

# Dreamcoat

- <sup>1</sup> Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan.
- <sup>2</sup> These are the generations of Jacob. 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.
- <sup>3</sup> 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.
- <sup>4</sup> 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.
- <sup>5</sup> Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more.
- <sup>6</sup> He said to them, "Hear this dream that I have dreamed:
- <sup>7</sup> 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."
- <sup>8</sup> 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.
- <sup>9</sup> 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."
- <sup>10</sup> 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?"

<sup>11</sup> And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

Genesis 37:1-11

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## Hatred and Anger

“Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses” (Prov 10:12). How many lives have been destroyed because of hatred? How many families broken, friendships erased, people suffered, warriors died, nations fallen? How much happiness hidden, minds maddened, hearts hardened, souls scared, unity undone by anger and hatred and jealousy?

In recent days, I have seen my fair share of these results of anger and hatred that have stemmed from unconfessed sin. I have seen men go from friendly to fiendish, from humble to unable to repent, from calm and likable to passive-aggressive to downright dirty. I have seen the filth, breathed the polluted air, smelled the cesspool;. I have seen seeds of simple disagreement grow into trees of self justification and give birth to the fruit of anger, hatred, and murder in one’s heart. I have sensed palpable evil, felt supernatural hatred, witnessed ruin and destruction all

because of hatred in men who deny that it even exists in their own hearts.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and who can know it? I have come to a new experience of just how true this is. I have witnessed men with such anger, rage, and hatred come to realize, finally, that it was there all along in their own heart, but they were unable to see it, unable to sense it, unable to know it even while it was slowly consuming them. When they finally saw it, thanks to Christ I believe, they have been able to see it melt away like ice on a warm day. I have seen it in myself, confessed it, begged God for it to leave, and found relief. I have seen others just begin to see it in themselves, yet watched them continue, unable to extricate themselves from its poisonous tentacles that shoot wicked sin into the darkest places of a man's soul. For hatred and anger demand retribution, self-justification, getting even, and a pound of flesh.

Have you ever seen it? Have you known at all the things I'm talking about? Do you know that even if you can't say that you have experienced anger or hatred personally (and this would be a remarkable statement), the ability to do so always resides in your fallen heart? In our

story today, we read not once, not twice, but **three times** (**Gen 37:4, 5, 8**) of a set of brothers who hated their brother so much, that they ended up leaving him for dead in a well and lying their broken hearted father about what they had done.

We will not get that far in the story this morning. Instead, we will look merely at the beginning of the story, where the hatred began to bear fruit in the heart before making its way to the lips, hands, and feet. It begins one of the most well known stories in the Bible: The story of **Joseph and his fabulous non-technicolor dreamcoat**.

## The Generations of Jacob

The story begins with the **final of ten** “generations of” phrases which mark the natural divisions of the book of Genesis. We have seen the generations of the heavens and earth, or Adam, Noah, the sons of Noah, Shem, Terah, Ishmael, Isaac, Esau, and now, finally, Jacob. Thus, we enter into the last and longest of these sections in Genesis. The basic structure is as follows: <sup>1</sup>

37:2–36	Joseph is sold into Egypt	
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<sup>1</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, vol. 2, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 344.

38:1–30	Tamar and Judah	
39:1–20	Joseph and Potiphar	A
39:21–40:23	Joseph in Prison	B
41:1–57	Joseph in the Palace	C
42:1–38	First visit of Joseph’s Family to Egypt	A’
43:1–45:28	Second visit of Joseph’s Family to Egypt	B’
46:1–47:31	Third visit of Joseph’s Family to Egypt	C’
48:1–50:26	The Last Days of Jacob and Joseph	

It begins, “Jacob lived in the land of his father’s sojournings, in the land of Canaan” (Gen 37:1). So Jacob is back in the Promised Land, where Isaac his father had lived out his life. Unlike his brother Esau, he did not leave for greener (or redder in this case) pastures, but he trusted in God to provide and care for all of his needs in the midst of his enemies.

