

Genesis 37:1-36

Genesis 37:1-11

1 Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan.

2 These are the generations of Jacob.

7462 [e] rō·'eh	1961 [e] hā-yāh	8141 [e] šā-nāh	6240 [e] 'eś-rēh	7651 [e] šə·bā'	1121 [e] ben-	3130 [e] yō·w-sēp̄	3290 [e] ya·'ā-qōb̄,	8435 [e] tō-lə·dō-wt̄	428 [e] 'ēl-leh
רָעָה	הָיָה	שָׁנָה	עֶשְׂרֵה	שְׁבַע	בֶּן	יוֹסֵף	יַעֲקֹב	תִּלְדוֹת	אֵלֵה 2
feeding	was	years	[and] ten	seven	[being] old	Joseph	of Jacob	the generations	These [are]
V-Qal-Prtcpl-ms	V-Qal-Perf-3ms	N-fs	Number-fs	Number-fsc	N-msc	N-proper-ms	N-proper-ms	N-fpc	Pro-cp

2153 [e] zil-pāh	1121 [e] bə-nē	854 [e] wə·'et-	1090 [e] bil-hāh	1121 [e] bə-nē	854 [e] 'et-	5288 [e] na·'ar,	1931 [e] wə·hū	6629 [e] baš-šōn,	251 [e] 'e-hāw	854 [e] 'et-
זִלְפָּה	בָּנָי	וְאֵת	בִּלְהָה	בָּנָי	אֶת	נָעַר	וְהוּא	בָּצָאן	אֶחָיו	אֶת
of Zilpah	the sons	and	of Bilhah	the sons	with	the boy	and was	the flock	his brothers	with
N-proper-fs	N-mpc	Conj-w Prep	N-proper-fs	N-mpc	Prep	N-ms	Conj-w Pro-3ms	Prep-b, Art N-cs	N-mpc 3ms	Prep

- bad
- evil (natural or moral)

defaming, evil report, infamy, slander

1 [e] 'ā·bī·hem.	413 [e] 'el-	7451 [e] rā·'āh	1681 [e] dib·bā·tām	853 [e] 'et-	3130 [e] yō·w-sēp̄	935 [e] way·yā·bē	1 [e] 'ā·bīw,	802 [e] nə·šē
אֲבִיהֶם	אֶל	רָעָה	דִּבְתָּם	אֶת	יוֹסֵף	וַיָּבֵא	אֶחָיו	נָשָׁיו
his father	to	bad	a report of them	-	Joseph	And brought	of his father	wives
N-msc 3mp	Prep	Adj-fs	N-fsc 3mp	DirObjM	N-proper-ms	Conj-w V-Hifil-ConseclImperf-3ms	N-msc 3ms	N-fpc

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors. 4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.

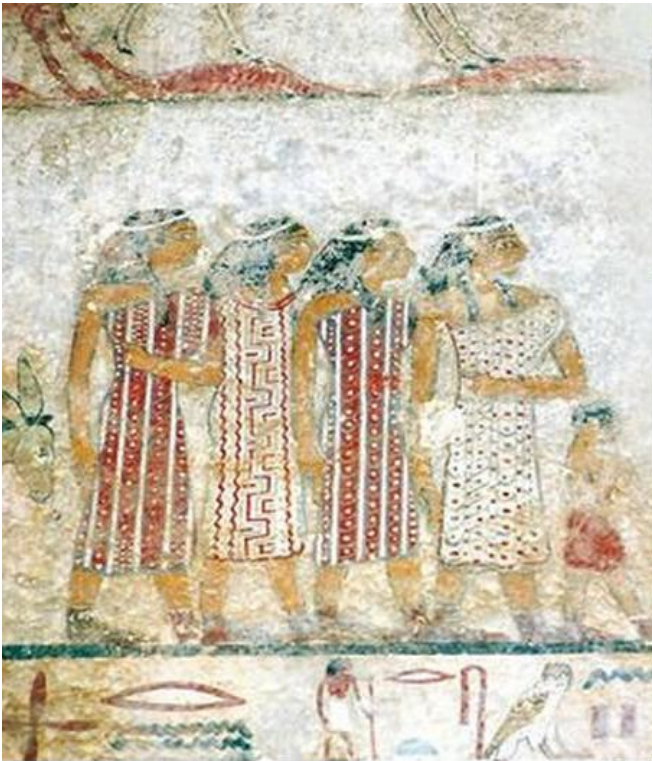
1931 [e] hū	2208 [e] zə-qu-nīm	1121 [e] ben-	3588 [e] kī-	1121 [e] bā·nāw,	3605 [e] mik-kāl	3130 [e] yō·w-sēp̄	853 [e] 'et-	157 [e] 'ā·hab̄	3478 [e] wə·yis·rā·'ēl,
הוּא	זָקֵנִים	בֶּן	כִּי	בָנָיו	מִכָּל	יוֹסֵף	אֶת	אָהַב	וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל 3
he [was]	of old age	the son	because	his children	more than all	Joseph	-	loved	And Israel
Pro-3ms	N-mp	N-msc	Conj	N-mpc 3ms	Prep-m N-msc	N-proper-ms	DirObjM	V-Qal-Perf-3ms	Conj-w N-proper-ms

