

Genesis 37,41-45

Joseph the Dreamer

37 Jacob lived in the land of Canaan, where his father had lived. ² This is the family history of Jacob.

Joseph was a young man, 17 years old. He and his brothers cared for the flocks. His brothers were the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. Joseph gave his father bad reports about his brothers. ³ Joseph was born when his father Israel, also called Jacob, was old. So Israel loved Joseph more than his other sons. He made Joseph a special robe with long sleeves. ⁴ Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved Joseph more than he loved them. So they hated their brother and could not speak to him politely.

Genesis 37,41-45

Joseph the Dreamer

⁵One time Joseph had a dream. When he told his brothers about it, they hated him even more. ⁶Joseph said, “Listen to the dream I had. ⁷We were in the field tying bundles of wheat together. My bundle stood up, and your bundles of wheat gathered around mine. Your bundles bowed down to mine.”

⁸His brothers said, “Do you really think you will be king over us? Do you truly think you will rule over us?” His brothers hated him even more now. They hated him because of his dreams and what he had said.

⁹Then Joseph had another dream. He told his brothers about it also. He said, “Listen, I had another dream. I saw the sun, moon and 11 stars bowing down to me.”

Genesis 37,41-45

Joseph the Dreamer

¹⁰ Joseph also told his father about this dream. But his father scolded him, saying, “What kind of dream is this? Do you really believe that your mother, your brothers and I will bow down to you?” ¹¹ Joseph’s brothers were jealous of him. But his father thought about what all these things could mean.

¹² One day Joseph’s brothers went to Shechem to herd their father’s sheep. ¹³ Jacob said to Joseph, “Go to Shechem. Your brothers are there herding the sheep.” Joseph answered, “I will go.”

Genesis 37,41-45

Joseph the Dreamer

¹⁴His father said, “Go and see if your brothers and the sheep are all right. Then come back and tell me.” So Joseph’s father sent him from the Valley of Hebron.

When Joseph came to Shechem, ¹⁵ a man found him wandering in the field. He asked Joseph, “What are you looking for?”

¹⁶Joseph answered, “I am looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are herding the sheep?”

¹⁷The man said, “They have already gone. I heard them say they were going to Dothan.” So Joseph went to look for his brothers and found them in Dothan.

Genesis 37,41-45

Joseph Sold into Slavery

¹⁸Joseph's brothers saw him coming from far away. Before he reached them, they made a plan to kill him. ¹⁹They said to each other, "Here comes that dreamer. ²⁰Let's kill him and throw his body into one of the wells. We can tell our father that a wild animal killed him. Then we will see what will become of his dreams."

²¹But Reuben heard their plan and saved Joseph. He said, "Let's not kill him. ²²Don't spill any blood. Throw him into this well here in the desert. But don't hurt him!" Reuben planned to save Joseph later and send him back to his father. ²³So when Joseph came to his brothers, they pulled off his robe with long sleeves. ²⁴Then they threw him into the well. It was empty. There was no water in it.

Genesis 37,41-45

Joseph Sold into Slavery

²⁵While Joseph was in the well, the brothers sat down to eat. When they looked up, they saw a group of Ishmaelites. They were traveling from Gilead to Egypt. Their camels were carrying spices, balm and myrrh.

²⁶Then Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and hide his death? ²⁷Let’s sell him to these Ishmaelites. Then we will not be guilty of killing our own brother. After all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.” And the other brothers agreed. ²⁸So when the Midianite traders came by, the brothers took Joseph out of the well. They sold him to the Ishmaelites for eight ounces of silver. And the Ishmaelites took him to Egypt.

Genesis 37,41-45

Joseph Sold into Slavery

²⁹Reuben was not with his brothers when they sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites. When Reuben came back to the well, Joseph was not there. Reuben tore his clothes to show he was sad. ³⁰Then he went back to his brothers and said, “The boy is not there! What will I do?” ³¹The brothers killed a goat and dipped Joseph’s long-sleeved robe in its blood. ³²Then they brought the robe to their father. They said, “We found this robe. Look it over carefully. See if it is your son’s robe.”

