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Joseph's Coat of Many Colors

37: 1-4

Joseph's coat of many colors 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 did Joseph have that his brothers didn't? Would you want Joseph for a brother? Why? Or why not? Explain. What six ways did Joseph foreshadow the life of Christ?

REFLECT: Has favoritism hurt you or members of your family? Have you ever played favorites with your children? 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?

Parashah 9: vaYeshev (He continued living) 37:1-40:23

(see my commentary on Deuteronomy, to see link click [Af](#) - Parashah)

The Key People include **Jacob, Isra'el, Joseph, brothers, Ishmaelites, Reuben, Judah, Potiphar and his wife, daughter of Shua, Er, Ona, Shelah, Tamar, Perez, Zerah, the warden, the cupbearer, and the baker.**

The Scenes include **Canaan, Shechem, Hebron, Dothan, Egypt, and Enaim.**

The Main Events include **Jacob** settling, **Joseph's dreams and coat, Joseph** stripped and sold twice, **Judah** intermarried, **sons killed, twins for Tamar, Joseph** promoted, advances by **Potiphar's wife, Joseph** jailed, **dreams** interpreted, **Joseph** promoted, but **Joseph** forgotten.

The book of **Genesis** is a masterful piece of literature. Too often we get caught up in analyzing characters or deciphering the history and forget to notice the beauty of style and craft by which Moshe composed the book. This becomes clearly evident in this parashah when we begin the story of **Joseph**. It is at once a story of irony, suspense, sadness, and joy. Along with the book of **Esther**, it is the greatest account of the sovereignty of **ADONAI**. On

the surface, the actors in the story make their own way in life, set in motion their own plans, succeed or fail, start again, all on their own initiative. That is the immediate superficial impression. In fact, however, it is **the Divine Providence** which is carrying out, through mankind, **His** own predestined plan.

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 name Yeshua 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 (**1 Samuel**

17:40-51 and 2 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 **God** 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. Joseph 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 our heads with oil.

And while tending the flocks he brought their father an evil report (KJ) about them (37:2b). As the favored son, **Joseph's** job was to oversee the activities of **Jacob's** concubines' sons (**Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher**), and to **report their** activities back to **Jacob**. 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).**

Joseph was only **seventeen** years old. Though **he** was old enough to be married, **he** was still quite immature in **his** emotions and world outlook. Yet, despite **his** youth, **he** was entrusted with the enormous burden of bearing the stigma of being **his father's** favorite son among **the twelve**. **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 **Joseph** 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 **Biliah (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). **Isra'el's** dotting over **Joseph** 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 **Joseph** 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.