

Joseph's Coat of Many Colors

37: 2-4

DIG: What did Joseph's coat of many colors symbolize? How did Israel's obvious favoritism (like his father's) cause dissension in his family? Was that favoritism justified? Was it wise? What six ways did Joseph foreshadow the life of Christ?

REFLECT: Has favoritism hurt you or members of your family? How can that situation be repaired? What if you have done all you can to repair the situation and there is no change? What can you do to protect yourself, knowing that you have done all you can? How can you make sure you don't hurt someone by playing favorites?

This is the account of, or the generations of Jacob, meaning what became of Jacob (37:2a). And what became of Ya'akov was Yosef. 1. The names of Joseph and Jesus come from the same Hebrew root word. The name means *savior* and/or *deliverer*. Joseph saved his brothers from starvation, from poverty, from prison, and he forgave them for the way they treated him. He saved them from certain death and brought them to the plush lands of Goshen in Egypt. Yeshua, your heavenly Ya'akov, came to this earth, and although he was rejected by His own, He has forgiven you of all of your sin, He has written your name in the Lamb's Book of Life, and He has made you a joint heir with Himself at the cross.

2. Joseph had two names, Joseph, meaning *addition* or *he shall add*, and Zaphnath-paaneah, given to him by Pharaoh, meaning *revealer of secrets* (41:45). Jesus also had two names. When he came the first time He was called the Lamb of God (John 1:29) and when He returns the Second time He will receive a new name just like Joseph, and the Bible says it will be the Revealer of Secrets. The apostle Paul tells us that at the end of time, during God's righteous judgment, He will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as the Gospel declares (Romans 2:16). The Revealer of Secrets is coming. To the righteous, Jesus will hold you in His arms and explain to you why that darling child of yours died. He will explain why your spouse turned to another. He will explain why you became ill before your time. He will explain why your child turned to a homosexual lifestyle. He will explain why, when you were doing the will of God like Job, your life came crashing down around you. Humanly, you will never be able to understand it. But when the Revealer of Secrets explains it to you, everything will become clear. ADONAI is too wise to make a mistake and too loving to be unkind. To the ungodly, it means every liar will be publicly exposed. Every pedophile will answer for every child he has ever molested. Who killed your family member? The Revealer of Secrets knows. Every abortionist will have to answer to the Revealer of Secrets. No one will be able to bluff their way into heaven.⁵⁵³

The strange and eventful life of **Joseph** started when **he** was a young man of **seventeen** (37:2b). Why did **God** include these words in the Scriptures? Because **He** is always looking for a teenager with a dream. **David** was a teenager when **he** dipped his hand into the brook, looking for five smooth stones to kill Goliath and his four brothers (**First Samuel 17:40-51** and **Second Samuel 21:22**). **Mary** was a teenager when **the LORD** sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth to tell **her** that **she** had found favor with **God** and would give birth to **the Savior** (**Luke 1:26-33**). These teenagers changed world history. If you are a teenager, **ADONAI** has great things in store for you, if you will allow him to work in your life and stand up for godly principles. You may one day end up in a pit. But **the LORD** wants to take you to **His** place with **Him**. Once you have a divine dream, you will never be the same.

Joseph was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of **Bilhah** and the sons of **Zilpah**, his father's wives. Because **Jacob** played favorites, the sons of the maidservants **Bilhah** and **Zilpah** always felt inferior to the sons of **Leah**, and especially **Rachel**. **While Rachel and Leah were alive, Bilhah and Zilpah were called maidservants and concubines; but, now that they were dead, the Holy Spirit gave them the status of wives.** **3. Yosef was a shepherd, and so was the Lord** (Psalm 23). **Joseph** was tending the flocks, and **Yeshua** spent His time tending to the lost sheep of **Isra'el** (**Matthew 15:24**). **It is the ability of the shepherd that determines the quality of life for the sheep. Our Shepherd is a healer, our Shepherd is a provider, our Shepherd is a protector, and our Shepherd anoints my head with oil.**

And while tending the flocks he brought their father an evil report (KJ) about them (37:2b). We do not know exactly what **evil** this was, but the Hebrew language suggests it was something well known to the whole community. It could have been dishonesty, but quite frankly, with what we already know about **them**, nothing these **brothers** did would shock anyone. After all, **they** had slaughtered and looted Shechem. It is not surprising that people who hate do **evil** things, and hate characterized these **brothers**. It wasn't so much that **Joseph** was a tattletale, because what **he** said was probably true and needed to be said. Later, the obligation to testify became part of the Torah (**Leviticus 5:1**). **4. Joseph was opposed to evil, and so was the Lord. Jesus said: The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil** (John 7:7).

Now **Isra'el** loved **Joseph** more than any of his other sons. **Joseph** was the firstborn of his favorite wife **Rachel** and his father had clearly spoiled **him**. Nonetheless, **Isra'el** recognized **Joseph's** leadership qualities and placed **him** in charge of shepherding the flock, even though **he** was younger than all the **brothers** except for **Benjamin**. Maybe the events at Shechem had shaken **Isra'el** more than we now realize. **Isra'el** was probably unwise in favoring **Joseph**, but **he** may have had good reason to believe that **he** was the one who could best be trusted with such authority among the **brothers**.⁵⁵⁴ Put simply; **Isra'el** saw qualities in **Joseph** that **he** did not see in his other sons. **5. Joseph was loved by his father, and the Lord Jesus was loved by His Father, who declared, "This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased"** (**Matthew 3:17**).

Isra'el loved Joseph because he had been born to him in his old age. He was the first born son of his favorite wife Rachel. And because of this, he made Joseph a coat of many colors (37:3 NKJ). The Hebrew language emphasizes that it was a long seamless coat with full sleeves, but it was also a coat of royalty (Second Samuel 13:18-19). Long coats with full sleeves were for ruling, not for working, and the brothers did not miss the point. This action gave Yosef the right of the firstborn even though he was the eleventh born son, and indeed he would receive a double portion through his sons Manasseh and Ephraim (48:1-20). Isra'el was replacing Reuben as heir to the birthright because of his sin with Bilhah (35:22). So the coat of many colors was a sign that Isra'el had marked him out for leadership.

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 (37:4). Israel's dotting over Yosef was as offensive to them as was his gift of the coat of many colors, the tallit of that day. But when Isra'el looked at his sons, he saw qualities in Joseph that his other sons did not have. Although immature and probably more than a little full of himself in his youth, Joseph's moral standards and spiritual interests were clearly superior to his brothers. In fact, ADONAI had once again chosen the younger to rule over the older. **6. Jacob's brothers hated Joseph because of his love for his father and Yeshua was likewise hated. When the Messiah exposed the hypocrisy of the Pharisees they hated Yeshua so much they plotted to kill Him (Matthew 12:14).**

So far everything that Yosef had done (37:2b) and received (37:3), only served to alienate his brothers, but when he shared his dreams with them, it only made matters worse.