- פָּס **"pahs"** /pas/
- occurs only here 37:3, 23, 32 and 2 Sam. 13:18, 19
- LXX = "a multicolored frock"
- postbiblical **pas** means "flat of the hand, palm" and "flat of the foot, sole"
- Ezekiel 47:3 **'epes** refers to "ankles" or "end, "extremity" as the water was ankle deep

- from an unused root meaning to cover
- תִּנְתַּךְ --> **kthoneth** /keh-tho'-neth/
- "coat", "long robe", "tunic"

6446 [e] pas·sim.	3801 [e] kə·tō·net̄	6213 [e] wə·'ā·sāh	lōw;
פָּסִים	כִּתְנֹת	וַעֲשָׂה	לּוֹ
of [many] colors	a robe	and he made	unto him
N-mp	N-fsc	Prep 3ms	Conj-w V-Qal-ConjPerf-3ms

- 2 Samuel 13:18-19 – “Now she was wearing a long robe with sleeves, for thus were the virgin daughters of the king dressed. So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. 19 And Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long robe that she wore. And she laid her hand on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went.”



Semitic (or, Hebrew) merchants coming to Egypt in 1900-1800 BC portrayed on the Egyptian tomb of BENI HASSAN



- Joseph’s garment could have been patches of different colored material stitched together to cover the arms to the hands and the legs to the feet.
- Clothing communicated rank and status. The color, length and hem all could indicate a rank.
- Joseph’s coat designated the authority or birthright Jacob had bestowed on Joseph.
- The “coat of many colors” interpretation goes back to the Greek and Latin translations, and many scholars are still searching for the clear Hebrew meaning. But, 2,000-2,200 years ago the Greek and Latin did translate it from their understanding of Hebrew as “coat of many colors”
- For sure, Joseph’s coat was a full-length coat with long sleeves.

5 Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more.

6 He said to them, “Hear this dream that I have dreamed:

7 Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf.” 8 His brothers said to him, “Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?” So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

1. In the ancient world dreams were understood to be irreversible information revealed by deity.

9 Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said,

“Behold, I have dreamed another dream.

Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” 10 But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, “What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?” 11 And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

1. The second dream includes prominence over his mother and father.
 - a. Since Rachel had died before Joseph was ten years old the handmaiden Bilhah may have become Jacob’s wife and Joseph’s “mother”.
 - b. Or, this second dream may indicate Joseph is not only to rise as the ruling brother over the other brothers, but Joseph will rise to prominence over the entire genealogical family including those who have died.

