

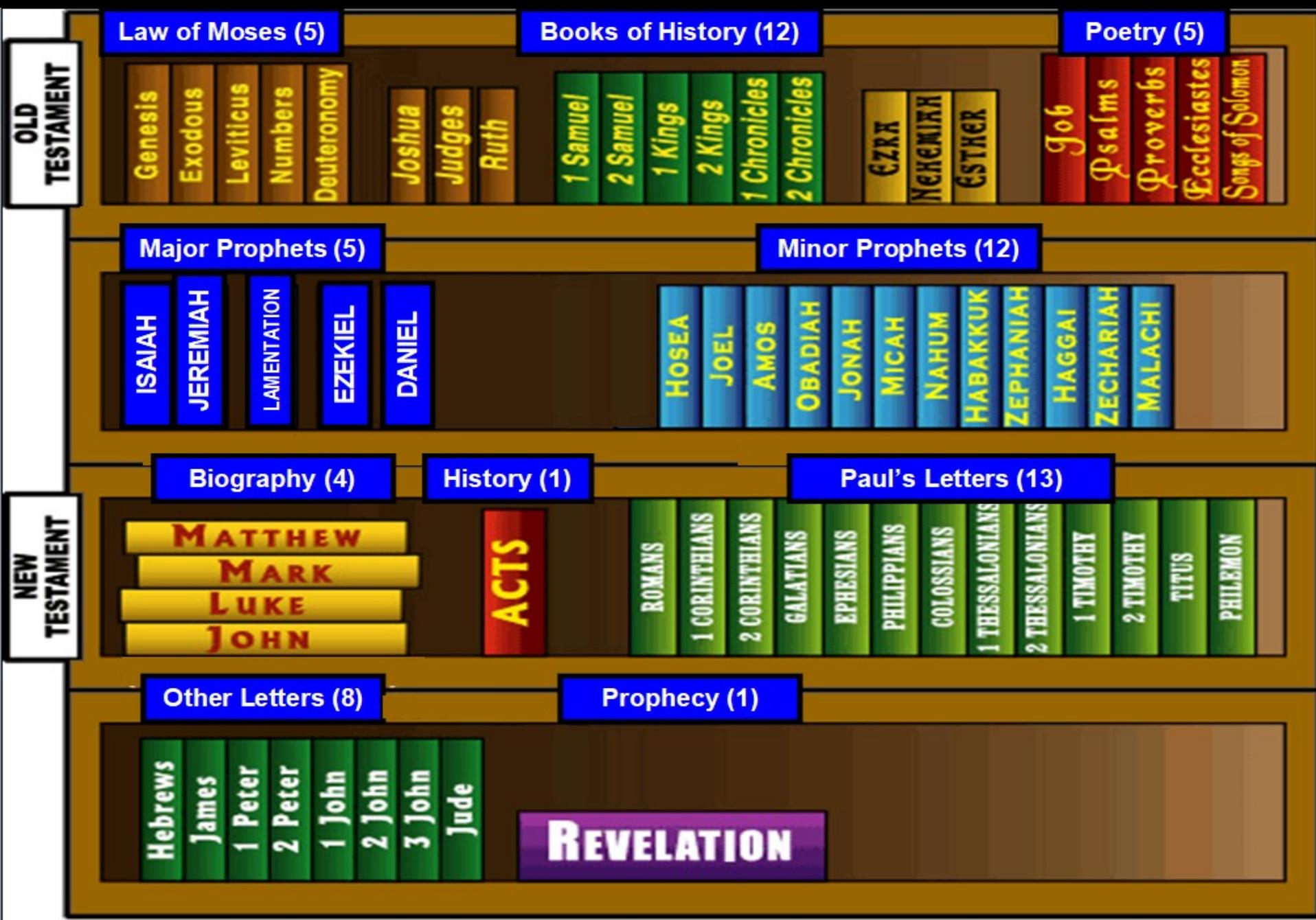
Patriarchal Age – The Patriarchs.

**Genesis 37:1-36;
Joseph Jealousy
and Betrayal.**

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Jacob, Joseph, Jealousy, & Journey. Gen 37:1-37:36;

JOSEPH is the next famous Bible character in line.

**Jacob, one of Isaac's twin sons,
eventually
became the father of twelve sons.**

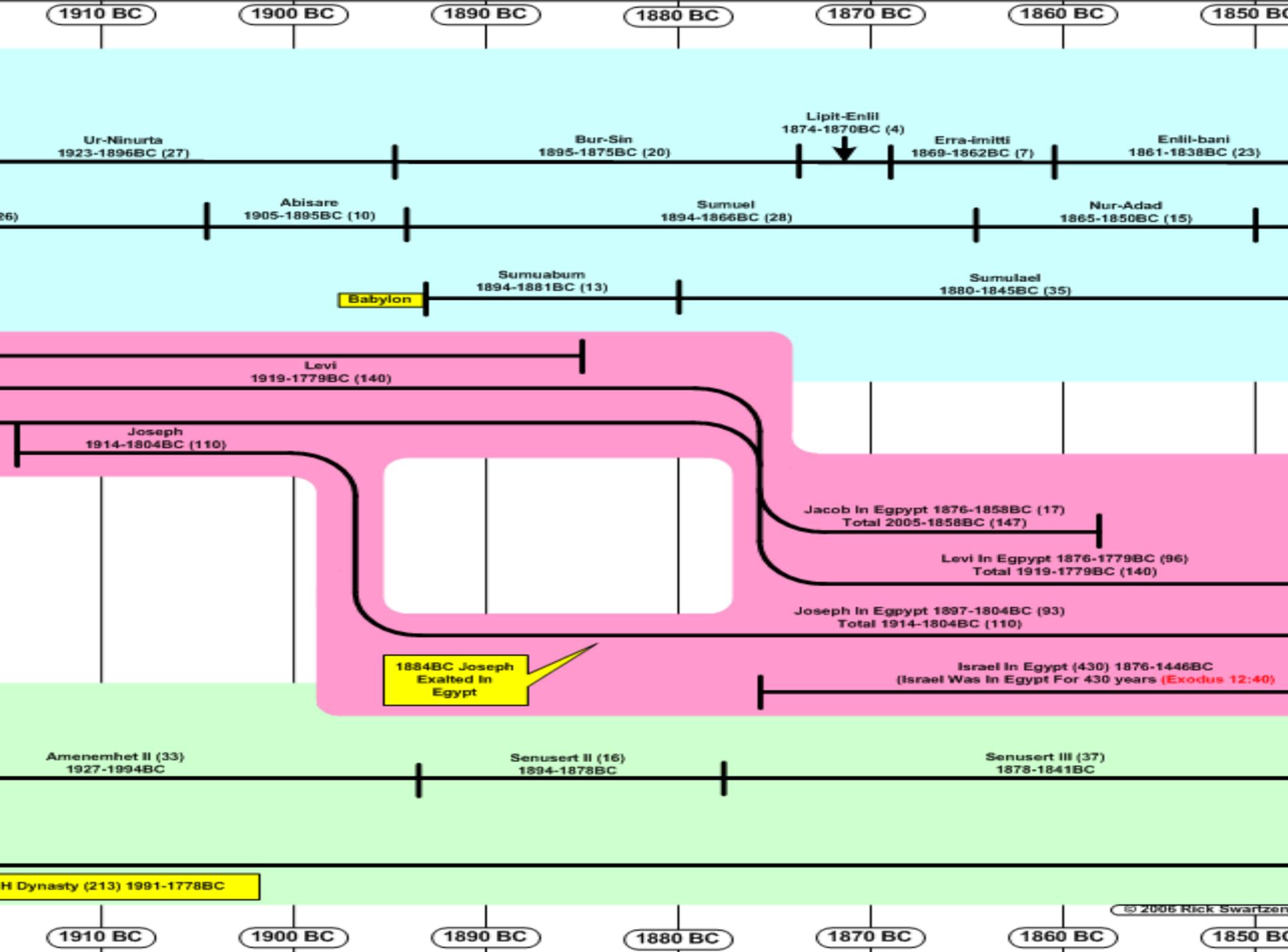
**Among these twelve was Joseph,
one of the best known men of the Bible.
Genesis 35:22-26;**

