

Their  
Evil  
Report

**Genesis 37:1 - 19**



~ We got so busy bowing down to Esau’s family of self-important dukes and kings in our last report that we almost forgot all about Jacob. Chapter thirty-six was like a detour out of the Bible, if you ask me, and it seemed to take us away to some medieval land with castles and princes and all that! I remember “Medieval Day” at school in the seventh grade – I dressed as a monk. My mom made the costume, and I had no idea what was going on. Anyways, we’re getting back with Jacob in this report – but he’s in a land where his father, Isaac, was a stranger. Storms are brewing for Jacob across the plains as his sons hatch another murder – but this time the victim is their own brother! They’ve already killed strangers; and we’re going to see them in this chapter with the audacity to feed the flock in the place where they slew all the males of Shechem! It’s almost unbelievable that God would even record this account in the Bible.

It is next to impossible, if not impossible, to witness to those you love. However, we receive a blessing when we walk before them in faith in the fear of God; and the people around us see that we walk in the light that is the Lord Jesus. Jacob has not led the best possible family life and he has twelve little killers running around as a result. Well, even with all that has transpired, they know their father calls upon the True and Living God, which brings us to the last of four great men we will see in Genesis: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob - and now Joseph - and we are going to follow Joseph around from here and on out of this book. We’ll still see the others, but the story of Joseph is prominent and, indeed, has now begun. You may have noticed Joseph will get more time in this book than we spent studying creation in the first eleven chapters.

Can we - do we need to – explain why the account of Joseph’s life receives such significance in God’s Word? There are several reasons and here are

two: one, the life we are going to see in Joseph is, finally, a good and honorable life within this family. Whatsoever things are true and whatsoever things are honest, just, pure, lovely or of good report, if there be any virtue or if there be any praise: think on these things. That's what we're going to do as we consider Joseph's life. God wants us to have that which is good and virtuous before us – and Joseph's life is precisely that. Second, nowhere in the New Testament is Joseph mentioned as a type of Christ. Yet, no one is more like Christ in their experience and life than Joseph. For thirty-six chapters we have seen in the abstract what we will see here now in the concrete – and it isn't accidental. Any good commentator and some easy research will bring you more than twenty parallels between the life of Joseph and the life of Christ. Some say there are more than thirty; and we'll see some of them as we go along – although we won't make them a theme.

The last chapter was no laughing matter; but I did laugh when the dukes came on the scene from nowhere. That is such a ridiculous designation; born of utter pride and arrogance run rampant. We met the entire line of royalty in the family of Esau in the last chapter; and if you were in that line, you needed a title – because, without one, you had no identity. Men have been falling for titles that advertise self-importance from that day until this. Many people around this forum on which I teach have phony names and titles, too. Well, I don't trust anyone when I don't even know if they're real or not, friends. The degrees and designations being turned out at university today aren't worth five cents if the Lord Jesus Christ isn't being glorified by them; and He can be - if one wants to.

See, it's quite meaningless to respect the office when the individual occupying the office isn't worthy of respect. We're getting back to Esau quickly now; so, I'll leave it at this: America hasn't had a man in office worthy of respect or thoughtful consideration in over seventy-five years. Many will disagree; and they have a right to be wrong. So, with that, at the time in which we are studying, we pick back up in the line of Jacob. We skipped right over Bethlehem when it was first mentioned in chapter thirty-five - and we did so for a number of reasons - which I'll not spell out at this time. Oh, little town of Bethlehem where Benjamin and Jesus were both born! How could prophecy have ever been fulfilled there? That is the

wonder that makes the Bible the Word of God, my beloved. We also skipped the sin of Reuben because he will come back before us on trial for it later....

***1 And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.***

***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.***

***3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.***

~ Well, this may be the generations of Jacob but only Joseph is mentioned in it! Is he the only one that mattered? These sons of Jacob are real troublemakers, to be sure. It's going to take all of these men a very long time to learn anything at all. This is where we see the actual shift from Jacob to Joseph in Scripture, too. We're going to Egypt with Joseph because his brothers didn't like his evil report. Further, we hear a lot about this coat today - but there may be another translation: coat with 'sleeves' is what some take it to mean. It would have been wildly unpopular in that day to have sleeves. They weren't turning them out en masse in Jacobs's day. It may have been multi-colored - or it may have had sleeves....

***4 And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.***

~ Bitterness and strife have characterized this family all the way down the line; and here it is rearing its ugly head again. I have made the following statement in our last several reports, so I hope you will understand when I say again, that SIN ruins lives. I don't care what it is, friends, you won't beat God with your sins. Sin ruins families, communities, cities and nations. There is only one problem in this world today - and God has Personally labeled it sin. Here, Joseph is experiencing discrimination from both sides; his father loves him inordinately and, as a result, his brothers hate him! It

also seems the whole family was a bunch of dreamers. We saw Jacobs's ladder dream and now Joseph has a dream that doesn't do anything to help anyone. You may wonder why Joseph would even tell this dream to anyone and the answer is simple: Joseph had been sheltered and had NO EARTHLY IDEA what the dream meant – or how awful this world – and his own family – were capable of treating him! Joseph is abjectly naïve and gullible – as we all were - at seventeen years old. There is a lot of background to all of this; and, if you haven't read all of our safari reports from Genesis, then I highly recommend you go all the way back and start at the beginning. We have the favoritism of Joseph by Jacob - and the others deeply resent it....

***5 And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.***

***6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed:***

***7 For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.***

***8 And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.***

***9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.***

***10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?***

~ The brothers aren't even finished asking Joseph if he really thinks he will reign over them when Joseph has another dream. They hate him now for sure. You may not yet understand what Joseph was talking about - but the

family sure did! Those of you who have started reading your Bible at the back - in the Book of Revelation – will have no clue what any of these things mean when you read them here. See, friends, when you find a woman mentioned in the twelfth chapter of Revelation with the sun, moon and stars under her feet – you’ll do well to know that means the nation Israel. Joseph’s brothers understood perfectly well that it was the sons of Israel that Joseph was talking about. See, Genesis is like a bud to a flower; it opens up as it grows. We ought to understand what is being said so this safari will mean something to us. Guessing at the Bible is useless, friends; and we don’t need to guess when it’s all made crystal clear throughout. Jacob knew what Joseph was saying - but Joseph only knew what he had dreamed. Joseph didn’t know the full implications of saying what he was saying....

***11 And his brethren dismissed him; but his father observed the saying.***

***12 And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem; (and each was determined they would never bow to their brother Joseph).***

***13 And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I.***

***14 And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.***

***15 And a certain man found him , and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him , saying , What seekest thou?***

***16 And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks.***

***17 And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.***

**18 And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him.**

**19 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.**

~ So, we end this leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God in Shechem - over 100 miles from Hebron. This indicates the vast area Jacob's sons cultivated. Remember, Shechem is the place where these brothers murdered all the men of the city. Now, they are feeding their flocks in verse thirteen. How weird is that? I don't think these boys had anything good to feed other peoples flocks with, quite frankly. Anyways, Dothan is a long ways north of Shechem; so, these brothers are a long way from home, when here comes the dreamer. Well, we'll see whether or not these dreams come to pass as we move on through life with Joseph in our safari. In our next report we will begin to draw some comparisons between the life of the Lord Jesus and the life of Joseph. Christ will be glorified forevermore ~

