Study of Joseph - Part 1

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[0:00] Now, seeking God's blessing, we'll turn to Genesis chapter 37, and verse 8.

And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us, or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words.
They hated him yet the more for his dreams. Now, for some time, we've considered the life of Jacob, the great patriarch.
And we saw how he left his home in a kind of exile for over 20 years in the land of Paddan Aram. And how he had a family there and how God called him to leave that place and to return to Canaan, the family home, after serving Laban for over 20 years.
We saw how he stopped in a kind of spiritual declension in Shechem for around 10 years. And then we saw how he rededicated himself and God awoke him from his spiritual slumber so that Jacob renewed his vows at Bethel.
[1:33] But just on his way into Canaan, Rachel, his wife, died. But she died in childbirth. And the child, Benjamin, was safely born.

And Jacob called him the son of my right hand. And he makes his way home to meet his father, Isaac, for the first time in around 30 years.
Now, in that period, obviously, his mother has died, whom he loved greatly, Rebecca. But his father, Isaac, is alive and will remain alive until Joseph is sometime in Egypt.
Now, again, I'm sure we would expect that Jacob would have thought that now was the time when his trials would be over. And he could truly take rest now that he's arrived in Canaan.
But he then discovers what every child of God discovers, that there is no rest as such in this world. Rest is in Christ. It is not in this world.
[2:34] And we find ourselves moving from one adversity to another and from one trial to another. Different kinds of trials and hardships, but still one test after another. And Jacob finds that.

Like Abraham, he finds himself tried in his old age. And the source of his trial, interestingly enough, rises in his own family.
Because out of his 12 sons, Benjamin is still very young, out of his 12, only Joseph shows any signs of grace in his own life. And with respect to the other 10 particularly, far from showing any signs of grace, they are showing themselves increasingly wayward in their lives.
They have no respect for himself, and they have little respect for the things of God at all. And Jacob finds himself not the first person or the last to be grieved by a wayward family.
And I'm sure that those who know this and who experience it in their own lives can testify to the many hardships it gives and the many sleepless nights and the many prayers which it causes to ascend to the Lord.
[3:41] And Jacob finds himself tried in his own family. Now, although that's true, it has to be said that some of the fault, no doubt, lies with Jacob and with Leah and with Rachel.

There was always division and strife in the home because of polygamy. And that came, as you know, from Laban, giving Leah to Jacob as wife as well as Rachel.
And there was a constant rivalry between those two. And it has a sad edge to it all the time. For example, when Leah's womb is opened, she calls her first child Reuben.
And that means, see a son. And she says after that, sadly, no, my husband will love me. And then when Simeon is born, she calls his name Simeon, which means herd or herd of God.
Which means that the Lord has heard how I am unloved. And there again she acutely feels that she is not loved by her own husband.
[4:50] And Rachel, as we saw already, she calls to Jacob when she is frustrated at having no family. She says to him, give me children or else I die. And we saw already the interchange

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between Leah and Rachel when it came to the mandrakes, which were supposed to make a woman fertile.

How she purchased the mandrakes of Leah in exchange for Jacob to go with her for some time.
Now you see the dissension and the strife which that was bound to bring into the family.
And it's no surprise that as you find the sons growing up, they show signs of great waywardness.
For example, Simeon and Levi. There's no grace there.
When their sister is violated, they wreak vengeance. And they wreak vengeance terribly by slaying every man in the village. Judah in chapter 38. You'll find there that he has no control over his own life.
He is governed and ruled by the lusts of the flesh. And he has no respect for the things of God.
Reuben, we read of here the firstborn, he goes into his father's concubine.
[5:56] There's a probable reason for that which we might come on to a little later on. And these are supposed to be the 12 foundation stones of Israel. The great pillars out of which God is going to build his church.