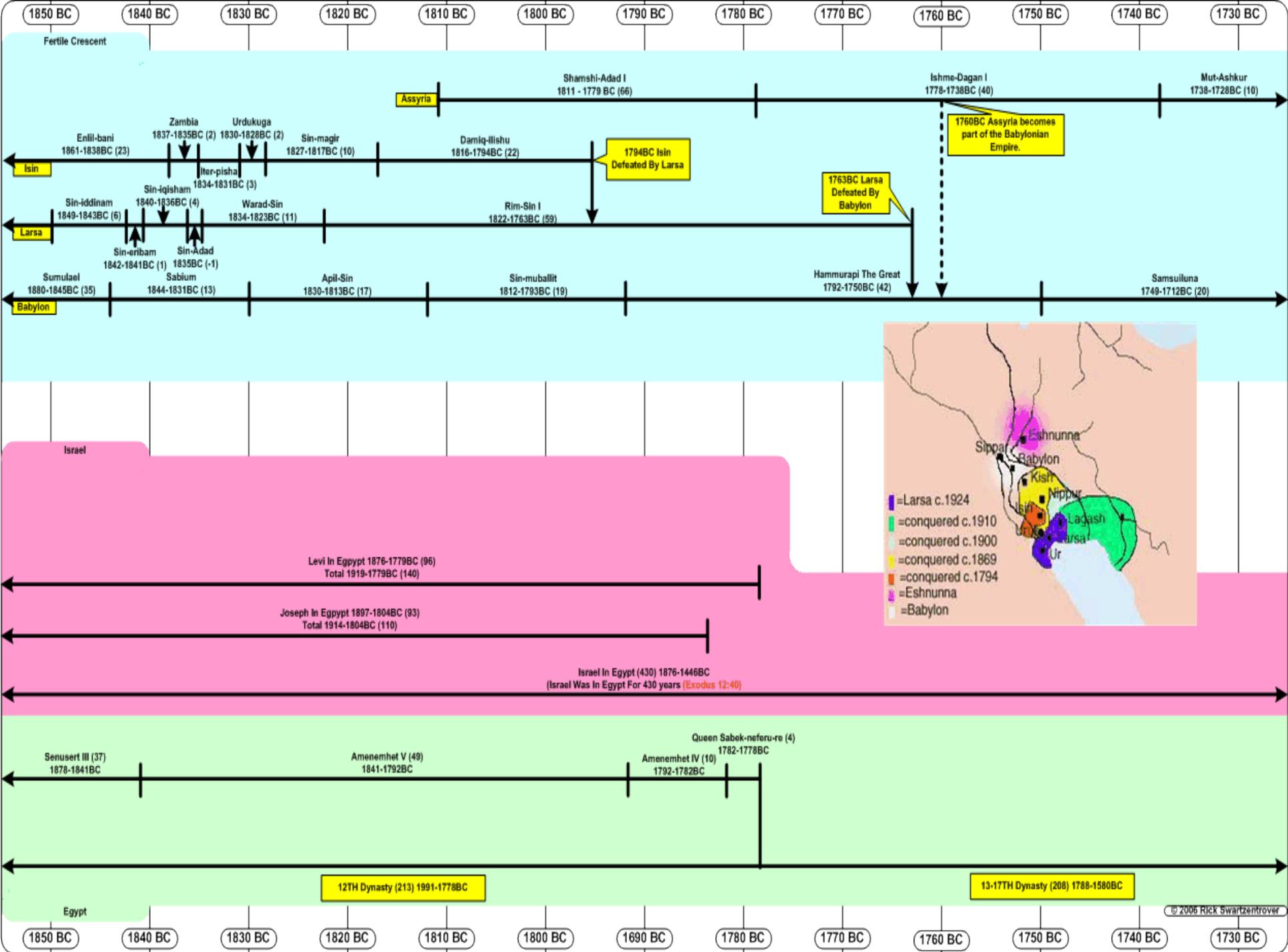
THE PATRIARCHAL AGE

CREATION
GARDEN of EDEN
SACRIFICE FOR
SIN
WICKEDNESS
THE FLOOD
The DESCENDANTS
ABRAHAM & ISAAC
JACOB & JOSEPH
JOSEPH IN EGYPT
MOSES BIRTH
MOSES FREES
ISRAEL

God Spoke To the Fathers







The PATRIARCHAL Age –The Patriarchs.

Joseph. Genesis 37-50;



Joseph's dream. Gen 37;

Dream comes true. Gen 39-45;

Jacob moves to Egypt. Gen 46-50;

Jacob, Joseph, Jealousy, & Journey. Gen 37:1-37:36;

There is **a story** (probably not true) about a man who was the sole survivor of a ship which sank at sea.

He made a small raft of some of the ship's cargo and eventually was able to drift to a desert island.

Finally, he saw a ship approaching more closely and **hurriedly set a signal fire ablaze.**

To his dismay, **the ship passed by and was quickly fading from sight.**

Accidentally, sparks from the signal fire set the thatched roof of his shelter in flames, and the man watched hopelessly and helplessly as all of his provision burned to ashes.

Jacob, Joseph, Jealousy, & Journey. Gen 37:1-37:36;

All was lost, he reasoned, and life could not last much longer. **Suddenly he noticed that the ship which had passed him** by was turning around and approaching the island.

To his great relief, **he was seen by the crew and rescued.** Once on board, the grateful survivor **went to the captain** to express his thanks.

“what caused you to turn around after you had already passed by me?” he queried.

“Why, we saw the signal fire you made by setting your shelter on fire,”
the captain said.

The very thing which seemed to seal the doom of this marooned man was the means of his delivery.

That is precisely the case with Joseph and Jacob in Genesis 37; A tragic and cruel event occurred which, to Jacob, brought his world to an end.

Life was hardly worth living, he reasoned, because he had lost the one thing which meant the most to him.

But in the end, the loss of Joseph for a period of years was the means God employed to save the nation from starvation and, worse yet, from a loss of purity by being absorbed into the culture and religion of the Canaanites.

Jacob, Joseph, Jealousy, & Journey. Gen 37:1-37:36;

The **emotional intensity** of the events of this episode **in the life of Jacob and his sons** is difficult for us to appreciate.

We come to this 37th chapter of Genesis in much the same way as we would watch the video replay of a week-old football match.

We know the outcome of the story. We know that Jacob was in error when he later cried out, “... all these things are against me.”
(Genesis 42:36;)

Only in the **throes of crisis or tragedy** can we fully **appreciate** what **Jacob is experiencing in this chapter.**

Generations of Jacob, Jealousy of His Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

Now Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan.

These are the records of the generations of Jacob.

“Joseph, when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers while he was still a youth, along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives.”

“Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father.”

Generations of Jacob, Jealousy of His Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

**“Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons,
because he was the son of his old age;
and he made him **a varicoloured tunic.**”**

**“his brothers saw that their father loved him
more than all his brothers; and so they hated him
and could not speak to him on friendly terms.”**

Who was Joseph?

The eleventh son, but the first of Jacob and Rachel.

What is the meaning of his name?

“Yahweh Increases or “adds.”

Where was he born?

Mesopotamia? People of the East.

Key word in his life. By Faith.

