

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

GENESIS 34-37

What's a little girl to do? She's the only sister in a family of eleven brothers, and her mom is one of four matriarchs mad at each other. This little girl lives in a dysfunctional household. No wonder she wants to escape her family, and find some friends of her own.

This is the young lady in verse 1, "Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land." As the song says, "girls just want to have fun." And Dinah just wanted some girlfriends with whom she could hang out. But innocent desires can lead us astray. The likelihood of finding the right kind of friend in the wrong kind of place isn't good. And Shechem was the wrong kind of place.

Shechem was a Canaanite city, full of wickedness and idolatry. Dinah became prey to a perverted prince.

"And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and violated her." The son of the king of Shechem (his name was Shechem) rapes the new girl in town.

And "His soul was strongly attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the young woman and spoke kindly to the young woman." Of course, only after he raped her. This guy was piece of work, a narcissist if there ever was one. Girls, don't listen to what a guy says. Listen to what he does. "So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this young woman as a wife. And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter." Chapter 32 marked Jacob's spiritual breakthrough. He stopped wrestling with God and surrendered to His will. But now his newfound faith is tested with tragedy. And by far the most difficult tests of faith are those that attack and harm our children.

"Now his sons were with his livestock in the field; so Jacob held his peace until they came. Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. And the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard it; and the men were grieved and very angry, because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, a thing which ought not to be done." The kid sister had been violated!

But Hamor spoke with them, saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter." "Lusts" would be a better word than "longs." This Shechem was a spoiled brat who's daddy caved in to his every whim.

"Please give her to him as a wife. And make marriages with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters to yourselves. So you shall dwell with us, and the land

shall be before you. Dwell and trade in it, and acquire possessions for yourselves in it." Hamor never apologizes for his son's crime. He's self-deluded. He mistakes Shechem's vile act as an open door for social and economic partnerships with Jacob's family.

"Then Shechem said to her father and her brothers, "Let me find favor in your eyes, and whatever you say to me I will give. Ask me ever so much dowry and gift, and I will give according to what you say to me; but give me the young woman as a wife." **The rapist himself shows no remorse!** Instead, he tries to cover up his rape and buy the approval of Dinah's family with a large dowry. *I suppose, like father like son.*

But this only made Dinah's brothers angry. "The sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, and spoke deceitfully, because he had defiled Dinah their sister. And they said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that would be a reproach to us." Circumcision was the seal of the covenant God made with their grandpa, Abraham. It was a religious symbol, a mark of identity.

"But on this condition we will consent to you: If you will become as we are, if every male of you is circumcised, then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to us; and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. But if you will not heed us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and be gone." The brothers require them to be circumcised, and give a religious reason, *but they have ulterior motives.* They plan to avenge their sister.

Verse 18, "And their words pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son. So the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob's daughter. He was more honorable than all the household of his father." I'm not sure why it says he was "*more honorable,*" unless it's because he was domestically driven to be circumcised. He wanted a wife. *But why would other men go along with this?*

And Hamor and Shechem his son came to the gate of their city, and spoke with the men of their city, saying: "These men are at peace with us. Therefore let them dwell in the land and trade in it. For indeed the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters to us as wives, and let us give them our daughters. Only on this condition will the men consent to dwell with us, to be one people: if every male among us is circumcised as they are circumcised. Will not their livestock, their property, and every animal of theirs be ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will dwell with us." They suggest unity with Jacob will make them all rich. *For greed's sake* they agree to be circumcised.

"And all who went out of the gate of his city heeded Hamor and Shechem his son;

every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city. Now it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain..." These were adult males who underwent un-anesthetized surgery. *They stop baseball games when a catcher feels this kind of pain.* The men of Shechem are sore and incapacitated. They become sitting ducks.

And "two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males." It was bloody. And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and went out." This was probably the origin of the phrase, "Don't get caught with your pants down."

Levi and Simeon did the dirty work, but then the rest of "The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because their sister had been defiled. They took their sheep, their oxen, and their donkeys, what was in the city and what was in the field, and all their wealth. All their little ones and their wives they took captive; and they plundered even all that was in the houses." And notice, all this brutality occurs without Jacob's knowledge or approval. It's a sign the old man had lost control of his family. We see this again when the brothers sale Joseph into slavery and lie to Jacob. *He's a weak leader.* He played favorites among the siblings and was a stranger to his children.

