

LESSON 2



JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT

Scripture texts: *Genesis 37:12-36; 2 Peter 2:19; Romans 6:16*

Let us see how the lines of thought mentioned in Lesson 1 are developing. In today's lesson we see only evil come to Joseph. We must wait and see how God turns it for good.

MEMORY VERSE: *"And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, And delivered him out of all his afflictions"*

Acts 7:9-10

The Growth of Sin

Genesis 37:12-17 When Jacob wished to send Joseph to learn the welfare of his brothers pasturing the flock far from home, Joseph willingly went. Joseph was conscientious and dependable or his father would not have entrusted him with this important errand. He sought his brothers in Shechem and Dothan. Can we not see a type here of Christ's journey to us from our Father? Because of his position with God, Joseph's brothers were envious.

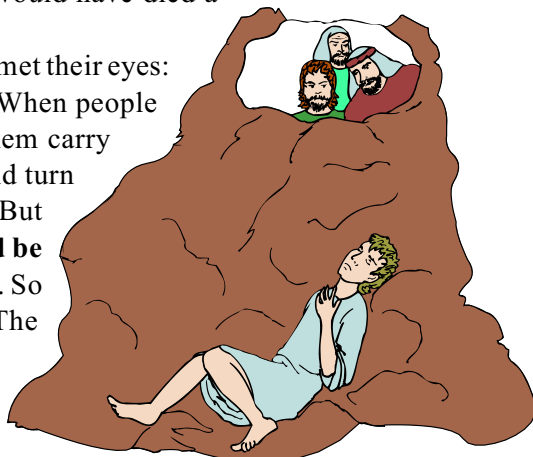
18-20 The spirit of the brothers was entirely different than the spirit of Joseph. The hatred in their hearts was active. It had grown until they desired to kill Joseph, **even before he came near**. They would kill and then lie about it, laying the blame on **some evil beast**. Joseph's dreams were the chief target for bitterness—**Behold this dreamer cometh . . . we shall see what will become of his dreams**. Leaning to their own understanding, they planned to kill the dreamer and thus be rid of the dreams.

21-24 A spark of kindness in Reuben's heart held him back from the extreme of the others. **Let us not kill him . . . cast him into this pit**. He secretly planned to rescue Joseph and return him to their father. God has always had a person in every age, and through every circumstance, that He could use to tip the scale of justice. In this case, it was Reuben who started Joseph in the direction God wanted him to go. Many persons whom God intended to use in years past were cast low before going on for God. Impossible circumstances, that they had no control over, helped them to carry out God's will.

Try to imagine the fierceness and anger with which the brothers stripped the hated **coat of many colours** from Joseph and cast him, without his coat, into an empty pit. There he would have died a slow death. Did anything similar happen to Christ?

25-28 The brothers sat down to eat lunch. At that moment a scene met their eyes: camels and merchantmen were traveling to Egypt with their goods. When people plan to do evil, it seems someone will always come along to help them carry out their plans. Suddenly, an idea formed in Judah's mind. They could turn this matter into financial gain and at the same time lessen their guilt. But guilt is not this easily wiped away, as we will learn. **Let not our hand be upon him**. Too late he remembered, **He is our brother and our flesh**. So they lifted Joseph out and sold him for **twenty pieces of silver**. The merchants took him away to Egypt, and the brothers thought they were free from him and his dreams forever.

We may think we would not have done as the brothers did.



Probably they would not at the beginning. Sin is a dangerous wilderness. It grows. When it is in our hearts, we do not know what we may do. Sin binds and controls our every action. The brothers allowed envy and jealousy to abide in their hearts. It grew into hatred, which grew into murder (1 John 3:15).

The Bondage of Sin

29-32 Reuben's grief at finding Joseph gone seems genuine. **He rent his clothes** . . . a usual manner of showing sorrow. **The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?** Yes, where? Is this not still the question today? Yet, he kept his brothers' guilty secret. And they covered it with a lie. One sin leads to another. Trying to sound innocent, they brought Joseph's bloody coat to their father.

33-36 Yes, Jacob knew it was Joseph's coat, and he believed what his sons intended for him to believe—that Joseph was **rent in pieces**. The grief of Jacob was more intense than they had expected. All they and his daughters could do failed to comfort him. Sin brings grief that man cannot comfort. All he wanted was Joseph—whom he thought he would never see again. He did not know that Joseph was in Egypt, the property of Potiphar, Pharaoh's captain of the guard.

2 Peter 2:19 Sin binds in many different ways. In this case the hated object, Joseph, was now bound more firmly upon the brothers than before. They sinned to rid themselves of Joseph, but now he loomed larger than ever in their lives. Before, he was an irritant nearby. Now he was painful guilt within their consciences. Not until they repented many years later would that guilt be removed. In the meantime it brought much suffering. Sin always brings suffering. Sin always brings bondage. Sin always brings death (Romans 6:16).

JUST A THOUGHT

**If you're looking for trouble,
offer some good advice.**

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