Genesis 37:12-36

12 Now his brothers went to pasture their father's flock near Shechem.

13 And Israel said to Joseph, “Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.” And he said to him, “Here I am.” 14 So he said to him, “Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock, and bring me word.” So he sent him from the Valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

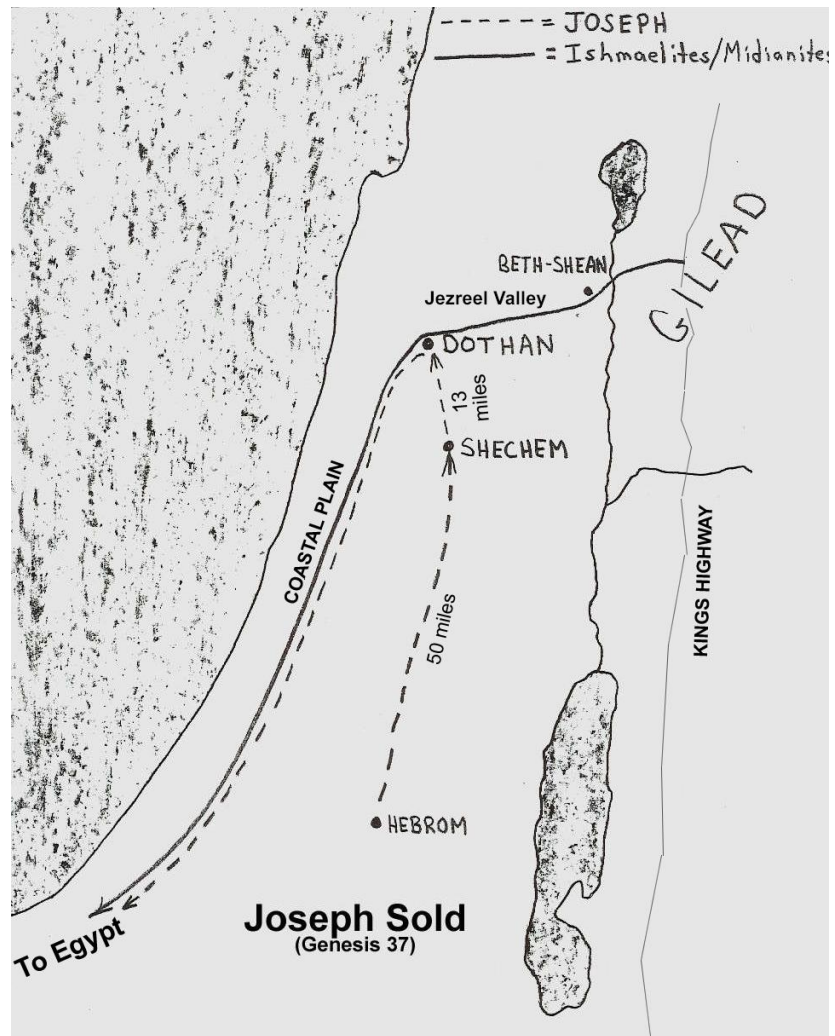
15 And a man found him wandering in the fields. And the man asked him, “What are you seeking?” 16 “I am seeking my brothers,” he said. “Tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock.” 17 And the man said, “They have gone away, for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’” So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.

1. The journey from Hebron to Dothan would take about 4-5 days for Joseph to travel the 63-65 miles.
 - a. 50 miles Hebron to Shechem
 - b. 13-14 miles to Dothan
 - c. (41 miles Jerusalem to Shechem)

18 They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. 19 They said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer. 20

Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams.”

21 But when Reuben heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, “Let us not take his life.” 22 And Reuben said to them, “Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him”—that he might rescue him out of their hand to restore him to his father.



