

# Genesis: From Creation to New Creation

## Genesis 37:1-36

"The Fruit of Demonic Wisdom"— July 30, 2023



### **Introduction**

Do the trials of life cause you to question God's goodness? Being a Christian doesn't make us immune to tragic accidents, illness, family problems, loss of a job, grief over the loss of a loved one, etc. A tragedy like this can leave us asking, "Where is God? Doesn't He see; doesn't He care?" The psalmist expressed this feeling in [Psalm 79](#). Even the disciples caught in a storm on the Sea of Galilee asked Jesus, "Do you not care that we perish?" ([Mark 4:38](#))

Have you asked questions like this? Have you asked, "God, where are you?" What do we do in moments of darkness? How can we trust God when we are in a pit, and we think that He is nowhere to be found?

Many people think that this story is all about Joseph. However, this is a story about God. While God is not mentioned, He is involved in every detail, fulfilling all His purposes. ([Genesis 15](#)) God's providence is His sovereignty for your good. Even though Joseph couldn't see God's providence now, God was at work. Joseph would understand in the end. ([Genesis 50:20](#))

Big Idea: When we are in the pits and God seems distant, trust God because He rules every detail of life.

### **Sermon Outline**

1. God's providence in dysfunctional families vs. 2 - 11
2. God's providence in shattered dreams vs. 12 - 36

### **Read & Discuss**

#### **1. Read vs. 1 - 11**

Joseph brought a bad report about his brothers to their dad. As Jacob's favorite, Joseph was given a coat of many colors, indicating that Joseph was given some level of authority over his brothers. This caused the brothers to hate Joseph even more.

Past hurts, favoritism, etc. were kindling for a fire. Then Joseph shared his dreams. They ALL understand the meaning of the dreams - the brothers would be subservient to him. Knowing the tension between him and his brothers, it seemed foolish to share the dreams with them. Even though the dreams were from God, Joseph probably should have heeded the warning from Proverbs. ([Proverbs 18:6](#); [17:28](#))

Envy and jealousy are close cousins. Envy wants what belongs to others. Jealousy protects what we assume is ours. Jealousy is hatred on steroids. The brothers became slaves of hatred. What were they jealous of? As the older brothers, they had authority over the younger ones. Making Joseph the supervisor of the brothers stoked their jealousy. Hearing about the dreams put them over the edge. While the dreams were God's word, the brothers didn't recognize this. Jealousy made them deaf to the voice of God. It is the same reason that the religious leaders killed Jesus. They saw Jesus as a threat to their authority.

The fruit of demonic wisdom is disorder, division, and conflict. ([James 3:14-16](#)) Are your relationships marked by conflict and disorder? Are jealousy or selfish ambition motivating you in your relationship? If this is true, bring it to God, confess it. With the help of the Spirit, it can be put to death.

#### **2. Read vs. 12 - 36**

In spite of knowing about the hatred of the brothers toward Joseph, Jacob sent him out to check on them. He ended up about 14 miles away from home and the protective custody of his father. But Joseph was not away from God's protection. We see a picture of this in [2 Kings 6](#). God was just as present with Joseph in Dothan as He was with Elisha. Joseph just couldn't see it.

Joseph's brothers attacked him and threw him in a pit. In spite of Joseph's cries for help, they ignored him. They saw an opportunity to make some money and sold Joseph to Midianite traders. Joseph's dreams were shattered. What are the brothers going to do now? They hatched a plan to deceive their father, making him think Joseph had been killed. Then Jacob's dreams were shattered.

As you read the text, there is an interplay between the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. Jacob chose to show favoritism. Joseph chose to tell his brothers about his dreams. The brothers chose to sell Joseph into slavery. All were responsible for their choices. Yet God's invisible providence was in every detail. Everything that was necessary for Joseph to be in Egypt one day for him to save his people happened at the right time. This was no coincidence. It was God's providence. The brothers thought they could stop the dreamer, but God can use our sinful choices to accomplish his purpose. ([Psalm 2](#)) All that happens to a Christian is divinely planned; we must obey and trust.

Joseph couldn't see ahead; he could only see the shackles. He didn't know how it would end. Have you felt like Joseph in the midst of your trial? The good news is that we do know the end. How can we know God's plan today? God has given us His word. ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)) Everything we think or feel has to be tested by the authority of God's word. Sometimes our dreams are shattered, and it can be painful. However, God has something better for us. Sometimes following God means we go through "the valley of the shadow of death." ([Psalm 23](#)) We don't have to panic. We can trust God because we know that He is sovereign, in control even of the painful parts of our life. ([Romans 8:28](#)) Have you seen the providential hand of God in your tough times?

There are a lot of bad things that happen in this world. Is God really working ALL things, including the sinful choices of man, for His good, or is it a cliché that Christians use in bad times? The apostle Peter reminded the crowd that he preached to at Pentecost that lawless men killed Jesus. They were responsible for putting Christ on the cross, but that was all part of God's definite plan. ([Acts 2:23](#)) If God can use the worst evil - the crucifixion - for the greatest good - our salvation, we can believe that our pain isn't meaningless. There is an end to our suffering. There is a purpose, so we can trust God.

God made it clear to Jacob that He was building a community of nations. ([Genesis 35:11](#)) The twelve brothers who hated each other would be transformed into a unified, worshiping community, first as the nation of Israel then as the church of Jesus Christ. But how? Our actions are driven by our longing for the affection of God, yet our sin separates us from God. Jesus came to bridge the gap of separation. We can be brought together because of what Jesus did. Christian unity cannot be built on a social or political issue. It can only be built on our unity in Christ. At the foot of the cross, there is no boasting.

God IS telling us the truth, and He is trustworthy. What is it that you need to trust God with today? The hard things in your life can be used for good. Come to Him in faith. He will receive you with open arms.

### **Prayer of Response**

- 1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to confess? From what do I need to repent?
- 2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to come. If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at [fbcum.org](http://fbcum.org)

<b>Next week's sermon text:</b> we turn to <a href="#">Psalm 34</a> "God is Good"
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