Genesis 37,41-45

Joseph Sold into Slavery

³³Jacob looked it over and said, “It is my son’s robe! Some savage animal has eaten him. My son Joseph has been torn to pieces!” ³⁴ Then Jacob tore his clothes and put on rough cloth to show that he was sad. He continued to be sad about his son for a long time. ³⁵All of Jacob’s sons and daughters tried to comfort him. But he could not be comforted. Jacob said, “I will be sad about my son until the day I die.” So Jacob cried for his son Joseph.

³⁶Meanwhile the Midianites who had bought Joseph had taken him to Egypt. There they sold him to Potiphar. Potiphar was an officer to the king of Egypt and captain of the palace guard.

Genesis 37,41-45

The King's Dreams

41 Two years later the king had a dream. He dreamed he was standing on the bank of the Nile River. ² He saw seven fat and beautiful cows come up out of the river. They stood there, eating the grass. ³ Then seven more cows came up out of the river. But they were thin and ugly. They stood beside the seven beautiful cows on the bank of the Nile. ⁴ The seven thin and ugly cows ate the seven beautiful fat cows. Then the king woke up. ⁵ The king slept again and dreamed a second time. In his dream he saw seven full and good heads of grain growing on one stalk. ⁶ After that, seven more heads of grain sprang up. But they were thin and burned by the hot east wind. ⁷ The thin heads of grain ate the seven full and good heads. Then the king woke up again. And he realized it was only a dream.

Genesis 37,41-45

The King's Dreams

⁸The next morning the king was troubled about these dreams. So he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. The king told them his dreams. But no one could explain their meaning to him.

Genesis 37,41-45

The King's Dreams

⁹Then the chief officer who served wine to the king said to him, “I remember something I promised to do. But I had forgotten about it. ¹⁰There was a time when you were angry with me and the baker. You put us in prison in the house of the captain of the guard. ¹¹In prison we each had a dream on the same night. Each dream had a different meaning. ¹²A young Hebrew man was in the prison with us. He was a servant of the captain of the guard. We told him our dreams, and he explained their meanings to us. He told each man the meaning of his dream. ¹³Things happened exactly as he said they would: I was given back my old position, and the baker was hanged.”

Genesis 37,41-45

The King's Dreams

¹⁰There was a time when you were angry with me and the baker. You put us in prison in the house of the captain of the guard. ¹¹In prison we each had a dream on the same night. Each dream had a different meaning. ¹²A young Hebrew man was in the prison with us. He was a servant of the captain of the guard. We told him our dreams, and he explained their meanings to us. He told each man the meaning of his dream. ¹³Things happened exactly as he said they would: I was given back my old position, and the baker was hanged.”

¹⁴So the king called for Joseph. The guards quickly brought him out of the prison. He shaved, put on clean clothes and went before the king.

Genesis 37,41-45

The King's Dreams

¹⁵The king said to Joseph, “I have had a dream. But no one can explain its meaning to me. I have heard that you can explain a dream when someone tells it to you.”

¹⁶Joseph answered the king, “I am not able to explain the meaning of dreams. God will do this for the king.”

¹⁷Then the king said to Joseph, “In my dream I was standing on the bank of the Nile River. ¹⁸I saw seven fat and beautiful cows. They came up out of the river and ate the grass. ¹⁹Then I saw seven more cows come out of the river. They were thin and lean and ugly. They were the worst looking cows I have seen in all the land of Egypt.

Genesis 37,41-45

The King's Dreams

²⁰And these thin and ugly cows ate the first seven fat cows. ²¹But after they had eaten the seven cows, no one could tell they had eaten them. They just looked as thin and ugly as they did in the beginning. Then I woke up.

²²“I had another dream. I saw seven full and good heads of grain growing on one stalk. ²³Then seven more heads of grain sprang up after them. But these heads were thin and ugly. They were burned by the hot east wind. ²⁴Then the thin heads ate the seven good heads. I told this dream to the magicians. But no one could explain its meaning to me.”

Genesis 37,41-45

Joseph Tells the Dreams' Meaning

²⁵Then Joseph said to the king, “Both of these dreams mean the same thing. God is telling you what he is about to do. ²⁶The seven good cows stand for seven years. And the seven good heads of grain stand for seven years. Both dreams mean the same thing. ²⁷The seven thin and ugly cows stand for seven years. And the seven thin heads of grain burned by the hot east wind stand for seven years of hunger. ²⁸This will happen as I told you. God is showing the king what he is about to do. ²⁹You will have seven years of good crops and plenty to eat in all the land of Egypt. ³⁰But after those seven years, there will come seven years of hunger. All the food that grew in the land of Egypt will be forgotten. The time of hunger will eat up the land.