My friends, what work the Lord has to do with every single one of us. Are we not born in sin? Are we not conceived in it? Do we not all make our own wayward path in this world?
God never found good stuff to work on, as it were. We are all clay of the same lump. Fallen, godless, immoral, and chaotic in our lives and in our thoughts.
But God takes stone from the quarry. He chisels it. And he shapes it. And he puts it into his own temple. And everything here is the grace of God. The salvation of these 12 sons is all down to the grace of God.
It is not of man, not of him that willeth, not of him that runneth. But it is just of God that showeth mercy. Now the Lord obviously has to intervene. And intervene he does.
[6:59] And he intervenes in a remarkable way. The process which God chooses for the cure of this situation is this. He takes one son. He selects one.

And he separates him from his brethren. He takes him down to the refining fire of Egypt. There he purifies him. There he cleanses him.
There he humbles him. And in that humiliation he is purified and cleansed. Until then at the appropriate time the Lord lifts him. And exalts him greatly to become second only to Pharaoh in the land.
And in that process God will use him. And will use his brethren who are reunited with him. And he will cause Joseph by his spirit to work repentance in his own brethren.
So that they will be preserved and nurtured in Egypt. So God will select and separate Joseph in order to save his own brethren.
[8:02] Now from this point onwards. Right till the end of Genesis. From chapters 37 through to 50. The focus falls on Joseph. The 11th son of Jacob.

Now it's vital for us to understand right at the outset. That that makes Joseph a messianic person. By that I mean this. That his life.
The circumstances of his life. Even his character. Everything about him. Is typical. It points towards the Messiah. Now that's not just an accident.
That's not the product of the mind of a commentator. Who thinks that he can discern some kind of similarities between the two. It is a spiritually ordained. And a spiritually inscribed similarity.
The life of Joseph was meant to reflect the life of the Messiah. So that the Jews looking back at this history could say. God's deliverer will be a man who suffers.
[9:01] Who will be rejected by his own people. But yet he will be exalted. And he will be raised as a prince to give repentance unto Israel. In other words what I'm saying is this.

That had the Jews of Christ's own day been spiritual enough. They would have recognized what was happening in the life of the Savior. But in God's mysterious providence.
These things were hidden from them. But in all the life of Joseph. We see great lessons with respect to the life of Christ. And with respect to our own spiritual lives in this world.
Now in that respect the life of Joseph. I hope by God's grace will repay very careful sturdy bias. And you'll notice as I said that he's messianic.
And he's even messianic in his character. You'll notice that Joseph is as far as the history goes sinless. Now I don't mean by that that he was a sinless man. There has never been such a man.

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[9:59] Save for the Lord Jesus Christ. He was not sinless. But the narrative of his life is sinless. And you cannot find one other example of that. As far as I'm aware of in the scriptures.

Where you have a detailed narrative of any man of God. And no sin is recorded. You can search from beginning to end in the life of Joseph. And there is nothing there. But what is pure.
And what is attractive. And what is noble and virtuous. You find Joseph a man who is able to resist temptation. He is a man to whom you can commit anything into his trust.
He is honest. His tongue is carefully bridled. He behaves himself circumspectly. From the first time you meet him. As a young man of 17 years of age.
And in that he reflects the Joseph. Or a greater than Joseph is here. One who is altogether. Really. Not just in the narrative. But in his life. Holy. Harmless.
[10:54] And undefiled. The pure Christ. The one who is without sin. The true savior of his brethren. The one who became nothing. In order to save those who hated him.

That is how Joseph lived. And it reflects the life of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. And of course in every aspect of his life. With regard to the events recorded.
He again typifies the Lord Jesus Christ. Now I won't go through them. Because I want to look at them with you. In more detail. As we go on from week to week. But we'll see the way in which he resembles Christ.
In his humiliation. Right down to the dungeon in Egypt. And then in his exhortation. Right up to second. To Pharaoh alone. Now then.
If you turn to the history. You'll find that the curtain opens in the home in Canaan. And whatever disarray there has been in the family up till this point.
[11:54] Then it has only become worse. We join the narrative when Joseph is 17 years old. And the strains and the tensions amongst the sons. Are really nearly reaching breaking point.

