

## ARTFUL BIBLE STUDY - #5 - JOSEPH



### Genesis 35:22b-26

*Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: 23 The sons of Leah; Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun: 24 The sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin: 25 And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali: 26 And the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid; Gad, and Asher:  
these are the sons of Jacob*

Genesis 37:1-11 – Jacob's favorite son!?! What does this say about Joseph?

Genesis 37:12-35 – What does this say about his brothers? Where is God in all of this?

Is there a family life message here?

Have you or others ever had a pit experience and how did you or another person respond to it?

(Immediately, after this rather innocuous beginning, the story turns dark. "Joseph brought to their father a bad report of them" (Gen. 37:2). Where on earth does this come from? The very first thing we learn about the hero, Joseph, is that he is a tattletale, a spy sent to tell the father what the other boys are up to! No reason is given for this trait directly, but the very next sentence may offer insight. "Now Israel (Jacob) loved Joseph more than all of his children, because he was the son of his old age, and he had made him a long-sleeved coat" (Gen. 37:3). What the

special garment is, of course, is not at all clear. The KJV named it famously "the coat of many colors," but that appears to have no real relationship to the Hebrew, though it does appear to be something like how the Septuagint translates the phrase. Jacob has singled out the son of his old age by making for him something that he fails to offer to any of his other sons. We of course remember that Jacob was himself loved especially by his mother Rebekah, who in the attempt to trick his dying blind father out of the patriarchal blessing, used clothes to advance the deception. As we said some weeks ago, the trick may or may not have worked, but the point is that clothes have again become a source of tension in a story of Genesis.

The result of the gift of this wonderful garment is predictable. As Joseph parades his resplendent self among his brothers, perhaps flashing his great robe before them, it is abundantly obvious that he is Dad's pet, so "the brothers saw that their father loved him more than all of his brothers, and they hated him and could never say 'shalom' to him" (Gen. 37:4). Even the most common greeting stuck in the brothers' throats whenever Joseph showed up flaunting that stinking robe!"..... Well, this is fully a Genesis tale, is it not? Trickery and hatred and deception abound, and the hero is finally not so heroic after all. He flaunts his sumptuous robe and his dream skills, and finds himself at the bottom of a pit, alone, and then sold off to the pits of Egypt, nearly a certain and monstrous death. But of course, as we know, that will not be Joseph's fate at all, a fate that still will intertwine with his murderous and greedy brothers in ways we will be astonished to discover. And just who is Joseph? He is Abraham and Isaac and even Jacob all over again. And, as usual, he is us, if we are courageous and honest enough to admit it.

Genesis 39:1-20 – Potiphar's wife and prison! Why is this in the Bible?



Joseph the Dream Interpreter and Pharaoh's Dream and Joseph's ascendancy – 7 and 7..... What qualities? Zaphnath-Paaneah,

Genesis 41:14-46 – Dream Interpreter for Pharaoh.



What characteristics of Joseph are shown in this passage? Applications for today?

What is involved in Joseph's business model? Are their applications for today?

Genesis 42:6-25 – Famished Brothers



What are Joseph's feelings?

In life is there always payback for bad behavior?

Genesis 44:1-13

What were Joseph's motives? Getting back at brothers or???????

How would you preach it?

Genesis 45:1-15



If you were painting this scene, what colors would you use?

If you were directing this scene what emotions would you like them to express?

Is there a recurring theme here?

Very Interesting..... "And now, do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life...God sent me here before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth...So it was not you who sent me here, but God."

How do you feel about the theology of God's hand in this>

Genesis 48:8-22 – The blessing of the wrong son?

What's going on here? There seems to be a recurring theme.....

Genesis 50:15-26 – Reconciliation and Joseph's Death

Why reconcile?

How to deal with unfulfilled hopes and dreams?

Learnings from Joseph narrative.....

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One telling of Joseph and his brother's sibling rivalry.....

- Now the story shifts to Jacob's son. Yep, it's still a family affair.
- Joseph is Jacob's favorite (come on, everyone has one), so Jacob gives him a fancy coat. Oh, also, Joseph dreams of his brothers' sheaves bowing down to his sheaf. Then he goes and tells them about all about it.
- First, a fancy coat and now this? Cue jealous brothers.

- What does he think he's going to do? Rule over them or something?
- Then Joseph dreams a second similar dream and blabs to everyone all about it.
- His brothers are fuming at this point. Joseph's the second youngest of Jacob's children, so he definitely shouldn't be getting all this attention.
- Joseph's brothers are pasturing their father's sheep at Shechem, when Israel sends Joseph out to meet up with his brothers and report back to him.
- Joseph's brothers see him coming and conspire to kill him. The only question is how they should they do it.
- Plan A: they kill Joseph, then throw him into a pit and say some wild animals killed him.
- Plan B: throw Joseph into a pit, but don't kill him.
- When Joseph arrives near his brothers, they strip off his big fancy coat and throw him into a pit. Guess it was Plan B BTW.
- Meanwhile, the brothers are eating and see a group of Ishmaelite businessmen traveling from Gilead to Egypt.
- Judah, one of Joseph's older brothers, suggests selling Joseph to the Ishmaelites so that *technically* they are not guilty of murder. Plus, they can make some money while they're at it.
- And that's just what they do. The brothers sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver.
- The brothers take Joseph's robe, kill a goat, dip the robe in the blood, and bring it to their father as if Joseph is dead. Jacob is upset, to say the least.
- Meanwhile, the businessmen who bought Joseph take him to Egypt and sell him to one of the higher-ups in the Pharaoh's court, "the captain of the bodyguard" (37:36 NRSV).