

Community Bible Church

The Book of Genesis

Chapters 36-37

This week's lesson marks the transition from the **patriarch Jacob** (also called **Israel**) to one of his twelve sons, **Joseph**. The story of Joseph is found in **Genesis chapters 37 to 50**, and will comprise most of the study for the remaining portions of **Genesis**. Much of this material is familiar to students of the Old Testament. However, as previously discussed there are **three distinct levels** to examine in this narrative. The **first** is to simply read the text as literature. The drama in the story is well known and riveting. However, there is much more in these chapters than theater and literature. The **second level** in **Chapters 37-50** clearly shows the hand of God and His Providence as He builds a nation that will bring blessing to the whole world. These chapters will lead Joseph and God's chosen people to Egypt, where over four centuries will pass before they return to Canaan to establish their home country of Israel. The **third level** is even more captivating. Here we see Joseph as a **type of Christ**, beloved by his father, but rejected by his brothers. elevated and exalted from suffering to a throne, and saving his own people from their death.

This week, our study will be predominantly in **Genesis chapter 37**. This chapter can be simply outlined as follows:

- I. **Loved By His Father** **37:1-3**
- II. **Loathed By His Brothers** **37:4-36**
 - His Dreams** **37:5-11**
 - His Departure** **37:12-17**
 - Their Treachery** **37:18-27**
 - Their Transaction** **37:28-30**
 - Their Trickery** **37:31-36**

1. **Chapter 36** contains the genealogy of Esau. As you recall, Esau was the son of Isaac and Rebekah, the elder twin brother of Jacob, and the father of the Edomites. Esau himself was known by the name Edom. The country of Edom was located south of the Dead Sea and is part of modern-day Jordan. Esau had three wives and five sons, and this chapter gives "***the records of the generations of Esau (that is, Edom).***" (36:1) One author has written that "*this chapter is complicated, difficult and baffling.*" As a result, we will move on to **chapter 37** without further study or questions.
2. Now, let's study **chapter 37**. Read **37:1-4** and write a one-sentence summary of this entire passage. Remember that Jacob was also called Israel.

3. Read **37:5-11** and describe the content of the two dreams of Joseph. How were these interpreted by his family members and what was their response?

4. How should Christians consider dreams today as indicators of God's direction for life decisions?

5. **Hebron**, the home of Jacob's family, is located in southern Canaan, west of the Dead Sea. **Shechem** is fifty miles north of Hebron, and is where Joseph's brothers went to "*pasture their flock.*" In **37:15-17** Joseph's brothers are said to have moved fifteen miles further north to the city of **Dothan**. From **37:18-24**, what occurs in Dothan?

6. Read **37:25-28** and describe what happens next in this narrative of Joseph being taken to Egypt. Although this will be studied in a later lesson, how was this transaction a part of God's overall plan for Israel?

7. How does this story of treachery, violence and deceit come to a conclusion in **37: 29-36**? What is your opinion of Joseph's brothers at this point in the narrative?

8. This part of the Joseph narrative concludes with a single, understated, matter-of-fact sentence in **37:36** which introduces the next several chapters. Describe what happens to Joseph upon being taken to Egypt.