Generations of Jacob, Jealousy of His Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

There is **a tendency** to regard **the remaining chapters** of Genesis as the **“story of Joseph,”** but this is not technically accurate.

Moses referred to **chapter 36;** as the **“records of the generations of Esau.”** (36:1,9;)

In Genesis 37:2; Moses entitled this section **“the records of the generations of Jacob.”**

We must not forget that **Jacob** will not pass off the scene until **Genesis 49,** where we find the account of his death.

Generations of Jacob, Jealousy of His Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

This last section then, is an account of God's working in the life of Jacob and of his Sons through the instrumentality of Joseph.

Joseph is certainly the central figure in these chapters, but he is not the only figure.

God is forming a nation out of all the sons of Jacob.

Joseph's sojourn in Egypt and his ultimate elevation to the post of prime minister under Pharaoh makes possible the preservation of Jacob and his sons, as well as teaching all of them some valuable spiritual lessons.

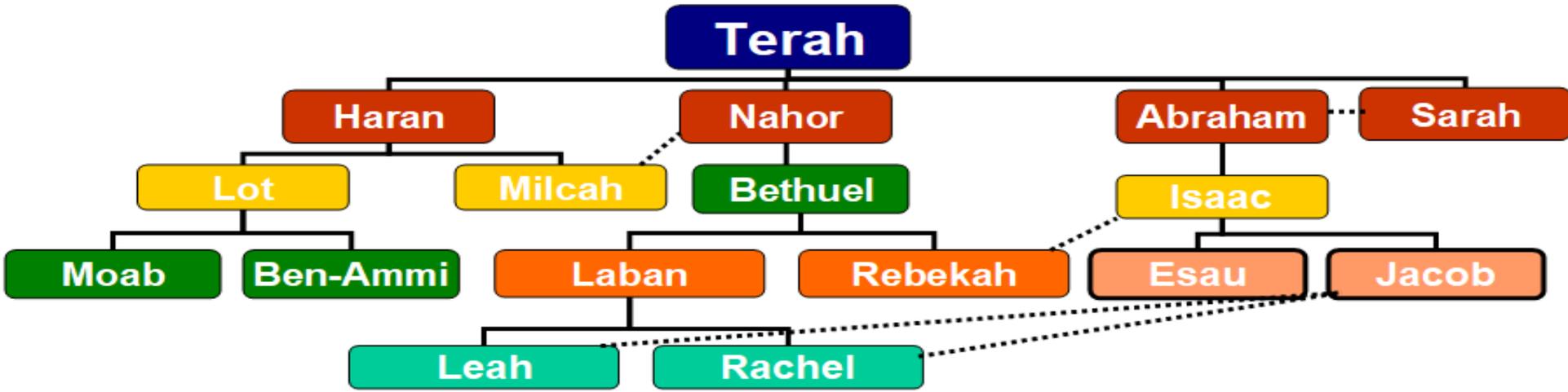
Generations of Jacob, Jealousy of His Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

There is more space given about **Joseph** than any other character in the book of Genesis.

This was a **significant aspect** to those for whom **Moses** was writing.
God wants us to know about Joseph.

**“Now Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan.”
(Genesis 37:1;)**

Jacob, Joseph, Jealousy, & Journey. Gen 37:1-37:36;



Jacob.



Genesis 30:24... "So she called his name **Joseph**, and said, "The Lord shall add to me another son."

There are a number of contrasts and comparisons that we can see between Joseph and his father Jacob.

Jacob	Joseph
He was the younger son.	He was the youngest son.
His name means "heel-grabber"	His name means, "To add."
He was loved by his mother.	He was loved by his father.
He bought the birthright from his brother.	His father gave him the birthright over his older brothers.
He was hated by his older brother.	He was hated by his older brothers.
As a result of his brother's threats, he travelled to Haran.	As a result of his brothers' plot, he was sold and taken to Egypt.
In Haran, he worked for Laban.	In Egypt, he worked for Potiphar.
Jacob brought prosperity to Laban.	Joseph brought prosperity to Potiphar.
Laban deceived Jacob.	Potiphar was deceived by his wife.
When Jacob left Laban, he was a rich man.	Joseph left Potiphar's prison to become the ruler of all Egypt.
Jacob became fearful as he anticipated meeting his brother again.	His brothers became fearful when they met Joseph again.
Jacob was eventually reconciled with his brother.	Joseph was eventually reconciled with his brothers.

The Joseph Story.

A problem of favouritism.

Deception with garments and a goat.

Departure from the land.

Egypt in the days of Joseph.

Joseph's Imprisonment.

Joseph's Exaltation.

Israel's Entrance into Egypt.

The Life of Joseph.

The Corruption of Joseph's Family.

Joseph's Family Sins against him. Gen 37:1-36;

Joseph's Family Sins with the Canaanites. Gen 38:1-30;

The Exaltation of Joseph.

Joseph's Test with the Egyptian Woman. Gen 39:1-23;

Joseph's Test with the Egyptian Society. Gen 40:1-23;

Joseph's Test with Pharaoh's Dreams. Gen 41:1-36;

Joseph's Exaltation over Egypt. Gen 41:37-57;

The Salvation of Jacob's Family.

Joseph's brothers visit Egypt. Gen 42:1-43:28;

Jacob dies in Egypt. Gen 49:29-50:13;

Joseph dies in Egypt. Gen 50:14-26;

Generations of Jacob, Jealousy of His Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

Joseph is the eleventh of twelve children.

He would have been only **six years old** when his **family fled** from their home in Haran.

The family had come down to Shechem.

His sister had been raped there and his brothers had gone in and had murdered everyone in the city.

Because of this, the family had to move again and now they were near to Bethel.

He had seen three deaths in his extended family.

His grandfather Isaac.

His mother Rachael.

A nurse named Deborah.

Generations of Jacob, Jealousy of His Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

Genesis 37:2;

“This is the history of Joseph, **being seventeen years old**, was feeding the flock with his brothers.

And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah

and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and

Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.”



Generations of Jacob, Jealousy of His Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

One of the great disservices we do to this text is to fail to grasp **the fundamental** cause of the **animosity of Joseph's brothers** toward him.

Generally **we tend to think of Joseph** as a small lad 8-10 years of age **who tells tales** on his big brothers.

That is hardly a crime which deserves death, and it **does not fit the details** of the account.
Joseph is not 7 years old, but 17. (37:2;)

Now in some senses this is young, but in the Ancient Near East **girls of this age were often already married.** (for example, Dinah 34:lff.), and **young men were not infrequently kings at this age.** (cf. 2 Kings 11:21;)

Generations of Jacob, Jealousy of His Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

It is more likely that Joseph was rejected by his brothers because of the authority he exercised over them, even though he was their younger brother.

Seventeen was not necessarily young for such authority, but it was younger than his older brothers, and this was indeed a bitter pill for them to swallow.

To make matters worse, Jacob loved Joseph more than all his children and made a coat of many colours. Because of this partiality the older brothers resented Joseph.

Generations of Jacob, Jealousy of His Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

Genesis 37:5-9; “Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. So he said to them, **“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.”

“And his brothers said to him, ‘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.”**

“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.”

Joseph was a youthful dreamer and his dream came true.



Gen 41:42-44; “Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck.”

And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, "Bow the knee!**" So he set him over all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh also said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and **without your consent no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.**"**

Joseph has two sets of dreams.

They are set in the world in which he lived; an agricultural economy and life out under the sky and the stars.

Setting	Action	Implication
In the field.	Brothers' sheaves bow down to Joseph's sheaves.	Brothers would bow down to Joseph.
In the sky.	Sun, moon and 11 stars bow down to Joseph.	Jacob and his wives and sons would bow down before Joseph.

