

© 2002
Fellowship
Life of Joseph
Lesson 1
Jealousy Brews
Genesis 37:1-11
3/17/2

Introduction...Our story takes place 39 centuries ago (@ 1900 B.C.). We have leapt back 14 centuries in time before Daniel and later Esther; 19 centuries before Daniel's 7's "one like the Son of Man" or Daniel 9's "Messiah" (Anointed One; Christ [Greek]) will come.

It is five centuries before Moses will lead the children of Israel out of Egypt and back to their promised inheritance, or Joshua leads them across the Jordan to claim it, and another

The Great Pyramid in Egypt has been standing almost 6 centuries.

In fact, we are back at the beginning, that was "Genesis" means. So far the creation has already taken place, as well as Noah's flood. God has called a man named Abraham to across the Fertile Crescent towards its southwest corner, just short of Egypt on the Mediterranean Sea. We call this land the land of Canaan.

God has promised to give Abraham a land, people and to become a blessing (Gen 12). He has given Abraham a son, Isaac and twin grandsons, Jacob (now renamed Israel) and Esau. Jacob has now given

God has also told Abraham that now is not the time for his children to fully occupy the Land. The sins of the people already living there, the Amorites, had not reached its full measure. Instead, his children will become strangers in another land and they will become enslaved and mistreated for four hundred years. But then he will bring them back to the land (Gen 15).

In the meantime, God has renewed his promise to Abraham's son, Isaac, and Abraham's grandson, Jacob (Israel).

We now begin to plant the seeds for how the children of Israel came to be slaves in Egypt and how God miraculously freed them and led them back home under the able leadership of Moses. But that is

One only has to read the headlines or watch the evening news to see that 39 centuries later (almost 4000 years), Israel still fights to possess her Promised Inheritance.

**Gen. 37:1 Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed,
the land of Canaan.**

Who is Jacob? Who was his father? And where is the land of Canaan?

2 This is the account of Jacob.

**Joseph, a young man of seventeen,
was tending the flocks with his brothers,
the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zil
and he brought their father a bad report about them.**

Is it Jacob telling this story? Who is Joseph? How big a herd? How far away from his home? How many brothers? His father had more than one wife? What was the bad report? Had they been drinking? loafing on the job? chasing other girls? Had they allowed some sheep to be lost to wolves or other tribes? What manner did he bring back the report? Was it a wah wah story...I'm telling on you? Or was it a straightforward no-frills?

**3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons,
because he had been born to him in his old age;
and he made a richly ornamented robe for him.**

Who is Israel? Is this another name for Jacob? Is he the dad? Is this where they get the term the "children of Israel?" Had the mother died in childbirth or something? Did he not know that this extra attention would create jealousy among his other sons? Did the robe have jewels on it? Wasn't he putting his son at risk?

**4 When his brothers saw
that their father loved him
more than any of them,
they hated him
and could not speak a kind word to him.**

This could not have been fun for Joseph.

**5 Joseph had a dream,
and when he told it to his brothers,
they hated him all the more.**

6 He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had:

**7 We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field
when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright,
while your sheaves gathered**

Not a good idea, Joseph.

**8 His brothers said to him,
"Do you intend to reign over us?
Will you actually rule us?"
And they hated him all the more because of his dream
and what he had said.**

Were they mocking him?

**9 Then he had another dream,
and he told it to his brothers.
"Listen," he said,
"I had another dream,
and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars
were bowing down to me."**

Talk about heaping it on...Who was the sun, moon and eleven stars? his parents and brothers?

**10 When he told his father as well as his brothers,
his father rebuked him and said,
"What is this dream you had?
Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come
and bow down to the ground before you?"**

Even his father doubts his dreams...and yet could they be true? Why does God use imagery to communicate with us?

**11 His brothers were jealous of him,
but his father kept the matter in mind.**

Did his father think that there might be something to it?

Who? Jacob, his father, Joseph, a young man of seventeen, his brothers, the sons of Zilpah and Bilnah, his father's wives, Israel, his other sons, brothers, their father, mother and I, your brothers

Where? in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan, out in the field, rose and stood upright, down to it, down to me, down to the ground before you

When? in his old age, when his brothers saw, when he told it, when suddenly, while your sheaves, will you, then he had another dream, this time, when he told his father as well

What?

- Jacob lives in Canaan and this is his account.
- His young son Joseph was tending the flocks with his brothers when he came and gave his father a bad report concerning them.
- Jacob loves Joseph more because Jacob had him when Jacob was old and gives his son an ornate robe.
- His brothers see this and become jealous of him.
- Then Joseph has two dreams, both of which he tells his brothers; in the first dream, their sheaves bow down.
- Joseph's brothers interpret this to mean that they will someday have to bow down to Joseph and hate him all the more for this.
- His father rebukes Joseph for the second dream; but while his brothers' jealousy only grows, Jacob keeps this in mind.

Summary...Joseph's brothers grow deeply jealous of their younger brother because of his father's affection for him as well as Joseph's two dreams in which Joseph's brothers are bowing down to Joseph.

Bottom Line....Joseph's brothers grow deeply jealous of him.

Why? What do I learn about God, people, myself or life?

- That families have problems, including sibling rivalry.
- That parents play favorites sometimes.
- That jealousy fuels
- God communicates to people through dreams with images.

So What?

My greatest struggles...being sick at the moment; attempting to ensure that the church is finished in a competent and timely manner--finishing up.

Principle...That families have problems, including sibling rivalry.

Application...The story involving my family of origin, including the confrontation of my brothers and mother is not over. Be patient, prayerfully, hopefully, God willing, someday it will be resolved on God's terms and God's timetable.

So What about You?

Struggle?

Principle?

Application?

What about your students?

Joseph M Cross,

Scripture quotations, unless noted otherwise, are taken from the Holy Bible: New International Version, NIV, Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984, International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers. All rights reserved.