
Life application of its truths...

1. What valuable lessons are learnt about the damage that favouritism causes in families? How can this be eliminated so that families are not torn apart?
2. What evidence is there that God's hand is at work in this episode?
3. How has this story served to strengthen your confidence in God?
4. The sins of the fathers are visited on their children and children's children. How can you be more acutely aware of this in your life so that you don't repeat the character flaws of the previous generations?
5. How have the events of this episode assured you that God knows the future and that He is fulfilling His plan to keep His promises?

The end...

God uses dreams to show what will happen in the future. He also overrules all human actions to ensure that His promises are fulfilled. This is proof that He is in supreme control of history from start to finish.

study	OLD TESTAMENT: <i>Genesis 37-50</i>	
1	THE LIFE OF JACOB'S SONS	
	Joseph sold into slavery	

Genesis 37: 1–36

The story so far...

The Genesis story starts by telling how God created a perfect world, only for it to be utterly ruined by rebellion against Him. The devastating consequence of this rebellion was that everything was thoroughly corrupted by sin.

The story then tracks how God is at work to reverse the effects of sin. He made a promise to the woman that from her seed a descendant would come to restore the now corrupted creation (3:15). And after further rebellion, God made a fresh start with Noah but that didn't solve the sin problem (6:9ff).

Then He restarted with Abraham, making promises to him and his descendants, Isaac and Jacob, that he would inherit land, have many descendants and be blessed and be a blessing to everyone (Genesis 12:1-3). He reiterated the same promises to Isaac, his son, and to Jacob, his grandson.

Genesis 37-50 focusses on Jacob, the patriarch, and his sons. Through them a promised descendant would come who'd deal with sin and reverse its effects.

Now Jacob had sons so let's track their story. Yet, rather surprisingly, the dominant focus is on one of Jacob's sons, Joseph.

The story unfolds...

1. What's the significance of the location where Jacob lived (1 [12:1, 7; 13:15])?

2. What caused the fractured family relationships (2-4 [see 25:28])?

3. How are Joseph's dreams meant to be interpreted (5-11 [see 40:8; 41:32])?

a. What reaction do Joseph's brothers have to his dreams?

b. How does Joseph's father respond to his dreams?

c. How should Joseph have dealt with his dreams?

Joseph wasn't with his brothers tending sheep so was dispatched by his father to find out news about their wellbeing (12-14); this was perhaps yet another sign of being his father's favourite.

4. Why do Joseph's brothers plot against him (12-20)?

5. What distinguished Reuben from his brothers regarding their plot against Joseph (21-22; 29)?

6. What's the significance of Judah's intervention (23-28 [see Deut. 24:7])?

7. Why was it important to cover their tracks (31-33)?

8. What family gene does the cover-up ploy reveal (31-33)?

9. What does Jacob's excessive sorrow and grief reveal (34-35)?

This episode ends with Joseph being traded as a slave to the Egyptians. Does this prefigure Jacob's descendant being enslaved there too? Why? There must be a significant reason why Joseph ends up living in Egypt.

Towards its fulfilment...

How does this episode show the fulfillment of God's promises regarding:

1. The promised land?

2. The promised descendants?

3. The promised blessing?

4. God's promised rule?