While the dream obviously comes from the Lord, we have to wonder at Joseph's lack of wisdom in sharing the contents of the dream with his brothers.

On the other hand, this was a revelation from God and, as such, was meant to be shared.

Generations of Jacob, Jealousy of His Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

There is a **continuing refrain** that we ought to have noticed throughout this chapter.

It has now been repeated on three different occasions. It is the refrain of hatred.

They hated him and could not speak to him

On friendly terms. (37:4;)

They hated him even more. (37:5;)

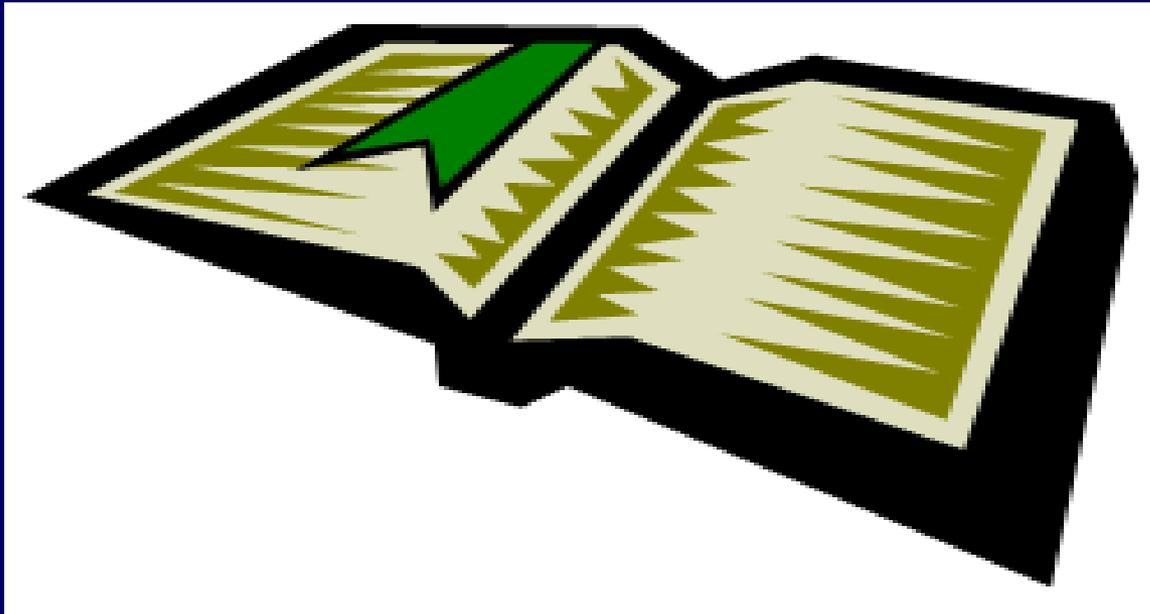
So they hated him even more

for his dreams and for his words. (37:8;)

Generations of Jacob, Jealousy of His Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

Genesis 37:8;

**“And his brothers said to him,
"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.”**



**Generations of Jacob, Jealousy of His Sons. Gen 37:1-11;
Hated because of the Authority
as well as the dreams:**

**Grammatically, Joseph's authority is not only permissible,
but it is preferable. George Bush, author
of the classic commentary on the book of Genesis,
strongly holds to the most literal and normal
rendering of verse 2, of which he writes:-**

**literally was "tending, or acting the shepherd over,
his brethren in the flock."**

**However uncouth to our ears the phraseology,
this is undoubtedly the exact rendering and the import
of the words we take to be that Joseph was
charged with the superintendence of his brethren,
particularly the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah.**

Jacob, Joseph, Jealousy, & Journey. Gen 37:1-37:36;

**After the sin of Reuben,
Joseph was given the rights of the firstborn.
1 Chronicles 5:1-2;**

**“Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel
(for he was the firstborn, but because he defiled
his father’s bed, his birthright was given
to the sons of Joseph the son of Israel; so that he is
not enrolled in the genealogy according to the birthright.”**

**“Though Judah prevailed over his brothers,
and from him came the leader,
yet the birthright belonged to Joseph.”**

Generations of Jacob, Jealousy of His Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

While it is not until chapter 49 that this transfer is formally stated by Jacob, the sin which precipitated it has already been recorded in Genesis 35:22;

It is not unlikely that Jacob expressed his intentions much sooner than this to his sons and even began to give Joseph pre-eminence over his brothers by this time.

Further details seem to demonstrate this:-

Generations of Jacob, Jealousy of His Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

Joseph's coat was a symbol of the authority he was granted over his brothers. Jacob's preference for Joseph was no secret. (37:2-3;)

The coat his father gave him was regarded as evidence of Jacob's greater love for Joseph above his other sons.

**Furthermore,
this coat indicated more than preference;
it symbolized pre-eminence and superiority of rank.**

Generations of Jacob, Jealousy of His Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

No one really knows exactly what this coat looked like. Some have suggested that it differed from the coats of Joseph's brethren in that it had long sleeves.

in which case it would mark out Joseph as a "white collar worker" while his brothers were mere "blue collar workers."

Just as supervisors are marked out today by the fact that they wear suits, so, we are told, Joseph was set apart by his long sleeved coat.

Jealousy of Jacob's Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

The gift of a **coat** of many 'pieces' (or 'colours'), or rather 'the tunic with sleeves,' was about the most significant act that Jacob could have shown to Joseph.

a coat.

2 Samuel 13:18; "And she had a garment of many colours on her: for with such robes."

Psalms 45:13-14; The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of worked gold"

Ezekiel 16:16; "And of your garments you did take, and decked your high places with"

**colours. {Kethoneth passim},
a coat made of stripes of different coloured cloth.**

It was a **mark of distinction** that carried its own meaning, for it implied that **exemption from labour** which was the peculiar **privilege** of the heir or prince of the Eastern clan.

Jealousy of Jacob's Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

“The outward distinction which the father bestows upon this son is ‘**a long sleeved cloak,**’ kethoneth passim.

The kethoneth is the undergarment or tunic, which usually was sleeveless, a thing of about knee length.”

Instead of the **ordinary work a day garment** which had **no sleeves**, and which, by coming **down to the knees only**, enabled men to get on with work.

This tunic with sleeves clearly marked out its wearer as a person of special distinction, who was not required to do ordinary work.

Jealousy of Jacob's Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

**“But *passim* means ‘ankles’ or ‘wrists.’
Consequently, this tunic was
sleeved and extended to the ankles.”**

**“It was not, therefore, a garment adapted to work
but suitable to distinguish a superior, or an
overseer.” V. H. Griffith Thomas, Genesis: A Devotional
Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946), p. 356.**

**Not all commentators agree “There is nothing in any of the
texts where the term is used to indicate that the tunic
had long sleeves or was of many colours.”**

**“The AV ‘coat of many colours’ becomes only an attempt
to give a meaning to the total term.” Harold Stigers,
A Commentary on Genesis (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), p. 271.**

Jealousy of Jacob's Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

While there is **considerable conjecture** on this matter of the coat, **one thing is certain:-**

The term which is used for Joseph's coat in this chapter occurs elsewhere in 2 Samuel 13:18-19; There it is employed for **the coat which was worn by Tamar, the daughter of David.**

While other things may have been symbolized by this garment (such as virginity), **the coat was an evidence of royalty.**

Jealousy of Jacob's Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

In the context of our passage it is easy to believe that **Joseph's coat** was considered to be **symbolic of his authority** in the same manner as stripes on the sleeve of a military uniform.

Joseph's brothers hated this garment and what it symbolized, for their first act of violence was to strip his coat from him. (37:23;)

The greatest antagonism toward Joseph was from the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. (37:2;)

While the two brothers who attempted to release him (Reuben and Judah) were sons of Leah. (37:21,26;)

Jealousy of Jacob's Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

In verse 2 Joseph was said to have pastured the flocks of Jacob “along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah.”

