

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan

Chapter 37

Chapter thirty-seven opens with Jacob/Israel now camping in the land and he and his sons being blessed by God, and prosperous. Joseph, the first son by Rachel, the favorite wife of Jacob, is now seventeen years old and Jacob is foolishly favoring him as his pride and joy. He even makes him a special coat to mark him and place him as favorite above his brothers. The older sons are doing the work of shepherding, which means that several months of the year they have to travel and find grazing and water for the sheep to survive. They have traveled some distance from home with the flocks and Jacob has not heard of their welfare for some time, so he sends Joseph to find and report on their well-being. Joseph had dreams over the course of time which put him in a favorable light above his brethren. This infuriated his brothers and even further alienated him from them. Joseph even had a dream that disturbed his father in that it appeared that even his father would one day be subject to him and bow before him. Joseph found his brothers in the Valley of Dothan, near the Jezreel Valley in ancient and modern Israel, where there would have been plenty of pasture. Joseph was seen a distance away and the brothers plotted to get rid of him, to kill him. After arguing about it, they decided to put him in a pit and hold him until they could further decide what to do or let him die there. In the providence of God, Ishmaelite traders, also called Midianites, were coming through the Dothan Valley on their way to Egypt. Joseph, their own brother, was sold into slavery

to the Midianites, who would take him to Egypt and turn a profit.

The Midianites each year would cross the Jordan from the mountains of Gilead and come through the Eastern Jezreel Valley, also called the Harrod Valley and cut through a pass in the mountains to take a shortcut to the Via Maris which was the north, south route along the Mediterranean Sea coast, to Egypt. This was a normal occurrence and God used the normal routes and the culture of that day to accomplish His ultimate will in preserving the lives of those whom he had chosen and loved. For more on the ancient trade routes, see the three major north-south trade routes of ancient Israel, which ran from Egypt to Mesopotamia and Assyria.

Prayer and Action Steps

The story of Joseph is a story of pride, arrogance, vengeance, despair, guilt and shame. But it is also a story of God's providential care and shows how God takes care of His own despite our sin and shortcomings. The Midianites were unaware that the young slave they had bought would one day rule the people to whom they were selling him. Stop and thank God that He can rule and overrule in your life and the life of your family. What you might think is the end, could be God's way of providing for a better day in your future. What man many times means for evil, God turns into your good and salvation. Look for instances in your life and family where this has happened.

Date _____ Scripture _____

- Read the chapter. If you have time, read it again.
- Highlight, underline or circle the Key Verse or Verses of the chapter.
- Ask yourself these questions as you read through the chapter.

Is this historical narrative, analogy, metaphor, allegory, or some other element of speech or communicating truth?

Does the passage teach a Biblical Precept; that is, tells you something to be, do or act? _____

What is the Context? Old Testament? New Testament? What is the writer speaking or writing about? To whom is he writing?

Are there principles in this chapter that if followed, would require me to change my attitudes or actions? _____

Is this a clear passage of Scripture (can only be interpreted one way)? Or could the passage be interpreted legitimately, in two or more ways, according to grammar and context? _____

Does the passage give a Biblical Pattern that is followed here and other places in the Bible? _____