And it could be this was one reason Dinah fell into the hands of the prince. She was looking for a love her father never gave her... *Dad, if you have a daughter, love and spend time with her. For if she doesn't experience wholesome love from her dad, she may turn to unhealthy love in the arms of a dangerous man.*

Verse 30, "Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have troubled me by making me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and since I am few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and kill me. I shall be destroyed, my household and I." All Jacob cares about is how *his sons actions* impact *his own welfare*. If he'd cared as much about Dinah, and her honor, the incident may've never occurred.

And look at the boys' response, "But they said, "Should he treat our sister like a harlot?" What they did was savage and excessive; but at least they cared enough to take action! *And when a father doesn't care and take courage his kids either take off or take over.*

Now come Genesis 35, Jacob needs a revival. His faith has been far from exemplary. God had worked with a vacillating Jacob. His faith was *up and down, hot and cold, on again off again...* **Remember his story...**

After swindling his brother, Esau, out of his birthright, Jacob fled to Haran. On the

way, he had a dream of a ladder extending to heaven. Jacob encountered God that night, and he received the promise God also made to his dad, Isaac - and to his granddad, Abraham. **Jacob named the place, "Bethel," or "house of God."**

Jacob then spent the next twenty years *building a harem and growing herds*. He marries two wives, Leah and Rachel, and gets the bonus of two concubines. With the four women he sires 12 sons and a daughter. These are the founders of a future nation of Israel.

Finally Jacob returns to the land promised to him and encounters his God again. Near a tributary of the Jordan, Jacob wrestles with God's messenger, thinking he's Esau. Finally, he realizes he's been wrasslin with God, and he refuses to let Him go without a blessing. This is Jacob's spiritual highpoint. Jacob surrenders to God's will, and on the next day is reunited with Esau.

Then comes the chapter we just read, **the slaughter at Shechem**. Jacob is now dealing with the *violation* of a daughter, the *violence* of sons, the *vulnerability* of being surrounded by pagans who're now after revenge.

All this had diverted Jacob's eyes off the Lord and it resulted in confusion and chaos for him and his family. He needs a new encounter with God - so in Chapter 35 God sends him back to where it all began... *to Bethel*.

"Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother." God tells Jacob to **"make an altar."** He wants to *re-alter* his perspective. **That's what happens at an altar, when you again bow your life before God.**

And when will we learn, this is the cure to all of our ailments... If this world has you confused and beaten down, return to the house of God. Rededicate yourself to God's will, and at His **altar** let Him **re-alter** your life.

But notice there's some preparation that's needed to come to God's altar. Verse 2, **"And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone."** Before they meet the Lord they need to prepare themselves in three ways: *put away their idols, purify themselves, and change their garments*. And this also applies to us!

First, **put away your idols**. Salvation is a free gift, but you can't come to Jesus toting along a bag of other gods. **Jesus will not save who He cannot govern.** Whatever you love more than God, put that idol away.

Then **purify yourself**. Washed in Jesus' blood, let Him clean your conscience and create a new identity.

And **change your garments.** Take that new perspective and let it color how you view yourself, and life, and other people. Take off your worldly attitudes.

And this is what Jacob's family does... Verse 4, "So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hands, and the earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which was by Shechem." And notice what Jacob does with all their sin and worldliness - *he buries it under a tree...*

This is how you discard your baggage. Take it to the tree, the cross. Take it to Calvary's tree. For at Jesus' cross all our sins get buried - never to be dug up.

"And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob." God protected them from their revenge-seeking neighbors. "So Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him. And he built an altar there and called the place El Bethel (or "God of the house of God"), because there God appeared to him when he fled from the face of his brother."

Notice, Jacob doesn't get sentimental over a locale. Christians sometime make that mistake. They get attached to a church building, or a holy place as if God has spiritual hot spots, Wi-Fi zones, that make prayer more effective. It would've been easy for Jacob to feel this way of Bethel. This was where he first met God.

But after his second encounter, Jacob renames the place, not "Bethel", but "El Bethel," literally "the God of the house of God." Jacob is making a statement. His faith is not dependent on a physical location. Jacob trusts in the God who meets, not the meeting place.

Verse 8, "Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the terebinth tree. So the name of it was called Allon Bachuth." Or "tree of weeping." Remember the influence Rebekah had over her son. He was a mama's boy. Rebekah had coached Jacob in the conspiracy to steal Esau's blessing. I'm sure her maid reminded Jacob of his mom. And it's not until she dies *that God gives him a new name.* God promised Jacob this name after their wrestling match, but here He makes it official. Often before God gives us new directives, old affiliations have to be buried.

"Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him. And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name." So He called his name Israel." God changes his name from "Jacob" or "heel-catcher" - someone *sneaky and conniving* - to "Israel" which means "governed by God."