Reuben, and later Judah, sons of Leah, attempted to prevent or at least to modify the plan of the others to kill Joseph.

A footnote on verse 2 in the margin of the Berkeley Version suggests that the Sons of Bilhah and Zilpah would be less disciplined since they were the sons of pagan mothers, while Leah and Rachel would reflect the relatively more godly training of Laban?

Jealousy of Jacob's Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

If Joseph had been placed in a position of authority (a “**white collar**” job) by his father, then what could be more **logical** than a report to Jacob on the performance, efficiency, and reliability of those under him?

When Jacob asked Joseph to go to Shechem to check up on his sons and on his flocks (37:12-14;) he was not sending Joseph around the corner to spy upon and then tattle on his brothers. It was 50 miles or more to Shechem and about 70 miles to Dothan!

Since **Shechem** had been the scene of the slaughter of the men of that city years before, (34:25ff;) **Jacob would not have taken such a task lightly.**

Jealousy of Jacob's Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

It was the kind of responsibility that he would give only to one who had proven his capabilities as a leader.

A sensitive and potentially dangerous mission would not be given to a son without reliability and authority.

Joseph's report to his father would be a logical and necessary part of his function and authority as a supervisor.

Joseph was 17 so this kind of sibling rivalry would be expected but undeserving of such harsh counter measures by Joseph's brothers.

Jealousy of Jacob's Sons. Gen 37:1-11;

The intensity of Joseph's brothers' reaction to his dreams indicates that there must have been some substance to their fears of Joseph assuming such great power and prominence.

Joseph's brothers were deeply distressed by his two dreams. (37:8, 11;)

When the plot to kill him is first conceived, the dreams are a prominent part of their hostility and motivation.

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

Joseph Sold Into Slavery.

Jacob sent Joseph to
check on his brothers.
(37:12;)

They were tending
his sheep in Dothan.

When they saw him
coming they plotted
to kill him



An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

Jacob's concern for the welfare of his family and his flocks was not unfounded. **Shechem was the city where Dinah had been taken by force** and where Jacob's sons, especially **Simeon and Levi (34:30;)** had slaughtered all of the men.

Since Jacob had purchased land there, (33:19;) it would not be unusual for him to make use of it by sending his flocks there **to feed on its rich pastureland under the care of his sons.**

There was always the danger of some **angry relative** of one of those Shechemites who were killed or captured **seeking vengeance.**

This seems to be what Joseph was sent to look into.

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

**Joseph wandered about the fields of Shechem
in search of his brothers.**

**He departed, little knowing that he would not
see his father again for 22 years.**

**It just so happened that a man found him
who had further happened to see
Joseph's brothers and overhear them saying
they were going on to Dothan.**

**Not willing to give up his search
and return to his father without completing
his task, Joseph went on to Dothan.**

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

Animosity toward Joseph had continued to build up until the situation was explosive.

Now it was only a matter of time and opportunity.

That opportunity finally arrived when Jacob sent Joseph to Shechem.

“Then his brothers went to pasture their father’s flock in Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, “Are not your brothers pasturing the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will send you to them.”

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

“And he said to him, “I will go.” Then he said to him,
“Go now and see about the welfare of your brothers
and the welfare of the flock; and bring word back to me.”

So he sent him from the valley of Hebron,
and he came to Shechem. And a man found him,
and behold, he was wandering in the field;
and the man asked him, “What are you looking for?”

“And he said, “I am looking for my brothers;
please tell me where they are pasturing the flock.”

Then the man said, “**They have moved** from here;
for I heard them say, ‘**Let us go to Dothan.**’” So Joseph went
after his brothers **and found them at Dothan.**” Gen 37:12-17;

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

“While at a considerable distance Joseph was recognized by his brothers. They immediately conspired in a violent and daring plot which would rid them once and for all of their brother:”

“When they saw him from a distance and before he came close to them, they plotted against him to put him to death. And they said to one another,

“Here comes this dreamer!

“Now then, come and let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; and we will say, ‘A wild beast devoured him.’”

“Then let us see what will become of his dreams! But Reuben heard this and rescued him out of their hands and said, ‘Let us not take his life.’”

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

“Reuben further said to them, “Shed no blood. Throw him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but do not lay hands on him” that he might rescue him out of their hands, to restore him to his father.”

“So it came about, when Joseph reached his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the varicoloured tunic that was on him; and they took him and threw him into the pit. Now the pit was empty, without any water in it.”
Genesis 37:18-24;

It was probably Joseph’s coat that made it possible to identify him so quickly from such a distance.

It may also have been that coat which triggered the pent up feelings of jealousy and hostility toward the beloved son of their father.

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

They saw **the great distance** from their father and **the remoteness** of this spot as the **ideal opportunity** to do away with the threat which Joseph posed.

The opportunity for **a perfect alibi** was also at hand, for **wild animals were a threat** to life and limb in the open field.

They need not even produce a body if they blame Joseph's absence on **his being devoured by a wild beast.**

Only a bloody robe need be presented to Jacob.
His imagination would take care of the rest.

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

Reuben had good reason to hate his brother,
for it was Joseph who would obtain the birthright
that could have belonged to him.

But it seems that **Reuben feared facing his father**
more than he hated Joseph.

He was still the oldest of the family.
Whether or not he had the rights of the first born,
he was still saddled with the responsibilities.

This may be the explanation
for **Reuben's suggestion and his intention**
to spare the life of Joseph.

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

As a type of Christ, the cause of Joseph's rejection would most accurately be a refusal to submit to the authority of one who threatened personal power and prestige.

Joseph, was rejected by his brethren because they deeply resented and were Jealous of the authority his father had granted him over them, especially when they reasoned that it should be theirs.

Was this not the very root reason for the rejection of Jesus by the religious leaders of His day? When Jesus taught the people, the response of the masses was significant.

“The result was that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.” (Matthew 7:28-29;)

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

All of these lines of evidence lead us to the same conclusion:
Joseph was rejected by his brethren
because he, the youngest of these men (save Benjamin,
of course), was placed in a position of authority over them.

This rejection of Joseph's authority, coupled with
the spectre of even greater pre-eminence as foreshadowed
by his dreams, led them to conclude that they must
do away with him in order to protect their own position.

So what was the real cause of their hatred?
It was caused by jealousy. They recognized that
there was an element of truth in Joseph's dreams.

They saw their father's favouritism toward him and they
wanted that same sort of love and acceptance for themselves

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

**Jealousy is a terrible thing. James 5:16; says,
“Where jealousy and selfish ambition exist,
there is disorder and every evil thing.”**

**This was certainly evident in the case of the brothers
of Joseph. They were filled with jealousy
and it would eventually turn to a desire for murder.**

**Jealousy says, “I want to have what you have,
no matter what it costs you.”**

**Love says, “I want you to have whatever is best
for you, no matter what it costs me.”**

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

**The first case of jealousy in the Bible
is seen in the instance of Cain and Abel.**

**It was a case of acceptance and rejection from God.
God accepted Abel's offering
while rejecting Cain's offering.**

**The result? Cain became jealous. It was not long
before that jealousy turned to murder.**

**The same was about to happen
with the brothers of Joseph.**

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

Joseph Sold Into Slavery.

Reuben, the oldest, persuaded them to throw Joseph into a pit rather than kill him

He secretly planned to come back and rescue Joseph.

They took Joseph's coat, threw him into a pit, and sat down to eat.



An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

These brothers were mean, really mean. The slaughter of the Shechemites was only one evidence of their brutal natures.