And particularly we're told that they were all jealous of Joseph. And that for three reasons. Or perhaps we should say they hated him. And that for three reasons.
First of all because he was a tale bearer. According to them. Secondly because he was the favorite of their father. And thirdly because he dreamed dreams.
Now I want to look at these three things with you. First of all. He was as they said. A tale bearer.
Now look at verse two again. These are the generations of Jacob.
Joseph being 17 years old. Was feeding the flock with his brethren. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah. And with the sons of Zilpah. His father's wives.
[12:58] And Joseph brought unto his father. Their evil report. Now. Now that meant simply was this. That Joseph would come home from work.

Sometimes they were away perhaps for days looking after the sheep. He would come home. And he would have something to tell his father. With respect to his own brothers. Now you're not to think of a small boy doing this kind of thing.
You're to think of a 17 year old. A young man who is bringing tales. Or facts regarding the behavior of his own brothers.
Now very often you'll find people. And people who ought to know better. Saying that Joseph ought not to have done such a thing. That he was only. As they used to say.
Telling tales. Or he was only telling on what people had done. And he ought not to have done that.
Now that's based on a very worldly consideration. And the worldly consideration is this.
[13:57] That you should have solidarity with a group. In whatever group you are in. It doesn't matter what the group is doing. You should be in solidarity with that group. And whatever evil they do.

Well you should keep it quiet. And you should make sure that that evil is not uncovered. Because of your solidarity with the group. Now who says you should be in solidarity with any group?
Where is that commanded in scriptures? You must be in a solidarity group. It doesn't say that.
There was a greater command that was binding Joseph. And that command probably stems from Leviticus chapter 5 and verse 1.
Where it tells us for example. That if a person hears the name of the Lord taken in vain. Or he hears someone else take that name in vain. He is not to keep it quiet. If he keeps it quiet and does not report it.
He becomes an accomplice in the sin. Now do you see what I mean? Joseph is following scripture on this matter. He is not following what people might expect of him.

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[14:56] Or the kind of so-called loyalties that the world might expect. What matters to Joseph is the truth. What matters to him also is his brother's spiritual lives. These things matter to him.

And I have no doubt that Joseph on many occasions said to his brothers. Look you should not behave like this. You will cause our family to stink in this place. As you have caused it already to stink with your behavior amongst the Canaanites.
And that leads me to this. We are not to think that he was just going home telling little things that the brothers were doing. We have already seen what Judah stooped to. We have already seen the kind of behavior that Reuben was stooping to.
And the kind of behavior that Simeon and Levi were capable of. In other words these were major transgressions. That Joseph was reporting to his father as the head of the spiritual home.
In order to take matters in his hand. And in order to stamp upon the evil that was in the house. You know in that respect you can't view the man as a tail bearer at all.
[15:57] He had a duty to his father. He had a duty to his God for the serious sins that his brothers were committing. And let me say again. At the root of that lies love to his own brothers.

Now you say. Oh well that's easy enough to say. That that was his motive. Loving his own brothers. Will not the rest of the history of Joseph bear that out? Does he not show himself to be one of the most gracious men who ever lived.
Towards his own brothers who hated him without a cause? Was he not trampled upon by them? And when he had the opportunity to wreak vengeance and havoc on them. When they came begging for food to Egypt.
What does he do? Does he trample upon them? Does he treat them as they treated him? No. He loves them. And he weeps for them. And he yearns for them in his bowels that they might come to the Lord Jesus Christ.
That is how he deals with them. And is it not right for us to believe that that is his motive as a young man? Now my friends. This hatred which they had for him.
[16:58] That was something that came out of the so-called tail bearing. They hated the fact that he reported what they were doing back to his father. Now you'll notice this hatred was cumulative.

What I mean by that is this. There's this detail here in verse 2. We're told that the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Silpah, his father's wives.
Now that's interesting. Why was he with those four brothers? Bilhah and Silpah were the handmaids of Rachel and Leah respectively.
When Rachel could have no children, you remember she gave her handmaid Bilhah to Jacob for children that would be named after Rachel. And then Leah did the same.
She gave her handmaid, Silpah, so that she would have even more children which would be credited to her. Now you'll notice that Joseph, when he's sent out with the flock, is sent with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Silpah.
[18:02] Why? Well, obviously because the children of Leah can't stand him already. In other words, the hatred has become so intense between the full sons of Leah and Jacob that Jacob cannot send Joseph into their presence at all anymore.

