

## Chosen By God, Hated By Man

Genesis 37.2-11

The final section of Genesis, the *tôledôt* of Jacob, begins abruptly in Genesis 37 with the revelation of a dysfunctional family. Emotions run hot, and divisions run deep. There are hints of what is to come, and behind the scenes, the hand of God is guiding it all.

### A Quick Overview of Genesis

- Gen 1-11: *Creation, Rebellion, and Redemption* (Adam to Babel)
- Gen 12-25: *God's Promise and the Journey of Faith* (Abraham)
- Gen 26-36: *Deception and Destiny* (the descendants of Abraham)
- Gen 37-50: *Integrity Under Fire* (Joseph, his brothers, and Egypt)

### A Dreamer and a Dysfunctional Family (2-11)

- *Don't try this at home!* (the makings of domestic misery) (2-4)
- *I had a dream...* (some things are better left unsaid!) (5-11)

The moral: *God uses faithful people, despite the jealousy of others.*

Those who are faithful in little things, God will use in bigger things



1. Genesis 37.2 begins the *tôledôt* of Jacob – that Hebrew word is usually translated *these are the records of the generations of*, or *this is the account of*. It signals the beginning of an account of what happened to someone – in this case, what happened to Jacob's family. How are we introduced to the main characters in this narrative in verses 2-4? What do we learn about them? How would you describe the family of Jacob?
2. At the end of Gen. 37.2, Joseph returns from the pasturing the flock with his brothers; the text says that he *brought back a bad report about them to their father*. This sounds like something a 'tattletale' would do – especially to those who take evil lightly! But could there be something about Joseph the narrator wants us to know? What does this show about Joseph's faithfulness to his father? We don't know what his brothers did, but knowing what they will do later (sell Joseph into slavery, then lie to their father and say he was killed), do you see how the narrator uses contrast to establish Joseph's character?
3. A recurring theme in the story of Joseph is dreams. Dreams are sometimes analyzed today (dream therapy is a hot topic), but in Genesis they point to something else: God's sovereign dealings in human events. The application from the account of Joseph's dreams isn't that our dreams all contain messages from God, of course! – but what does this narrative reveal about God? What is His purpose in giving such vivid and divisive dreams, which He *knows* will increase Joseph's brothers' hatred of him? Can you see the providential hand of God even in this?
4. The great missionary J. Hudson Taylor said, *A little thing is a little thing; but faithfulness in a little thing is a big thing*. We all know the struggle with being faithful and obedient to God in our lives. Sometimes the little things are the hardest things; for example, we'd never commit murder, but we might gossip about someone! What 'little things' will you be more faithful in this week?