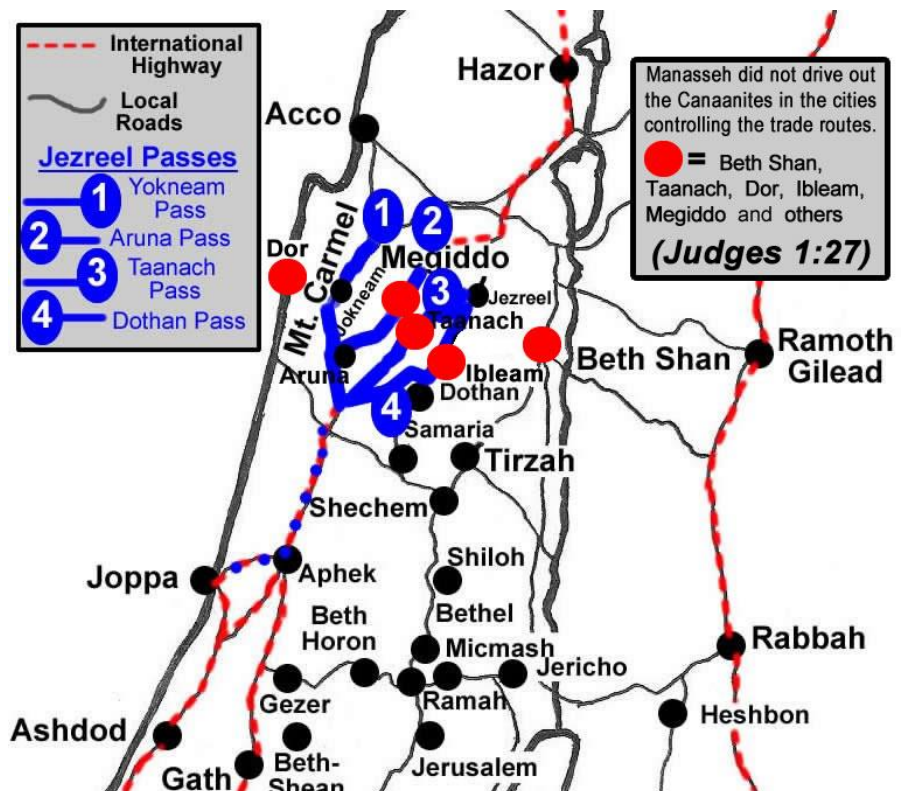


1. Dothan averaged 24-28 inches of rainfall annually, so 5,000 sheep could be watered for a full year if 20% of the runoff water from 2.5 acres could be caught in a cistern and stored.
2. Cisterns were wide and deep caverns with a long, narrow bottle neck with an opening that was covered with a stone. The inside would be plastered to prevent the water from seeping into the walls of the cistern.

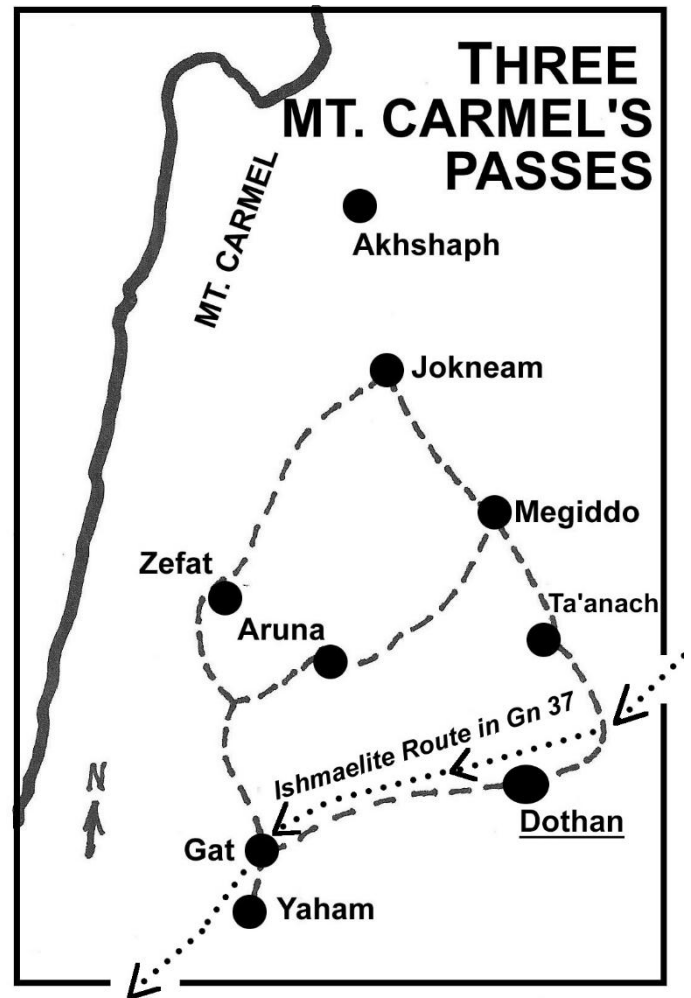
23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore. 24 And they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

1. “empty” and “without water” – Double problem. Abandoned with no water.

25 Then they sat down to eat. And looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. 26 Then Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? 27 Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.” And his brothers listened to him. 28 Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt.