He can only send him with these four sons, the sons of the two concubines, the sons of Bilhah and Silpah. But even that becomes impossible because they then begin to hate him also.
In verse 4, when his brethren, now all of them, saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him and could not speak peaceably unto him.
The whole thing grows and grows until eventually the whole family is alienated against Joseph.
Now, my friends, it's not the easiest thing in the world to be faithful to the truth.
It's not the easiest thing to tell a thing like it is. And that is what Joseph did. Joseph could, I suppose, have thought to himself, well, it might be better to keep quiet on this under all the circumstances.
[19:15] After all, whatever wickedness the family are doing, it's going to make matters ten times worse if I take it home and if I tell Jacob about the whole thing. And he could have even said this, what good is it going to do if I find myself alienated from my own brothers?

How can I possibly win them or have any effect upon them? Now, Joseph didn't think in that kind of rationalistic way. He didn't try and rationalize the commandments of God.
He just took them as they are. For if God says that I should not keep grievous wickedness secret in this way, then I will not do it. I will take it and I will reveal it and I will leave the consequences to

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God.
And it became progressively harder for him to do the thing like that. But do it, he would. Because that is what God requires. And on many occasions, God will test us as to whether our faithfulness is to men or to himself.
Now, once you discern the truth in a matter, then hold to the truth. Once you discern the word of God, hold to the word of God. And once you discover the right, hold to the right.
[20:16] And let nothing shake you from it. That was the kind of life that Joseph lived. And that life brought its own reward. You'll remember that that was true of another. We're told that the Jews hated Jesus.

Why? Because he testified that their works were evil. Do you think the Lord thought it better just to leave the thing unspoken and unsaid? No, he did not.
He left it spoken and said. And therefore the Jews hated him also. Joseph knew that his duty was to be a prophet, not a politician. And would God that all Christians were prophets and not politicians. He spoke the truth. And it was the truth that mattered to him. But not only did he tell the truth and risk himself in the light of it, we're also told that they hated him because he was the favorite of his father.
Verse 3. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a coat of many colors.
[21:21] Now Jacob was approximately 90 years of age when Joseph was born. And he was the son of his old age.

And you know yourself the tendency, perhaps, when fathers are older and they have children, they have a particular tendency, perhaps, it may be to go in their affections, perhaps a little more towards that child, the children of their old age.
That is sometimes the case. Now Jacob loved him. It seems to be for that reason. Or certainly initially for that reason. And he gave a sign.
And the sign of that particular love was the coat. Or the coat of many colors. Or as some would translate it, the coat of long sleeves. Now, this seems to have been a particularly rich kind of garment.
The only time this word is used again in scriptures, it's used of a coat that was, he loved him because he was the son of his old age. Now that's not, again, the best reason to love a child.
[22:30] I'm sure as Joseph grew, perhaps, that Jacob was attracted to him in other ways. Because Joseph showed that he was a child of God. And he showed that he loved the things of God.

But it seems that right from early on, Jacob loved him because he was the child of his own age. And that's old age. And that seems to have been the reason that he gave him this coat of many colors. As a sign of some kind of favoritism.
And that's the way the brothers saw it. When they saw the coat, they hated him even the more. So that they couldn't speak peaceably unto him. Or they couldn't say shalom. They couldn't even bless the day to Jacob.
To Joseph. It had become so bad that there was just no speech passing from the one to the other. Now, if Jacob is wrong in doing this, and I can't help but feel that there is something in the giving of this coat that is perhaps extravagant or not wise.
I can't help but feel that. Isn't it remarkable that Jacob deals with Joseph in a way which reflects the way that his own brother was dealt with by his father?
[23:41] What I mean is this. Jacob's brother was Esau. And Jacob grew up all his life conscious of the favoritism of Isaac for his own brother Esau.