Reuben therefore suggests that they kill Joseph without the shedding of blood. Throw the boy in a cistern and let nature do him in. The idea had some definite advantages, and so the plan was agreed.

When Joseph arrived, his reception was far from friendly. They tore off his coat, the symbol of all that they rejected, and threw the defenceless young man into a pit.

It is significant that this pit was empty, for normally it would have contained water. If this had been the case, Joseph would have drowned before the Ishmaelite caravan had arrived.

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

Even the empty pit was a part of God's providential care of Joseph and his brothers.

“a pit” “The original word is sometimes rendered ‘cistern,’ a term applied to hollow reservoirs excavated out of the solid rock for the purpose of holding rain water.”

“Or to natural cavities containing fountains, which were often walled up with stone to prevent the water from escaping.”

Bush, Genesis, 2, p. 231.

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

Joseph Sold Into Slavery.

When a caravan of Ishmaelites approached, Judah suggested that they sell Joseph as a slave.

The Ishmaelites bought Joseph and took him to Egypt. (37:28;)

In order to explain his disappearance, they dipped Joseph's coat in goats blood and sent it back to their father.



An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

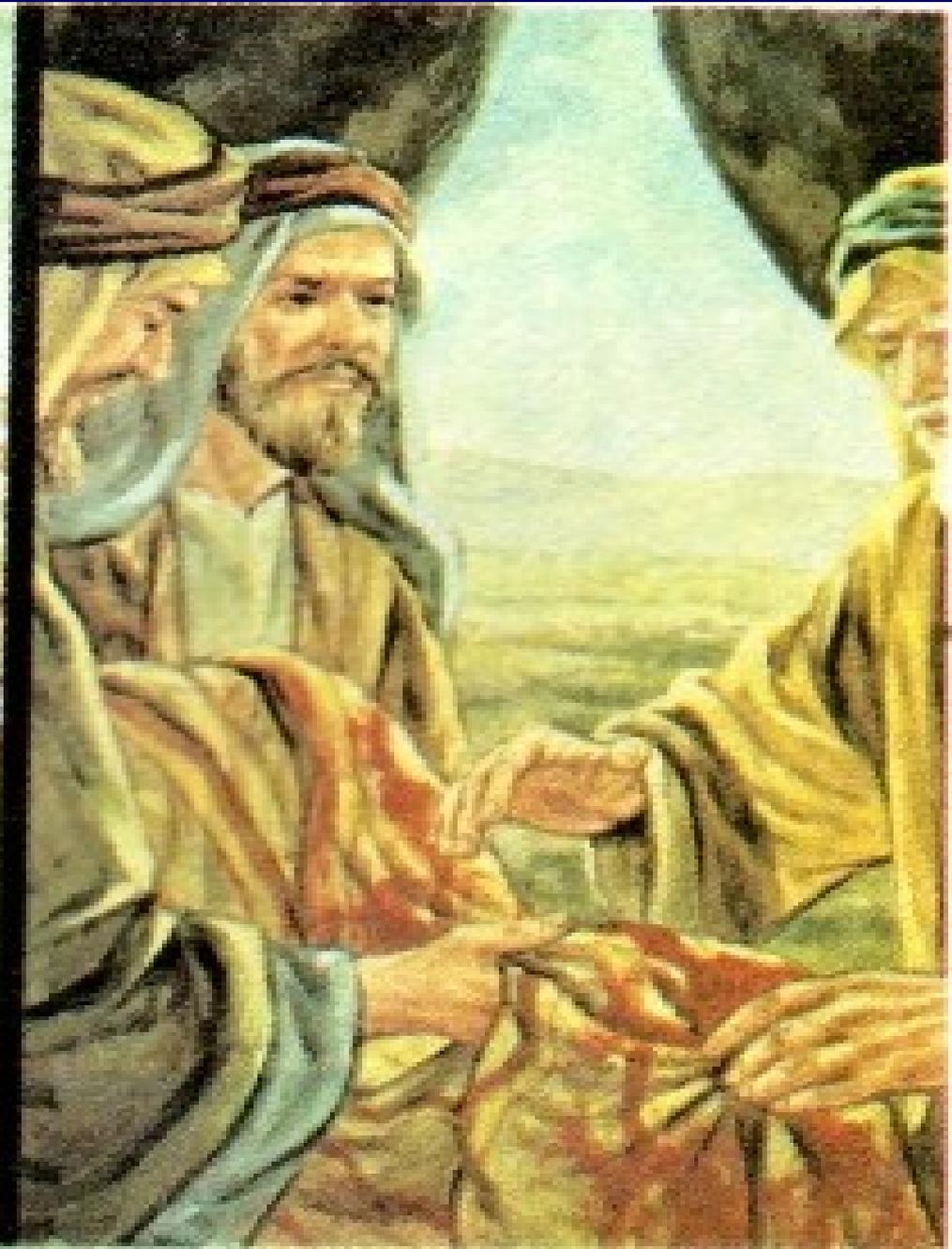
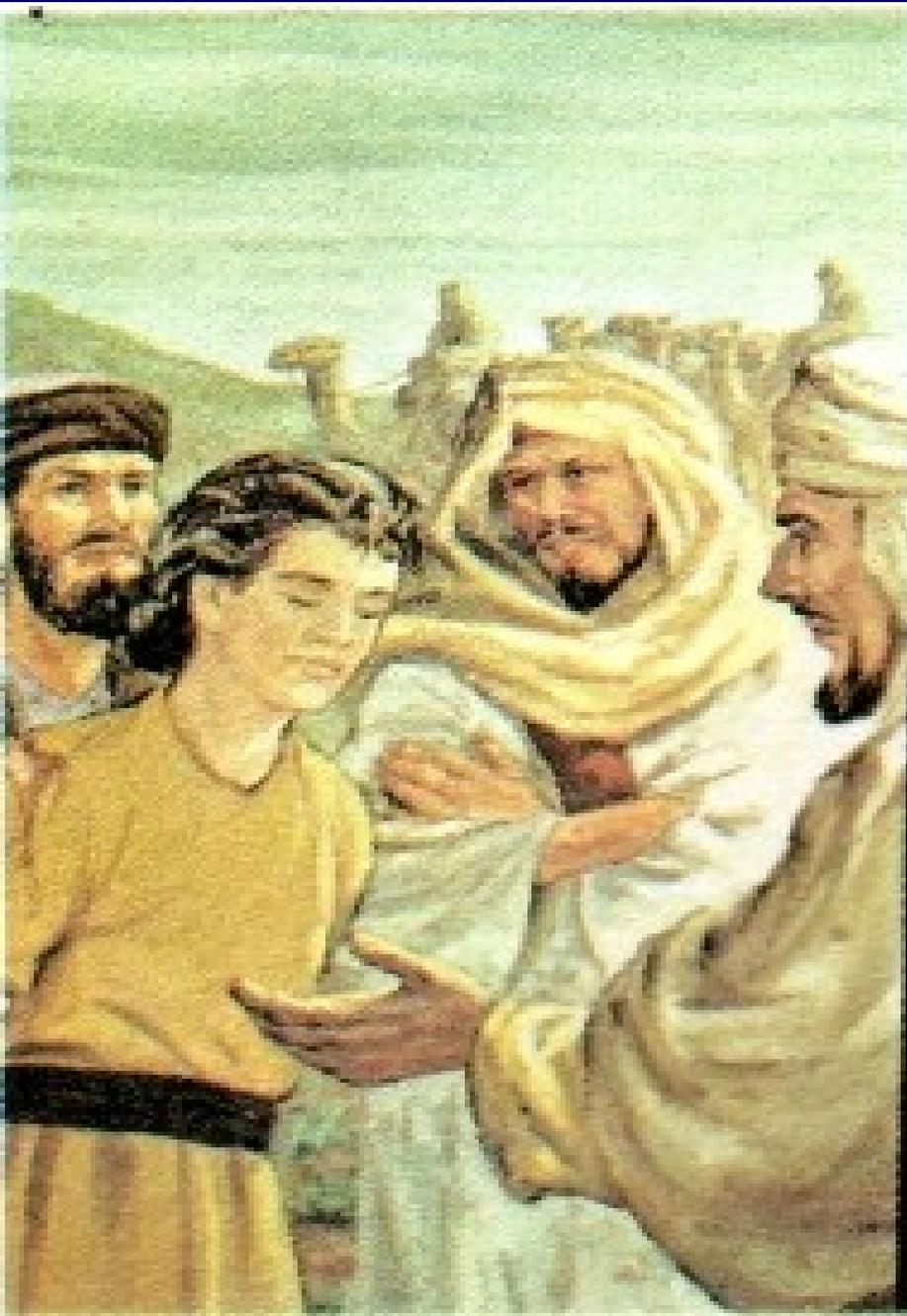
**The callousness and cruelty
of Joseph's brothers is almost unbelievable.**