This *name change* points to a *change in nature.* Between his two trips to Bethel, Jacob has gone from a self-sufficient man who relied on his own schemes, to a man

surrendered to God and trusting in His promises.

Verse 11, “Also God said to him: “I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body.” Recall Genesis 12, there we talked about the most crucial covenant in the Bible, God’s covenant with Abram. God promised him land, nation, blessing - or sod, seed, salvation. God later passed on this covenant to Abram’s son, Isaac. Now He’s reaffirming the same covenant with Jacob, or Israel.

And “The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land.” Today’s Palestinians and the Arab world need to read these verses. The covenant God made with Abraham also belongs to Israel and his 12 tribes.

“Then God went up from him in the place where He talked with him. So Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it.”

Again, a pile of rocks serve as a memorial - a landmark. And we all need these kinds of milestones to remind us of how far God has brought us in our lives.

I’ve talked to Christians who struggle with assurance of their salvation because they lack a point in time where they made, or stated a commitment. This is why landmarks are valuable - dates, and events, and experiences, and baptisms - are piles of remembrance.

And here, for years to come, a pile of stones will mark Jacob’s transformation. “And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel.”

Verse 16, “Then they journeyed from Bethel. And when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel labored in childbirth, and she had hard labor. Now it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said to her, “Do not fear; you will have this son also.” And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-Oni (or “son of my sorrow”); but his father called him Benjamin (or “son of my right hand” - a position of family honor).

“So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). And Jacob set a pillar on her grave, which is the pillar of Rachel’s grave to this day” I’ve been to Rachel’s tomb. It’s on the road to Bethlehem. And 2000 years after Benjamin is born another child is born in Bethlehem. Jesus too was “son of my sorrow” - he agonized on the cross. Yet later His name was changed to “son of my right hand” - for Jesus rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, and God exalted Him. Today, He sits at God’s right hand.

“Then Israel journeyed and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder. And it happened, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel heard about it.” Bilhah was Rachel's maid. Reuben was Jacob's firstborn son.

Bilhah and Rube may've been close in age, but their sexual tryst constituted incest. It was a sin against God and Jacob. And it cost Reuben dearly... Later, Reuben will get stripped of the rights of the firstborn. He could've been the fore-father of the Messiah. *Instead, he just gets a measly sandwich named after him.*

“Now the sons of Jacob were twelve (here's the roll call of Israel's tribes): the sons of Leah were Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; the sons of Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin; the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maidservant, were Dan and Naphtali; and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, were Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Padan Aram.”

It's amazing how the future of the nation Israel, parallels the life of the man with the same name. *Notice the similarity of their journeys... Because of sin both are forced into exile... While away, they yearn for home... They both develop into crafty businessmen (in exile the Jews and Jacob gained a reputation for shrewdness)... Both are preserved and prospered by God's providence... Both become wanderers... Finally, in God's time He returns both to the Land of Promise.*

Verse 27, “Then Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had dwelt. Now the days of Isaac were 180 years. So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.”

After burying the hatchet, now Esau and Jacob come together to bury their father, the patriarch, Isaac.

Chapter 36, “Now this is the genealogy of Esau, who is Edom.” Later in the OT we'll read a lot about a people called **the Edomites** - the offspring of Esau.

“Esau took his wives (all pagan princesses and idol worshippers) from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite; Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; and Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth.” And the rest of Chapter 36 is Esau's family tree. I'll let you read the chapter on your own, so that you, *not I*, can struggle with the pronunciation of these names.

Notice though the end of verse 6, Esau “went to a country away from the presence of his brother Jacob. For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together, and the land where they were strangers could not support them because of their

livestock. So Esau dwelt in Mount Seir. Esau is Edom.” Esau and his descendants settle east and south of the Dead Sea. The Edomites will end up Israel’s southern neighbor. And verses 15-19 are a list of Edom’s tribal chieftains.

Also mentioned in the chapter are the “sons of Seir” (verse 20), and the “Horites” (verses 29-30). These were people and tribes who lived in this area prior to Edom, and were probably assimilated by the Edomites.

In later years, Edom’s capitol becomes the rock city of Petra. Petra’s Treasury was used in the movie, *The Last Crusade*. It’s where Indiana found the holy grail.

Other notes of interest... King Herod, at the birth of Christ, was an Edomite... The book of Obadiah was written as a prophetic warning of a coming judgment upon Edom... And in verse 12 the name “Amalek” appears. Perhaps, this is the father of the Amalekites.