A favoritism that he could not understand. And here he is himself, perhaps carelessly, showing that same kind of favoritism to one who is the son of his old age.
Now, we would be more gracious perhaps to Jacob if the narrative had said that Jacob loved Joseph more than all his children because he was the more spiritual of them.
But it says because he was the son of his old age. And that was the source of the affection. And it seems to be the source of the coat of the many colors.
Now, that raises something that I mentioned before. I don't know what the law behind it is. But some people seem to fall into the sins that they are most anxious to avoid.

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[24:41] And how often you find that in families. Particular sins repeating themselves. You find children growing up anxious to avoid something that they have seen perhaps in their own home.

And lo and behold, by some mysterious turn of events, you find themselves falling into exactly the same things. Oh, how we need the Lord's protection at all times.
In everything. Lord, instruct me in a plain path. Be my leader and be my guide. Send thy life forth and thy truth. Let them be guides to me.
In every single turn and twist of life, we need the Lord. We need his restraint. We need his guidance. Even the things that you're sure you're going to stand in. And I'm sure Jacob thought he would never show favoritism.
Even in these things, we need to be restrained. And may God give us the wisdom to look to him for every single area of our lives. And very often, your strengths can be your weaknesses.
[25:40] Or the very areas in life where you think you need no prayer and you need no protection. These are the ones that the devil can step right into. Moses, the meekest man, slipped in anger.

And you find things like that right through the word of God. So they despised him because he was the favorite. But I want to focus on especially with you is this.
They hated him all the more for his dreams. In verse 8. They hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words.
Now Joseph had two dreams. And these two dreams were important when they came. And they were going to be even more important later on in his life.
And the dreams were these. Very simply, first of all, he dreamt that he was with his brothers binding sheaves of corn in the field. And Joseph's sheaves rose up and stood upright.
[26:47] And then the brothers sheaves all bowed down in kind of obedience or homage to Joseph's sheave. And then sometime after that he had another dream.

And this time the sun and the moon, as well as the eleven stars, fell down before Joseph's star. So this time it involved his parents.
Now when it says his parents, and in fact Jacob says your mother, that obviously refers to Leah. Now some people think that the scripture is contradictory there. That's just nitpicking.
That's all that is. Because it's quite obvious that you can call a person somebody's mother in this loose sense. Even when the actual natural mother has died. The sun and the moon and the eleven stars fall down and do obedience or homage to the star of Joseph.
Now that is a dream that Joseph understands to speak somehow of his own exaltation. That God is going to yet use him or put him into a position of prominence.
[27:54] And through that position, his own family will be blessed or somehow will be saved. Now where do the dreams come from?

Well as far as the brothers are concerned, they come from an over fertile imagination. And that is it, period. The man is thinking about this kind of thing all day. So it's no great surprise if he dreams this kind of thing all night.
But they think as far as they're concerned that Joseph would love to have one up over us. Or he would love somehow to quench us or to gain the ascendancy. And that's why he dreams at night.
Some people believe that the stuff of your waking thoughts prove to be the stuff of your dreams. And the fancy of your imagination at night time. That's what they put it down to. But is that what you're going to put it down to?
How do you describe these dreams? I've seen some people commenting on this. And they make Joseph look ridiculous. As though he's having some kind of dream. And he's going about like a young child telling about dreams of greatness.
[28:54] As though he's thinking that I'm going to get the ascendancy. And I'm going to be exalted. Is that how you're supposed to spiritually understand what the word of God is telling us here? Some people write that Joseph is a precocious child.

No my friend, that's just a complete distortion of the truth. And it is not right to understand the life of this man of God in that kind of way. Who gave the dreams?
Well, God gave the dreams. And what's more, I would assert that God gave him the dreams to tell. To tell. Not only did God give them, but God gave them to share.
To share with his brothers. And to share with his father. Now, how do we know, first of all, that they came from God? Well, in the first place, we know they came from God.

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Because they came to pass. Many years after this. When Joseph had been in prison. This came to pass. Because, lo and behold, when the famine came in the land of Canaan.
[30:00] The brothers came down to Egypt to get food. And they fall down before this stranger. And they don't recognize him. They don't recognize the clothes. The accent has changed.