“Then they sat down to eat a meal. And as they raised their eyes and looked, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing aromatic gum and balm and myrrh, on their way to bring them down to Egypt.”

“And Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is it for us to kill our brother and cover up his blood?”

Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; for he is our brother, our own flesh.”

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;



An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

**“Then some Midianite traders passed by,
so they pulled him up and lifted Joseph out of the pit,
and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver.
Thus they brought Joseph into Egypt.”**

**“Now Reuben returned to the pit,
and behold, Joseph was not in the pit;
so he tore his garments.”**

**“he returned to his brothers and said,
“The boy is not there,
as for me, where am I to go?”**

**So they took Joseph’s tunic, and slaughtered a male goat,
and dipped the tunic in the blood; and they sent
the varicoloured tunic and brought it to their father
and said, “We found this; please examine it to see Whether
it is your son’s tunic or not?” (Genesis 37:25 32;)**

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

Having thrown Joseph into the pit,
they **sat down to eat** a meal. **There is no
loss of appetite, no sense of guilt or remorse.**

There is no pity, for they eat their meal probably
well within hearing of the cries that were
continuing to come from the bottom of the pit.

We can almost hear one of the brothers
raise his voice over the petitions of Joseph
and say to one of the others,
“Want to trade a mutton sandwich for a cheese?”

**Only later would these cries
haunt the sons of Jacob:**

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

While they were eating, a **caravan of Ishmaelites** approached them on their way to Egypt from Gilead (Gen 37:25;)

This gave Judah an idea which would prevent the shedding of Joseph's blood altogether.

Rather than leaving Joseph to die of starvation and exposure, **why not sell him into slavery** to these traders?

This would dispose of their problem, avoid the messy matter of murder, and get rid of any evidence of wrongdoing. **Perhaps most appealing, it would provide them with a profit.**

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

There is no real virtue in Judah's proposal to his brothers. **While Reuben sought to return Joseph to his father, Judah is not said to have any such intention.**

He did not question the ethics or desirability of Joseph's murder, only the benefits.

**Profit was the one word
Which best summarizes Judah's motivation.**

While slavery may seem to be a more humane fate than death, some who lived in such a state of slavery might challenge this fact.

Selling a brother as a slave was hardly more commendable than putting him to death.

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

In the end, **Joseph was sold to the Midianite traders for twenty shekels of silver**, the price which Moses later fixed for a young slave boy (Lev 27:5;)

The Law of Moses set a price of 30 pieces of silver to redeem a disabled or killed slave.
(Exodus 21:32;)

“The **alternation of the names** Ishmaelites and Midianites in Gen 37:25, 27-28, 36; and Gen 39:1; **Is seen** by many commentators **as another example of a Bible mistake.**

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

**Rather than being a mistake
they were **synonymous or overlapping terms,**
even if no other evidence confirmed it.**

**It is in fact settled by Judges 8:24;
which says of the Midianites ‘they had golden
earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.’**

**This is a classic example of a situation where,
when we think we have found a Bible contradiction
we only need to **READ ON** in order
to find a solution to the problem.**

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

Reuben had been gone during the time
his brothers **sold Joseph** to the traders.

Very likely this was to distract their attention from
Joseph in the hope of their leaving him quickly,
so that he could return to rescue Joseph.

What **a shock** it must have been for him
to return to the dry cistern and find **Joseph gone.**

Reuben, as the oldest son, **is the one**
who must face his father, and that to him
is not a very pleasant thought.

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

Not only were Joseph's brothers completely aloof to his suffering, but also they **almost seemed to delight in the suffering** that their report would bring to Jacob.

There is no gentle approach, no careful preparation for the tragic news, only the crude act of sending the bloody coat to him and **letting him draw the desired conclusion.**

It was a heartless deed,
but one that accurately **depicted**
their spiritual condition at the time.

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

Like most of us, Jacob jumped to a conclusion, assuming the very worst had happened:

“Then he examined it and said, “It is my son’s tunic. A wild beast has devoured him; Joseph has surely been torn to pieces!” So Jacob tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins, and mourned for his son many days.”

“Then all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, “Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son.” So his father wept for him.” (Gen 37:33-35;)

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

It was, of course, his son's tunic, for there was none other like it. And it was covered with blood.

Such **a blood stained garment** without a body led Jacob to the conclusion his sons desired:
Joseph must have been attacked and devoured by a wild animal.

Perhaps the brothers of Joseph prided themselves in the fact that **they never said Joseph was dead.** They simply **“deceived”** their father into believing it.

Isn't it ironic that **this deception involved the killing of a goat,** just as the deception of Isaac had.
(27:9,16-17,19;)

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

Jacob seemed to have handled the death of Deborah (35:8;) and Rachel (35:16-19;) with a fair degree of composure, **but the death of Joseph simply overcame him.**

There was no way that his children could comfort him. **How hypocritical these efforts must have been anyway.**

Life for Jacob seemed hardly worth living any longer. **The only thing Jacob could look forward to was the grave.**

For many years **Jacob would live with the lie that his son was dead.**

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

While Jacob was crying, **“Woe is me,”**
God was working all things together for the good
of Jacob, Joseph, and his wayward brothers:

Joseph, in fact, **was not dead**, nor was he
outside of the providential care of God.

**“The Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar,
Pharaoh’s officer, the captain of the bodyguard.”**
(Genesis 37:36;)

**Joseph ended up in the home of one
of the most responsible officers
of Pharaoh’s administration.**

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

**While years would pass by before
God's purposes would become known,
Yet the process was under way.**

**Contextually and historically the sale of Joseph
into slavery explains how Joseph (and ultimately
the entire nation of Israel) ended up
in Egypt, from whence the exodus commenced.**

**More importantly, this chapter tells us a good part
of the reason why it was necessary
for the 400 years of bondage to occur.**

**The fact that this bondage would take place
was no mystery, for God had revealed it to Abraham.**

An Evil Plot, An Empty Pit, An Egyptian Purchase. Gen 37:12-36;

“God said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.”

“But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions.”

(Genesis 15:13-14;)

Spiritually, the state of the sons of Israel was at an all time low. Nowhere have we yet seen any kind of relationship with God such as that of their forefathers.

Internally, there was no unity among these brothers. They were simply the sons of four different mothers perpetuating the strife which existed between them.

(29:21; 30:24;)

Conclusion. Gen 37:12-36;

There was **no brotherly love**, only the seeking of self interest. **There is no better way to stimulate unity than through persecution.**

A brotherly quarrel is quickly forgotten and family unity is intensified **when outside opposition is introduced.**

Four hundred years spent among **Egyptians, who despised Hebrews, (46:34;)** developed and strengthened the cohesiveness of these **tribes of Israel.**

Conclusion. Gen 37:12-36;

Later on in the story of Joseph and his brothers, **Joseph will test them** in this matter of family unity.