Genesis 37,41-45

The King's Dreams

³¹People will forget what it was like to have plenty of food. This is because the hunger that follows will be so great. ³²You had two dreams which mean the same thing. This shows that God has firmly decided that this will happen. And he will make it happen soon.

Genesis 37,41-45

The King's Dreams

³²You had two dreams which mean the same thing. This shows that God has firmly decided that this will happen. And he will make it happen soon.

³³“So let the king choose a man who is very wise and understanding. Let the king set him over the land of Egypt. ³⁴And let the king also appoint officers over the land. They should take one-fifth of all the food that is grown during the seven good years. ³⁵They should gather all the food that is produced during the good years that are coming. Under the king's authority they should store the grain in the cities and guard it.

Genesis 37,41-45

The King's Dreams

³⁶ That food should be saved for later. It will be used during the seven years of hunger that will come on the land of Egypt. Then the people in Egypt will not die during the seven years of hunger.”

Genesis 37,41-45

Joseph Is Made Ruler over Egypt

³⁷This seemed like a very good idea to the king. All his officers agreed. ³⁸ And the king asked them, “Can we find a better man than Joseph to take this job? God’s spirit is truly in him!”

³⁹So the king said to Joseph, “God has shown you all this. There is no one as wise and understanding as you are. ⁴⁰I will put you in charge of my palace. All the people will obey your orders. Only I will be greater than you.”

Genesis 37,41-45

Joseph Is Made Ruler over Egypt

⁴¹Then the king said to Joseph, “Look! I have put you in charge of all the land of Egypt.” ⁴²Then the king took off from his own finger his ring with the royal seal on it. And he put it on Joseph’s finger. He gave Joseph fine linen clothes to wear. And he put a gold chain around Joseph’s neck. ⁴³The king had Joseph ride in the second royal chariot. Men walked ahead of his chariot calling, “Bow down!” By doing these things, the king put Joseph in charge of all of Egypt.

Genesis 37,41-45

Joseph Is Made Ruler over Egypt

⁴⁴The king said to him, “I am the king. And I say that no one in all the land of Egypt may lift a hand or a foot unless you say he may.” ⁴⁵The king gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah. He also gave Joseph a wife named Asenath. She was the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On. So Joseph traveled through all the land of Egypt.

Genesis 37,41-45

Joseph Is Made Ruler over Egypt

⁴⁶Joseph was 30 years old when he began serving the king of Egypt. And he left the king's court and traveled through all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁷During the seven good years, the crops in the land grew well. ⁴⁸And Joseph gathered all the food produced in Egypt during those seven years of good crops. He stored the food in the cities. In every city he stored grain that had been grown in the fields around that city. ⁴⁹Joseph stored much grain, as much as the sand of the seashore. He stored so much grain that he could not measure it.

Genesis 37,41-45

Joseph Is Made Ruler over Egypt

⁵⁰Joseph's wife was Asenath daughter of Potiphara, the priest of On. Before the years of hunger came, Joseph and Asenath had two sons. ⁵¹ Joseph named the first son Manasseh.^[a] Joseph said, "God has made me forget all the troubles I have had and all my father's family." ⁵² Joseph named the second son Ephraim.^[b] Joseph said, "God has given me children in the land of my troubles."

Genesis 37,41-45

Joseph Is Made Ruler over Egypt

⁵³The seven years of good crops came to an end in the land of Egypt. ⁵⁴ Then the seven years of hunger began, just as Joseph had said. In all the lands people had nothing to eat. But in Egypt there was food. ⁵⁵The time of hunger became terrible in all of Egypt. The people cried to the king for food. He said to all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph. Do whatever he tells you to do.”

Genesis 37,41-45

Joseph Is Made Ruler over Egypt

⁵⁶The hunger was everywhere in that part of the world. And Joseph opened the storehouses and sold grain to the people of Egypt. This was because the time of hunger became terrible in Egypt. ⁵⁷ And all the people in that part of the world came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain. This was because the hunger was terrible everywhere in that part of the world.