

Study 10: Jacob, Part 4 & Joseph, Part 1 Genesis 37

Themes set forth in Genesis chapters 25-49:

1. Covenant

- a. Jacob blessed with covenant (Abrahamic)
- b. New name (Israel)
- c. Land

2. Types & Shadows

- a. Jacob as a type of God
 - i. Two wives
- b. Esau as a type of the unregenerate man (Heb 12:16)
- c. "Jacob's Ladder" as a type of Christ
 - i. John 1:51

Other references to Jacob or Esau in the N.T.:

Romans 9: 6-13 But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, 7 nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." 8 That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. 9 For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son."

10 And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac 11 (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), 12 it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." 13 As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated" [Mal 1:2-3].

Hebrews 11:20-21: By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. 21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.

Hebrews 12:14-17: Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: 15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; 16 lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 17 For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

Genesis 37: Joseph, Part 1

Overview of chapters:

Gen 37: Joseph, first son of Rachel, is 17 years old, and he's out watching the sheep with his brothers, Dan and Naphtali (sons of Rachel's servant Bilhah), and Gad and Asher (sons of Leah's servant Zilpah), "and he brought their father a bad report about them" (v 2).

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate [the exact meaning of this Hebrew word is not known] robe for him. 4 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.**

5 Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. 6 He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: 7 We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

8 His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

9 Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time **the sun and moon and eleven stars** were bowing down to me."

10 When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will **your mother and I and your brothers** actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" 11

His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind. [Here we have a symbolic use of “sun, moon and stars that is picked up by the prophets later and used in their prophecies. Compare:

Isa 13:10:

The stars of heaven and their constellations
will not show their light.
The rising sun will be darkened
and the moon will not give its light

This was a prophecy concerning **the fall of Babylon** (Isa 13:1), which was fulfilled in the time of Daniel when **the Medes** (and Persians) took the city (v 17). Note that Isaiah wrote this prophecy some time between 740 and 680 B.C., and Babylon fell in 539 B.C. (140 to 200 years later).

Isa 24:23:

The moon will be dismayed,
the sun ashamed;
for the Lord Almighty will reign
on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem,
and before its elders—with great glory. [Prophecy regarding the devastation of “the land” (*ha eretz*), i.e. **Israel**]

Isa 34:4:

All the stars in the sky will be dissolved
and the heavens rolled up like a scroll;
all the starry host will fall
like withered leaves from the vine,
like shriveled figs from the fig tree. [This is a prophecy against **Edom** – vs. 5-6, 9, and 11]

Ezek 32:7: When I snuff you out, I will cover the heavens and darken their stars; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon will not give its light. (Prophecy against Egypt predicting its downfall at the hands of the Babylonians – v 11).

Joel 2:10: Before them the earth shakes, the heavens tremble, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine. (The fulfillment of this is cited in **Acts 2:16 ff.**)

Joel 3:15: The sun and moon will be darkened, and the stars no longer shine.

Matt 24:29: “Immediately after the distress of those days “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.”

Rev 8:12 The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night.

This type of “de-creative” language is also used in such places as **Nahum 1** in his prophecy concerning Nineveh. It is a grave mistake to take this highly emotive language in a woodenly literal manner. “Double fulfillment? NO. There is only ONE true fulfillment of a prophecy. This is the principle of the *univocal nature of language*].

Jacob (Israel) sends Joseph to Shechem to check on his brothers. They’d moved on to Dothan, so he went there and found them. (Verse 18) But they saw him in the distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him.

19 “Here comes that dreamer!” they said to each other. 20 “Come now, let’s kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we’ll see what comes of his dreams.”

21 When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. “Let’s not take his life,” he said. 22 “Don’t shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don’t lay a hand on him.” Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father.

23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing— 24 and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

25 As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with **spices, balm and myrrh**, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt.

26 Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? 27 Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed.

28 So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and **sold him for twenty shekels** [about 8 ounces] **of silver** to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt. [In Zech 11, the prophet writes about the Shepherd of Israel:

I told them, “If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it.” So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. 13 And the Lord said to me, “Throw it to the potter”—the handsome price at which they valued me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter at the house of the Lord (Zech 11:12-13).

This was fulfilled, of course, when Judas was paid 30 pieces of silver for betraying Jesus (Matt 26:15), and a field was bought later when, feeling guilty, Judas returned the money (Matt 27:3-10 which quotes these verses, and references Jer. 19:1-13; 32:6-9).

29 When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes. 30 He went back to his brothers and said, “The boy isn’t there! Where can I turn now?”