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors.

Gen 37:4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.

Now we are told that all of his brothers hated Joseph (except for Benjamin) because their father loved Joseph more. In other words, they got jealous of Joseph. The Jewish leaders in Christ's time also hated Him because they were also jealous of Him.

Mar 15:10 (ERV) Pilate knew that the leading priests had handed Jesus over to him **because they were jealous of him.**

Mar 15:11 But the leading priests persuaded the people to ask Pilate to free Barabbas, not Jesus.

The same jealousy caused Cain to kill his brother Abel, whose offering was accepted by God while Cain's was not. So again, the point being made here is that all these stories in the Old Testament are pointing to the story of Jesus Christ and His body. It is the story of a few people who are hated by their brothers because of their witness against them and because of their jealousy of all the blessings they are getting from their Father.

The robe or coat of many colors is a symbol of rulership, and this rulership was revealed in Joseph's dream:

Gen 37:5 One day, Joseph told his brothers what he had dreamed, and they hated him even more.

Gen 37:6 Joseph said, "Let me tell you about my dream.

Gen 37:7 We were out in the field, tying up bundles of wheat. **Suddenly my bundle stood up, and your bundles gathered around and bowed down to it."**

Gen 37:8 His brothers asked, "**Do you really think you are going to be king and rule over us?"** Now they hated Joseph more than ever because of what he had said about his dream.

Isn't this what the elect is claiming? That they will be rulers of all nations when Christ returns? Remember, this is a seventeen year-old Joseph talking to his much older brothers about his dream stating that one day, they will all bow down to him. And their reaction was predictable, "now they hated Joseph more".

Joseph's second dream confirms what God has planned for him:

Gen 37:9 (CEV) Joseph later had another dream, and he told his brothers, "Listen to what else I dreamed. The sun, the moon, and eleven stars bowed down to me."

Gen 37:10 When he told his father about this dream, his father became angry and said, "What's that supposed to mean? Are your mother and I and your brothers all going to

come and bow down in front of you?"

Jacob understood that the sun was referring to him. He did not like Joseph's dream, so he rebuked Joseph. In this part of Joseph's story, Jacob has become the symbol of our first spiritual father, Satan. The name Satan means adversary or enemy. This spirit is created by God to oppose or resist Him, as a tool to test God's people.

Zec 3:1 (KJV) And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, **and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.**

Joh 8:44 (ESV) **You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires.** He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Jacob understood that the moon was referring to Rachel. Rachel, who is already dead at that time, is the symbol of spiritually dead Babylon who will all bow down to the elect when they are ruling with Christ.

Rev 3:9 (CEV) Now you will see what I will do with those people who belong to Satan's group. They claim to be Jews (God's people), but they are liars. **I will make them come and kneel down at your feet. Then they will know that I love you.**

Let's go back to the story:

Gen 37:11 (CEV) Joseph's brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept wondering about the dream.

Gen 37:12 (ESV) Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem.

Gen 37:13 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."

Gen 37:14 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.

If you remember, Simeon and Levi did something very evil to the town of Shechem as a revenge for the evil done to their sister Dinah. So Israel is understandably concerned about Joseph's brothers and his flock being in Shechem. That is why he sent Joseph to make sure that they are okay.

Doesn't this scene remind you of these verses?

Joh 3:16 (ESV) "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Joh 3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Joseph had the same care for his brothers and his father's flock as his father had, so he kept on seeking for them until a man found him wandering in the fields.

Gen 37:15 (ESV) And a man found him wandering in the fields. And the man asked him, "What are you seeking?"

Gen 37:16 "I am seeking my brothers," he said. "Tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock."

Gen 37:17 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.

But when Joseph found his brothers in Dothan, he had no idea of the evil they were planning to do to him:

Gen 37:18 (ESV) They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him.

Gen 37:19 They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer.

Gen 37:20 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."

Gen 37:21 (ERV) But Reuben wanted to save Joseph. He said, "Let's not kill him.

Gen 37:22 We can put him into a well without hurting him." Reuben planned to save Joseph and send him back to his father.

So the Lord used Reuben to save Joseph's life. But this is only so that Joseph could go through all the trials that God has written for him, on his way to rulership of his brothers that was promised to him through his dreams.

Gen 37:23 (ESV) So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore.

Worldly men want to retain rulership of this world. Joseph's brothers think they could change the plan of God to give the rulership to Joseph, as this world thinks that the rulership of Christ and His body will never happen.

Gen 37:24 (CEV) and threw him into a dry well.

Gen 37:25 As Joseph's brothers sat down to eat, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with all kinds of spices that they were taking to Egypt.

Gen 37:26 So Judah said, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and hide his body?"

Gen 37:27 Let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not harm him. After all, he is our brother." And the others agreed.

Gen 37:28 When the Midianite merchants came by, Joseph's brothers took him out of the well, and for twenty pieces of silver they sold him to the Ishmaelites who took him to Egypt.

Gen 37:29 When Reuben returned to the well and did not find Joseph there, he tore his clothes in sorrow.

Gen 37:30 Then he went back to his brothers and said, "The boy is gone! What am I going to do?"

We see that Reuben was sincere in his intention to save Joseph, and he was not a part of the plan to sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites. Maybe he was trying to regain his father's favor after he had slept with Bilhah, his father's concubine. Maybe Reuben thought he would retain the rights of the firstborn despite Joseph's dreams.

But God's plans cannot be changed. He chose Isaac over Ishmael, He chose Jacob over Esau, and He chose Joseph over all his brothers including Reuben.

Next time, Lord willing, we will continue the story of Joseph and see more