1. The normal caravan route from Gilead to Egypt passes right by Dothan on the Dothan Pass that turned south as it crosses the Jezreel Valley.
2. This route crossed the Jordan River at Beth Shan, passed by the Harod Valley to Jezreel. From there it would follow the international Coastal Highway through one of four passes through Mt. Carmel.
3. Ishmaelites and Midianites
 - a. Ishmaelites related to Abraham through his wife Hagar
 - b. Midianites related to Abraham through his wife Keturah
 - c. These people were uncles to Jacob and 2nd/3rd cousins to Joseph and his brothers
 - d. Both Ishmaelites and Midianites were traders from the Arabian desert region
 - e. The two terms (Ishmaelite, Midianite) can be used to refer to the same people group
 - f. Both terms can refer to two separate people groups, in this case:



- i. Midianites are the negotiators and buyers for the products coming from the Ishmaelites.
 1. The Midianites are the middle man who moves the product with caravan.
 2. The Midianites make money moving the product and negotiating
 3. The Midianites are merchants buying from Ishmaelites (MYRRH, spices) and selling it for profit somewhere else
 4. The Midianites would add these spices to the BALM and products they had and make a trip to Egypt to sell it all for profit
 - ii. Ishmaelites provide the capital and finance the caravan
 1. The Ishmaelites produce and collect the product
 2. The Ishmaelites are businessman
 3. For example, the Ishmaelites would purchase MYRRH and other spices in southern Arabia and caravans passing through Gilead on the King's Highway
4. "Twenty shekels of silver"
 - a. Twenty shekels of silver was the going rate around 1800 BC for a slave.
 - i. Dr. Kenneth Kitchen's research indicates that the 20 shekels of silver for a slave in the biblical story of Joseph is consistent with the average market price in the ancient Near East around 1800–1700 BC. Kitchen, a renowned Egyptologist and

biblical scholar, used this data to support the historical reliability of the Genesis narrative.

- ii. This agrees with the price set in the Laws of Hammurabi from the city of Mari.
- iii. A variety of other documents from Old Babylon support this price

PRICE OF A SLAVE THROUGH TIME IN THE ANCIENT WORLD:

2100 BC	1800-1700	1500-1300	1200	1000 BC	Persian 500 BC	300 BC	Rome
10 shekels	20 shekels	30 shekels	40 shekels	50 shekels	80 shekels	100	125 Tyre shekel

- iv. 1400 BC the Law of Moses in Exodus 21:32: *"If the ox gores a slave, male or female, the owner shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned."*

1. Nuzi and Ugarit tablets from 1400 BC list slave prices at 30 shekels

- v. Zechariah 11:13 prophesied Jesus would be sold for 30 pieces of silver and he calls it a "Handsome price" in a sarcastic way

5. "Blood cries out" for vengeance in Scripture:

- a. Gen. 4:10 – Abel
- b. Job 16:18 - "O earth, cover not my blood, and let my cry find no resting place.
- c. Isaiah 26:21 – "For behold, the Lord is coming out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no more cover its slain."
- d. Ezekiel 24:7-8 – "For the blood she has shed is in her midst; she put it on the bare rock; she did not pour it out on the ground to cover it with dust. To rouse my wrath, to take vengeance, I have set on the bare rock the blood she has shed, that it may not be covered."
- e. Revelation 6:10 the martyrs cry out to the Lord for their blood to be avenged

29 When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes and returned to his brothers and said, "The boy is gone, and I, where shall I go?"

- 1. Reuben was hoping to restore his standing with his father as the first born.
- 2. Reuben the oldest went to protect the sheep while the caravan passed
- 3. After the caravan passed Reuben went to get Joseph from the pit.

31 Then they took Joseph's robe and slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. 32 And they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, "This we have found; please identify whether it is your son's robe or not." 33 And he identified it and said, "It is my son's robe. A fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces."

- 1. Jacob deceived his father with the skin of a young goat. Now he is deceived by a young goat.
- 2. The brothers did not make up a story. They merely provided evidence and let Jacob make his own, believable conclusions.

34 Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. 35 All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

- 1. Note Jacob's understanding of the afterlife. No heaven. No hell. Just the underworld.

36 Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.