The years have passed. Joseph has grown up. He's an Egyptian. They fall down before him. And they ask for Cain to take to the land of Canaan. And there Joseph sees, at last, the dream fulfilled. When his brethren fall down before him. And a short while after that, when his father comes down with his brothers. They all fall down in the presence of the second ruler of Egypt.
And again, the second dream was fulfilled. And the sun and the moon and the stars fall down before Joseph. So it came from God because it came to pass. And not only that, but this was the word of God that sustained Joseph when he was years in the dungeon.
Now he was anywhere between, as I understand it, three and thirteen years in the dungeon. And he was there suffering. And he was there suffering for righteousness' sake.
[31:05] And the iron cut into his soul there. And what does Psalm 105 tell us sustained him? What sustained him? It was the word of God that God had given to him.

And you say, where did God give him the word? Well, I ask you, where did God give him the word? He gave him the word in the dreams. In the dreams. And what God was telling him in the dreams was this, Joseph.
Whatever comes, I will keep you. I will bless you. I will protect you. And not only that, these brothers whom you love, even though they hate you, will yet come to myself through yourself.
And I will cause you to be a channel and a means of blessing to your own brethren who hate you without a cause. And when the iron cut into his soul in the darkness and gloom of the dungeon, that was what sustained Joseph.
And what would sustain any man of God in that condition but the word of God? A dream that came from your own imagination avails nothing. You need to know it is God who gave you the word before that word can keep you alive.
[32:12] And that's what Joseph knew. This dream was burnt into his consciousness. And it was a dream that said, I am with you and I will be with you. And through you I will deliver those whom you love, though they hate you.

Now, my friends, God very often gives us his own word in a remarkable way before we enter the furnace. Now, let me tell you that. He gives you his word in a remarkable way before you enter the furnace.
You'll notice that this dream doesn't tell Joseph that he's going to go into a furnace. But once he's in the furnace, this dream is all he's got. That's the way it will be with yourself.
God sometimes draws near to you in a peculiar way. You have a sense of his presence and a sense of his love. And the Bible is speaking to you. It's applied powerfully to your heart.
You're rejoicing in it. The Holy Ghost is in it. Ah, my friend, look out for something around the corner. Look out for something. Look out for some kind of trial.
[33:20] Or some kind of pit. Or some kind of affliction. Because that's what the word is giving you for. This was a word to sustain. Now, I said also that not only did God give him these dreams, but God gave him these dreams to share.

Now, again, there's a little detail that perhaps would convince us of that if we looked at it in the right way. And the detail is this. You'll notice that there are two dreams.
In the first dream, there's no sign of the father and the mother. In the second dream, the father and the mother appear.
It is the sun and the moon as well as the eleven stars. Now, when Joseph tells the first dream, he only tells it to his brothers.
Because the parents were not involved. But when the second dream is given to him, sometime afterwards, he not only tells his brothers that he has got the dream again, but he tells his father that he has received the dream.
[34:33] Now, what does that tell you? Does that give the picture of someone who's carelessly, as it were, as some people would have us believe, shooting his mouth off as to what he's been dreaming through the night? No. It gives you the picture of a man of God who has received a prophecy.

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And he will give that prophecy to the precise one it concerns. If he has dreamt of his brethren, then he will tell the thing to his brethren.
And if he has dreamt then of his brethren and his father and his mother, he will tell the thing to his brethren, to his father and to his mother. And that tells us that he was meant to share the thing.
He was meant to share the thing. Ah, my friend, it turned out, as far as his brothers went, that he was casting pearls before swine. But nonetheless, he was meant to tell it. And he was meant to reveal it.
Why? Well, friends, because the word of God is the thing that exposes the secret of men's hearts. It exposes you and it exposes me. There's nothing that tells the truth about men like having the word of God preached in their ears.
[35:40] There's nothing that shows you what a man or a woman is like compared to this, how they respond to the word of God when they hear it. Especially when that word of God somehow puts them into a secondary or into an inferior place to somebody or something else.

