

## Evil Cannot Stop God's Plan

Genesis 37.12-36

I hate horror movies. Something awful is about to happen, you know it, but you can't stop it. That's our story today: Joseph heads straight into a predictable disaster! He escapes death, but is sold into slavery. This leads to lies, and his father's grief. But God has a hand in it all.

### Obedience sometimes leads to persecution (12-28)

- *Going the extra mile to obey (12-17)*
- *Hatred bears its awful fruit (18-28)*

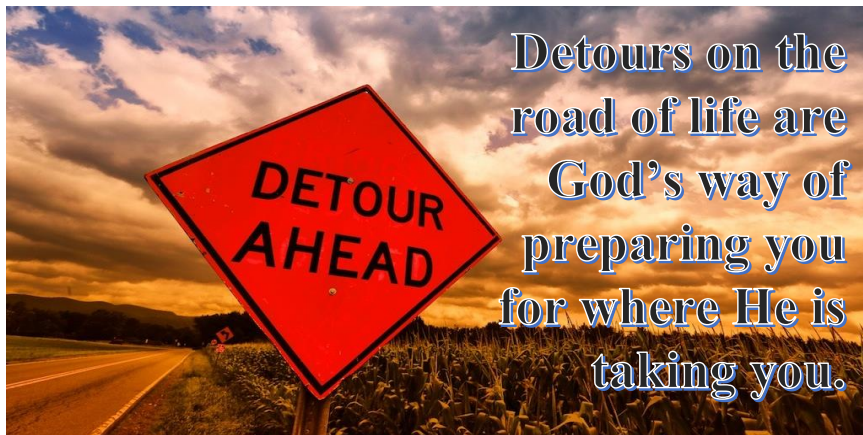
### Sin begets sin: Brothers lie, Jacob mourns (29-35)

- *Sin never lies still...it always spreads its awful tentacles.*
- *Sin leads to death – or the experience of death.*

### A Peek at the Future: God has a plan... (36)

#### Applications

- *Godly living leads to tests of faith (Js. 1.2-4; 1 Pet. 2.19-20)*
- *Holding a grudge leads to worse evil (Eph. 4.26; Js 1.19-20)*
- *We can't always see it, but God always has a hand in our lives.*



1. In Genesis 37.2-11, the tension between Joseph and his brothers is unmistakable. Joseph told on his brothers, and shared dreams that portrayed him as ruling over them. Jacob exhibited lack of foresight often during his life, and does so here; he should have known Joseph would be in danger from his brothers. Joseph is trustworthy, but glibly unaware of his situation. The escalation of his brothers' hatred is at a fever, and he walks right into their arms. Have you experienced dislike or rejection from those you thought were friends? Have you battled with anger toward those who have wronged you? What came of those situations?
2. Sin has a way of 'sneaking up' on us, if we just give it a chance. Sometimes, in the heat of a moment, we find ourselves capable of awful acts. Have you ever realized your own susceptibility to sin – for example, while driving? Holding a grudge – storing up anger (what Joseph's brothers did), is especially dangerous. Read Ephesians 4.26. Is anger a sin? What *does* this verse warn us against? What does James 1.19-20 advise concerning anger?
3. Focus on the motives and actions of Joseph's brothers in verses 18-28. What do they want to do at first? How are they planning to cover their sin? Reuben spares Joseph's life, but though he's the oldest, he is not able to resolve the problem. What is the significance of them stripping off Joseph's cloak? To what motivation does Judah appeal for them to sell Joseph into slavery? What traits of sin are exhibited in this sad account?
4. The results of sin are never good. Two frequent consequences of sin are displayed in vv29-35 – can you identify them? What do Joseph's brothers do? What does their father do?
5. The end of v28 (*They brought him to Egypt*), and the historical note in v36, show God's hand. One scholar writes, *Far from preventing Joseph's dream, the brothers actually became the agents in fulfilling it!* Read Psalm 37. Are you trusting in God, and waiting on Him in your life?