

# **Jealousy Resulting in Slavery**

Genesis 37

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Chapters:	Origin of...
1-2	Existence – Creation
3-5	Sin – the Fall of Man
6-9	Judgement – Noah & the Flood
10-11	Nations – Confusion of Languages
12-23	Patriarchs – Abram/Abraham
24-26	Isaac – Son of God’s Covenant Promise
27-36	Jacob / Israel – Chosen by God
37-50	Joseph – Foundation of the Chosen People

**God’s sovereignty and wisdom are big enough to encompass men’s wickedness.**

**I. In the Genesis account of the Jewish Patriarchs, chapter 37 turns to focus primarily on the favorite of Israel’s twelve sons. (v. 1-2)**

**II. Joseph’s favored status provoked serious family discord. (v. 3-4)**

Hatred stirs up conflict,  
but love covers over all wrongs. (Proverbs 10:12)

“I have loved you,” says the LORD.  
“But you ask, ‘How have you loved us?’  
“Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?” declares the LORD. “Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his hill country into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals.” (Malachi 1:2-3)

Not only that, but Rebekah’s children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac. Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God’s purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls—she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses,

“I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,  
and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”

It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God’s mercy. (Romans 9:10-16)

**III. God provided a prophetic dream of the future featuring an agricultural motif that provoked even more hatred. (v. 5-8)**

**IV. God gave Joseph a second prophetic dream which provoked yet more jealousy. (v. 9-11)**

The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon. (Genesis 41:32)

**V. Joseph was an obedient son. (v. 12-17, 2b)**

**VI. Jealousy escalated into plans for murder. (v. 18-19)**

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight...(James 4:1-2a)

**VII. Israel's eldest son was leery of committing outright murder. (v. 21-24)**

While Israel was living in that region, Reuben went in and slept with his father's concubine Bilhah, and Israel heard of it. (Genesis 35:22)

**VIII. Judah seized on an unexpected opportunity to rid the family of Joseph without being responsible for his brother's death. (v. 25-28)**

Abraham had taken another wife, whose name was Keturah. She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah... Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac. But while he was still living, he gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them away from his son Isaac to the land of the east. (Genesis 25:1-2, 5-6)

**IX. With Joseph carried off, his brothers don't lie verbally to their father but instead set up the appearance of an accidental death. (v. 29-33)**

**X. Israel was devastated at the (supposed) death of his favorite son. (v. 33-35)**

**XI. God sovereignly used the wickedness of Joseph's brothers to continue the process of forming the nation of Israel. (v. 36)**

"Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. (Acts 2:22-23)

He does as he pleases  
with the powers of heaven  
and the peoples of the earth.  
No one can hold back his hand  
or say to him: “What have you done?” (Daniel 4:35b)

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)