In other words, when the word of God cuts you or when it reduces you or when it takes you down to size, and when doesn't it? When doesn't it? When it reduces or cuts or brings you down to size, you see the response there in men's hearts.
It tells you what they're made of. And it's no surprise that when Joseph comes with the word of God, that you find two responses. You find a response in his brethren, and you find a different response in his father.
And you have those responses in the end of verse 8, They hated him yet the more for his dreams. And verse 11, His brethren envied him, but his father observed the same.
Now, let's look at these two things. First of all, His brothers hated him yet the more for his dreams, and they envied him. Now, here's a curious combination of things.
[36:57] But the more you look at it, the less curious it becomes. At one level, they can't help but envy him. Why? Well, I've no doubt that they envy his life deep down.

They envy his righteousness. They envy his faithfulness. In much the same way as many sinners out there will look at some people of God and say, Well, in spite of what annoys me about this person, I have to confess that there is an uprightness, there is a truth, there is a God-likeness, there is a Christ-likeness in that.
There is something in his life that is definitely not in mine. My life's going to rock and ruin. I'm wasting away, and I'm going in a careless path.
No, I don't necessarily want what he's got, or I don't want the obedience that he's got, but I envy the life. And I envy the contentment. And I envy the happiness.
In spite of his situation, I envy all these things. But deep down, they hated him. And they hated him, why? For his dreams. Now that's getting to the root of the matter.
[38:04] Because as long as we're talking about favoritism, you're not getting to the root of it. As long as we're talking about bringing an evil report, we're not getting to the root of it. But when we get to the dreams, we're getting to the root of it.

Why do they hate him? Well, they hate him because he's godly. That's why. And any time he stands up and brings the word of God, God to them, and seeks to preach the truth to them, that hatred is inflamed.
Now, can you follow that in your own soul? Can you follow that? I hope, my friend, that you cannot follow that. But it may be that you can follow that. But there is someone in your own community, or even in your own home, even in your own family, who takes to you the word of God, and who takes it to you in such a way that you see yourself and you see your sin.
Do you love him for his dreams? No, you don't love him for his dreams. You hate him the more for his dreams. And the more of God's word that he brings to you, the more you hate that, and the more you resist it.
And let me tell you, the brothers knew that it was the word of God Joseph was giving. Or they came to realize that. It's strange how they immediately discerned the significance of the dream.
[39:22] Now, I'm sure they would want to put it down to something like imagination. But as time goes on, I've got no doubt that they thought to themselves that it could be the word of God that he was speaking, or that he was speaking it as a prophet.

Whether they accepted it or not, that it was a prophetic utterance. They knew that Joseph was standing up and saying, I am saying to you in the name of God that this must happen, and that this

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will happen before you are brought to himself.
And they hated him yet the more for his dreams. Now, it's hard to take the word of God sometimes. It's hard to accept it. It's easy to take it when it's loose and the arrows fly over your head.
But the minute the arrow flies at your heart, then it's different. And something I've noticed for my own self is this, that very often the greatest resistance to the word of God comes from those who are professing the name of Christ.
Now, you can do with that what you may, but I have often found that in my own experience, that the greatest resistance to the word comes from amongst those who profess the name of Christ.
[40:25] And it is the greatest, and the best, and the purest man, in a soul, to see a soul subject to the word.

And to see a soul saying, yea, when the Lord says yea. And a soul saying nay, when the Lord says nay. Submission, beautiful submission to the truth, even when it cuts to the heart, is one of the most beautiful marks in any Christian.
They hated him more for his dreams. But what about his father? Well, notice his father's reaction to these dreams.
It's a two-fold reaction. In verse 10, he told it to his father, and to his brethren. And his father rebuked him.
Now, that's the first response. His father rebuked him, and said to him, what is this dream, that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren, indeed come to bow down yourselves to thee in the earth?
[41:35] And his brethren envied him. But his father observed the same. Now, what do you make of this? What do you make of it yourself? There seems to be a different response, one outwardly, and one inwardly.