And notice one other point of interest... Verses 4, 10, and 12 mention the name “Eliphaz.” In verse 33 you’ll find the name “Jobab,” or perhaps, “Job” for short.

Both names appear in the book of Job - *one reason why Bible scholars believe Job was the first book of the Bible written*. Job’s story could’ve occurred during the time of the patriarchs, before Moses wrote Genesis.

Chapter 37 begins the fascinating story of Joseph. More than a quarter of Genesis deals with this one man, Joseph. James Boice summarizes Joseph’s life as follows, “He was loved and hated, favored and abused, tempted and trusted, exalted and abased. Yet at no point in the 110 year life of Joseph did he ever seem to get his eyes off God or cease to trust Him. Adversity did not harden his character. Prosperity did not ruin him. He was the same in private as in public. He was a truly great man.” And over the next few weeks there’s much we’ll learn from the life of Joseph.

Verse 1, “Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. This is the history of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah (who were Dan and Naphtali) and the sons of Zilpah (Gad and Asher), his father’s wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.” There’s no indication that Joseph was a snitch or tattle-tale. His brothers were a wild bunch, and Joseph might’ve been the only one that Jacob trusted. Dad needed his son’s surveillance. But his role definitely didn’t make his brothers fond of him.

The brothers are further infuriated in verse 3, “Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age.” Israel really bears the blame for how the brothers treated Joseph. He created an intense sibling rivalry... Which brings up a point for parents, if you have multiple kids don’t play favorites.

And I understand the temptation... I have three sons, one daughter, and for some reason oblivious to me, my wife always thought I was tougher on my *grimy, gritty, gnarly, nappy, rough-necked boys*, than I was on my *sweet, precious, can-do-no-wrong, adorable princess*. I didn't see what Kathy was concerned about, but to humor her, I tried to guard against any favoritism.

For if you favor one child and slight another, you'll unleash a divisive and damaging dynamic in your family. This was the mistake Daddy Jacob made... And if there was ever a dad who knew better, it was Jacob. His own father, Isaac, sadly favored his older son, Esau, over Jake. Now he repeats what he resented...

The next line throws gasoline on the family fire! **"Also he made him a tunic of many colors"** - a special-order coat! It's said of Jacob **"he made"** the tunic, *perhaps with his own hands*. Joseph's coat was sewn in love...

One translation renders, **"tunic of many colors"** as **"a long sleeve coat,"** which was a landowner's attire. Field-hands wore short sleeves - the master wore long sleeves. The length of the sleeves revealed the nature of the man's work. A commoner rolled up his sleeves to sweat, an owner managed other workers. A full-length coat said to the brothers Joseph was *white-collar*, while they were *blue-collar*. **Joseph was best of the bros.**

And remember, Joseph was still a teenager, just 17. he was prone to the excesses of youth. You can be sure **how he wore that colorful jacket played a part in inflaming his brother's jealousies**. Whenever he walked out of the tent sporting his flamboyant tunic it caused *his shoulders to roll back, his chest to puff out, his gut to suck in*. That tunic made him feel special and favored. **It effected Joseph the same way it effected me whenever I wore my High School letter jacket.**

It's a bit snug after 50 years, *but wow, does it stir up memories!* At Joseph's age, 17, I'd walk the halls of my alma mater in the blue and gray - *and man was I cool!* Actually, you don't *walk* in a letter jacket, **you strut**. Your achievements are sowed to your chest. Put on a letter jacket and it shouts that you're special. Which is exactly the effect Joseph's colorful tunic had when he put it on. *And it made his brothers even more jealous.*

Verse 4, **"When his brothers saw that their father loved (Joseph) more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him."** And Joseph did nothing to tamp down the tension or diffuse the division - *instead he tells his brothers his dreams!*

"Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more." Joseph never learned one of the keys to a happy family life is leaving a few things unsaid. *Joseph keeps talking, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed:*

There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf." Your doughnut bowed down to my doughnut.

And the brothers knew what this implied... "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words." They couldn't accept that one day they'd submit to their bratty, little brother.

Joseph's second dream has the same impact. It even enrages his dad. Verse 9, "Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me." Now, the whole family - *father, mother, and all eleven brothers* - will one day bow down to Joseph.

"So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind." Jacob knew God's hand was on Joseph. *His dreams will become reality!*

Verse 12, "Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am." Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem."

In the OT, God speaks prophetically of NT realities through *types* or *analogies*. It's been said, "Typology is a species of prophecy." You may've heard the saying, "What's concealed in the Old is revealed in the New."