He will offer them the opportunity of gaining their freedom for the expedient sacrifice of their youngest brother. (chapters 42-44;)

Then they showed a change of heart which greatly encouraged and touched Joseph.

Conclusion. Gen 37:12-36;

Joseph was 17 years old when he was sold into slavery. (37:2;) He was raised to a position of power under Pharaoh at age 30. 41:46;

The seven years of plenty had already passed and two years of famine had gone by before Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers. (45:6-9;)

Joseph was therefore 39 when he revealed his identity to his brothers, and so 22 years had elapsed since his brothers sold him into slavery.

Conclusion. Gen 37:12-36;

Doctrinally, we gain insight into several key biblical truths. First, we are reminded of the teaching of Scripture on the matter of election (chosen) for service.

It is almost unbelievable to think that the roots of Israel's race and religion go back to men such as these brothers, who have conspired to do away with their own flesh and blood.

In the ninth chapter of Romans Paul taught that election is not based upon the works which a person has done or will do in the future. (9:6-13;)

Conclusion. Gen 37:12-36;

Nearly anyone else in the land of Canaan would have been as qualified or more so than these cruel and wicked men.

Most pagans have a deeper sense of family loyalty than this.

Furthermore, the doctrine of the sovereignty of God and foreknowledge of God is easily seen in this chapter.

In Romans it is summarized by these words:

“We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

(Romans 8:28;)

Conclusion. Gen 37:12-36;

In the book of Ephesians Paul has written:-

**“also we have obtained an inheritance,
having been predestined according to His purpose
who works all things after the counsel of His will.”
(Ephesians 1:11;)**

**God had purposed and promised to bring about
the fulfillment of His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
through these sons. (Gen 35:10-12;)**

**Neither Jacob nor Joseph nor Jacob's other sons
nor even Pharaoh himself could prevent
or even delay the sovereign purposes
of the God of Israel.**

Conclusion. Gen 37:12-36;

The means which God employed to accomplish His will is seen in the doctrine of the providence of God.

In its simplest terms, the providential rule of God is the working out of His plan through sinful and willful men, even when they are actively striving to resist Him and His purposes.

All the while, God remains sovereign and in full control. He assumes none of the guilt or responsibility for man's sins; Because of mans free will, man must bear the full weight of responsibility for his actions.

Conclusion. Gen 37:12-36;

The providence of God is not His preferred plan of action, but a back up system which assures the fulfillment of His eternal purposes.

Ideally, God works through believing men and women who will do His will as expressed through His Word.

When believers or unbelievers choose to resist the will and Word of God, He resorts to this secondary system.

Conclusion. Gen 37:12-36;

It is decidedly less desirable to willful obedience and submission, for the wayward one always faces the consequences of disobedience and fails to find the joy and fulfillment which comes from obedience.

The joy of actively and joyfully participating in the plan and program of God is lost.

God's work goes on, but often we are unaware of it,

just as Jacob and the brothers of Joseph were ignorant to the hand of God in what was taking place. God is never handicapped by man's sin and disobedience, but we are always hurt by it.

Conclusion. Gen 37:12-36;

That is why the **Apostle James** wrote centuries later:

“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials; knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1:2-4;)

The **writer to the Hebrews** has said nearly the **same thing** in more extensive terms. (Hebrews 12:1-13; and, indeed, the entire letter.)

All **discipline** for the moment seems not to be joyful, but **sorrowful**; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards **it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.** (Hebrews 12:11;)

Conclusion. Gen 37:12-36;

On the one hand, the suffering which we observe in the lives of Jacob, Joseph, and his brothers is need-less, the result of sin.

Yet God uses their sin and suffering and makes them a part of the gracious dealings and discipline of God to bring these men to Himself and to maturity

In the **midst of our suffering** this is most often not seen because **the truth is veiled by our tears.**

But the **end result of suffering is faith, maturity, and joy.** So it was for Jacob and his sons.
So it will be for every child of God.

Conclusion. Gen 37:12-36;

There is an interesting **analogy between Abraham and Jacob**. Both of them were called upon to give up their beloved sons.

Abraham did so voluntarily and actively, **Jacob** unknowingly and begrudgingly. **Both sons were given back to them.**

It was **through these sons**, whom these fathers gave up, that **the future of the fathers was secured.**

Conclusion. Gen 37:12-36;

Throughout the Scriptures,
salvation is never secured without great sacrifice.
As it was with Abraham, so it was with Jacob also.

**These two instances only prepare us
for the greatest sacrifice of all
When God the Father gave up His Son,
Jesus Christ, for our salvation.**

**As Joseph was rejected by his brethren
and humiliated by slavery and imprisonment,
so Jesus Christ was rejected by the Jewish
leaders and His brethren and crucified
on a Roman cross among criminals.**

Lessons from Gen 37:1-36;

**Through the suffering of Joseph,
Jacob and his sons were spared
from the ravages of a severe famine.**

**Through the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ,
those who trust in Him
are spared from the eternal wrath of God.**

Lying lips and a deceitful robe. Gen 37:31-36;

There is a striking parallel here between the actions of **Jacob's sons in deceiving their father** and in **Jacob's own actions** some 30 years earlier when **he deceived his own father.**

Jacob Deceived Isaac	Jacob's Sons deceive Jacob
Jacob had deliberately deceived Isaac into giving him the blessing	Jacob's sons deliberately deceive him into thinking Joseph is dead
An article of clothing is used in the deception: Jacob wraps his arms and his head in wool to simulate the hairy arms and back of Esau	An article of clothing is used in the deception: The brothers dip Joseph's tunic in blood to simulate Joseph's torn body
Jacob had deceived his father with the skin of a dead goat.	Jacob's sons deceive him with the blood of a dead goat.

Lying lips and a deceitful robe. Gen 37:31-36;

There is a lesson here.

**It is that the sins of the parents
are often repeated by the children.**

**No doubt, they had heard the story
of how their father had deceived his father.**

**While I doubt that they consciously
were following in their father's footsteps,
there is nevertheless a repeating of the old sin.**

**“And all his sons and all his daughters arose
to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted,
“For I shall go down into the grave to my son
in mourning.” Thus his father wept for him.”**

Gen 37:35;

Lessons from 37:1-36;

1) Life is not always nice. God's has not promised us easy living that is free from hardships.

He HAS promised us that He will work all things for good to those who love Him and who are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28;)

2) This story illustrates the providence of God in action.

God had a plan. It was both a short term as well as a long range plan.

It also means when you face hard times in the future, you can know God's hand is there, even when you cannot see it.

Lessons from 37:1-36;

3. The story of Joseph reminds us of the story of our own spiritual brother: Jesus Christ.

Joseph	Jesus
He was beloved by his father.	<i>"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."</i> (Matthew 3:17;)
He was hated by his brothers.	<i>He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.</i> (John 1:11;)
He was sent to find his brothers.	He was sent to save mankind.
His brothers plotted to murder him.	His fellow Jews plotted to murder Him.
He was sold for twenty shekels of silver.	He was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver.
The blood of a goat served as the sign of his death.	His own shed blood is the sign of His death.

Lessons from 37:1-36;

The difference between these two is that **Jesus gave His life willingly.**

He is the Son who volunteered to give His own life as a ransom for others.

He did so that we might be freed from the slavery of sin.

**Genesis 37:1-36;
Joseph Jealousy
and Betrayal.
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**Next in the series:-
Genesis 38:1-30; Judah and Tamar.**