The outward response is this. He rebukes Joseph, and says, what does this mean, that we'll all bow down before you? But the inward response is different.
We're told that the father observed the same. Ah, it's the same thought, as you have when Mary heard the words of the shepherd, and of the wise men, and the words of Simeon, when he blessed herself and Joseph, and blessed God Most High.
We're told that Mary kept these things in her heart, that she pondered these things in her heart. It's the same word we have used when Daniel saw the great, terrible vision of the four beasts.
And the vision was so terrifying and so fearful, but Daniel, we are told, kept these things in his heart, and he pondered them. Why? Because he knew it was the word of God, that's why.
[42:46] Why did Mary keep the words of Simeon in her own heart? Because she knew it was the word of God. Many times Mary sat down, and she said, well, what did Simeon mean by the sword that will pierce my heart?

Many times she kept it. Many times she observed that Simeon, and she waited to see how providence would bring the thing about, and how providence would make it happen.
Now, is that not what Jacob means here, when it says that his father observed the Simeon? He took it, and like the word of God, and like we should all do with the word of God, he gave it a place in his heart, and he let it sit there, and he meditated upon it, and he thought upon it, what these dreams mean.
And he watched for them to happen, and he waited for the thing to come to pass. But why the schizophrenic response? Why isn't the outward the same as the inward?
Why does he rebuke in public, and observe in private? Ah, is Jacob not becoming there a double-minded man? Is Israel not coming back to be Jacob?
[44:00] Jacob? Has the prince with God not certainly lost his nerve, and his power? And has he not become Jacob the worm again? It seems that he is still fearful of his brethren, of his sons.

Now, we saw signs of that already. If you remember over the whole incident, involving the violation of his daughter, we saw the way that he failed to deal, with his own family properly.
His rebuke was too weak. He wasn't negotiating the settlement, he wasn't negotiating the terms. The whole thing was in the hands of the sons. And when the sons are present, Jacob turns and he says to Joseph, what is this dream that you have dreamed?
Shall I and your mother bow down? But secretly, he observes the thing in his heart. Ah, Jacob, Jacob, would it not have been better for you to have recognized the word, and to have stood upon the word, and to there and then say to the sons, look, Joseph will have the birthright.

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Joseph will have the preeminence. You acknowledge that the birthright is Joseph's, and bow your knee to the will of God, and enter yourselves into the kingdom of heaven. But no, he doesn't risk that thing.
[45:06] He doesn't risk the offense of his own sons. And what happens? Well, you have a conspiracy, you have a sale, you have a betrayal, and you have a son sold off, and sold off as a slave into Egypt, because Israel became Jacob.

Ah, my friends, isn't it remarkable how strength fails us sometimes at the most critical hour, and how we reap the fruit of it for long periods afterwards. And I've had cause to say that on many occasions recently, that the chastisement of the Lord is a bitter thing, and sometimes we just fall down when it's vitally important for us to stand.
Falling down when we should stand. And he rebukes Joseph in public, but in private, he observes the thing in his heart. Now, where does that leave Joseph?
Well, it leaves him tried, and it leaves him tempted, and it leaves him tested. He is a godly man. He's a man of God who's molding his whole life according to the word of truth.
God has spoken to him. He's given him a dream. He's declared the dream, although he knew it wouldn't go down well, and he knew that. He did that to his brothers, and he did it to his father.
[46:21] And what has it brought him? Hatred, contempt. I have no doubt Joseph put up the prayer, Lord, what does this mean? Or why give me a word that they would trample underfoot?

Why is it that I have to be in such a situation and such a position? Joseph, your troubles are only beginning. But the Lord who gave you the word is the Lord who will sustain you by it.
Now, this situation is waiting for a crisis, and a crisis is just about to happen, and God willing, we'll look at that at the next opportunity. May the Lord bless our meditation on his word.
Let us pray. Our gracious God, thou who art the discerner of hearts and the judge of all the earth, who will give to all according to their works, oh, we pray that thou would look upon ourselves and grant us the Holy Spirit by which we may serve thee and do thy will, teach us faithfulness to thy word, and enable us to rebuke others with it and to be rebuked by it ourselves.
May the word of God be in our own lives and in the lives of those about us, sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing ascender of soul and spirit, discerning the thoughts and the intents of the heart.
[47:51] Do thou enable us to follow the example of one who kept thy truth and who would not flinch from the path of righteousness. Oh, forgive our many transgressions for Christ's sake.

Amen.

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