And Joseph is an excellent example... Joseph is an amazing type of Jesus. The name "*Hebron*" means "*communion*," which Joseph enjoyed with His father, Jacob - until he gets sent to Shechem... Throughout the Bible, "*Shechem*" is a city associated with sin and sorrow. And this is seen played out in the Gospels.

God's good news begins with the Father and Son in unbroken communion in heaven; then the Son is sent to *Shechem*, a world of sin and sorrow. Like Joseph, Jesus came to earth to check on his brothers, the people of Israel. Yet the Jews conspired to kill Him, which is what happens to Joseph in Shechem. We'll find the parallels between Jesus and Joseph startling.

In verse 15 Joseph arrives in Shechem, "Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?"

So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks." And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" Somehow this man had overheard the brothers say they were headed another 15 miles northwest to Dothan. "So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan."

This name "**Dothan**" means "two wells or two cisterns." At the time one of them must've been dry. This is probably where they end up tossing Joseph.

For 14 chapters we're going to journey with Joseph from *the pit* - to *Potiphar's house* - to *the prison* - finally to *the palace*. And his life is guided by another "P" - that's **providence**. **Providence is God's overarching will in all situations.** God is always behind the scenes altering circumstances to accomplish His purposes.

Verse 18, "Now when they saw him afar off..." No doubt Joseph is wearing his multi-colored coat. "Even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him." Joseph comes *prancing*, but his brothers are *plotting*. This young man is stepping into deep trouble. He's about to fall victim to a family jealousy.

It's been said, "Envy is the art of counting the other guy's blessings rather than your own." God had also been good to the brothers, but they were greedy for Joseph's blessings, rather than *grateful* for their own.

As we've seen, Genesis is a battle between God and the dragon or the sea monster. We find this battle *at creation, when the snake tempts Eve, when Cain kills Abel, with the giants of Noah's day, at Babel with a counterfeit Savior named Nimrod.* **What Satan can't stop he tries to spoil.** And this becomes true with God's chosen family. God chooses Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, but Satan again attacks this family with another monster. *The green-eyed monster called jealousy.*

It was Shakespeare who coined the phrase "**the green-eyed monster.**" One of his characters says to another, "O! beware, of jealousy; it is the green-eyed monster which doth mock the meat it feeds on." He alludes to cats. Cats are often green-eyed, and they tease their prey before they pounce - just like jealousy.

We think of what we've done or what we deserve. How much better we are than the other guy. We pump ourselves up only to bring ourselves down - in pride. It's said, "Envy is the backdoor to a pure and godly heart." Here, it spoils God's chosen family. Envy can sabotage any family, even a tight-knit church family.

Verse 19, "Then (the brothers) said to one another, 'Look, this dreamer is coming! Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!'" They plot a murder.

“But Reuben (the oldest brother) heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, ‘Let us not kill him.’ And Reuben said to them, ‘Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him’ - that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.” This was Reuben’s intention, to return Joseph to his father.

But that’s not how it plays out, “So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him. (That *blasted coat* was a big issue. It epitomized their father’s favoritism.) Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it.” And they sat down to eat a meal.” Joseph’s siblings were cut-throat and calloused.

“Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt.” Here again is **God’s providence**. It’s no coincidence that at this exact moment a caravan to Egypt happens to pass by.

“So Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood?” Judah is thinking, “*how can we make some money?*” Later, another Judah, or **Judas**, will think the same way.

Apparently Reuben wasn’t present at the time, so Judah is in charge. He says, “Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh.” And his brothers listened. Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.” **Remember, it was Judas who sold out Jesus for 30 shekels of silver.**

In verse 29 Reuben comes back, “Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes. And he returned to his brothers and said, “The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?” *How could he ever return and face his dad knowing what actually happened to his favored son?*

That’s when they concoct a plan, “So they took Joseph’s tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, “We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son’s tunic or not?” And he recognized it and said, “It is my son’s tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces.” Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days.” What a sad plight for this old man. His grief becomes perpetual. Yet note the irony! Jacob is tricked in the same way he tricked his dad. He killed a goat to attach its wool to his arms to mimic Esau. Now, his sons kill a goat, and dip Joseph’s coat in its blood. *Jacob deceived, and is deceived... by a goat!*

You could say, *his sons got his goat*. The chickens come home to roost. His sin comes back to bite him.

“And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, “For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning.” Thus his father wept for him.” For the next 20-plus years the old man grieves over Joseph's loss.

Verse 36 shifts location to the slave markets in Egypt. “Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.” He goes from the pit to Potiphar’s house. But in between a bizarre story gets inserted... Genesis 38.

Read ahead... chapters 38-40 for next week.