Then it tells us, “These are the generations of Jacob” (2). However, from here on through the rest of Genesis, the person who will be the focus of most every story is not Jacob, but his son Joseph. This is common in these “generations” formulas. The generations of heaven and earth told us about Adam and Eve. The generations of Adam told us about Cain, Abel, and their children. The generations of Terah told us many things about Abraham, and so on. We have read about Jacob under the generations

of Isaac, for Jacob is his son. Now we will begin to learn about Joseph, a man who **some say more than any other person** in the OT—a strange fact given that he is not mentioned in the NT—is more of a type of Christ than anyone else.

I would not go this far, though I do see much in the life of Joseph that foreshadows and typifies Christ. (Remember, a type is a kind of prefigurement of something later, especially as it involves redemptive history. Types can be persons, places, or things and can foreshadow anything from the heavenly temple to the church to Jesus Christ). And in as much as Joseph does this, he puts on display the glory of God who inspired both the Scripture and the history to which it pointed forward. It also gives us much to consider that moves us beyond the realm of law (ethics) and hatred I began with, so that we might consider the gospel, which is the only news that can save us from great sin.

As **Arthur Pink** explains, each of the Patriarchs typify Christ in their own unique ways. Abraham illustrates **election**. Isaac foreshadows **divine sonship**. Ishmael represents a man after **the flesh**. Jacob exemplifies **conflict**

between the two natures. Joseph, he suggests, typifies heirship preceded by suffering.<sup>2</sup> For the next 14 chapters we will unfold this time and again as we delve into the amazing life of Joseph, son of Jacob.

## A Good Question

Before digging in to the few verses we will look at today, I thought I would begin by capping off this idea of typology with a quote from **Caesarius of Arles** (France, 470-543 AD) who is commenting on this passage. He speaks very pastorally when he asks a question few today seem to ask:

When the Christian people devoutly come to church, of what benefit is it that they hear how the holy patriarchs took their wives or begot their children, unless they perceive in a spiritual sense why these things happened or what the facts prefigured? Behold, we have heard that blessed Jacob begot a son and called his name Joseph and that he loved him more than the rest of his sons. In this place blessed Jacob prefigured God the Father; holy Joseph typified our Lord and Savior. Therefore Jacob loved his son because God the Father

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<sup>2</sup> See Arthur Walkington Pink, *Gleanings in Genesis* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2005), 341.

loved his only-begotten Son, as he himself said, “This is my beloved Son” (Matt 3:17)” (Sermon 89.1).<sup>3</sup>

You must learn to approach the stories of the Bible not as ends to themselves, but as signs that point forward to Christ. Ask yourself questions about how this Scripture points you to Him, and in so doing, obey the Lord Jesus himself who taught his disciples to read the Scripture with him at the center, but chastised both disciple and Pharisees for refusing to do so. This we will try to do this morning via some rather peculiar “coincidences.” But until then, let us look more at the story itself.

## **Joseph the Loved Son**

The story of Jacob begins in **Genesis 37:2** with four facts. First, his **age**. Joseph is **seventeen** years old. Throughout the ages, people have tried to see some kind of symbolism in Joseph’s age here, but it seems like a pretty normal number to me. It is tied directly to Joseph being “a boy” later in the verse. He isn’t an infant. He isn’t a mature man. He is considered a youth. We must keep this in mind as we consider the things he does.

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<sup>3</sup> Mark Sheridan, *Genesis 12-50*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture OT 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 231.



Second, we learn his **profession**. Joseph is a **shepherd**. Of course, pretty much everyone in this family was, as we see that so also were his brothers, and we have seen that so also was Jacob. Third, **specific brothers** are mentioned. These are the sons of Bilhah (**Dan and Naphtali**) and Zilpah (**Gad and Asher**). This is all mentioned in order to set up the scene for us.

The brothers that interact with Joseph here are the sons of the maidservant-wives, not of his wives from Laban. So as much as he loved Rachel more than Leah, Jacob probably loved Leah more than these two women. They represent the four kids of this family that would be most on the outside with regard to Jacob's favor.<sup>4</sup>

Now we combine this with the fact that **Joseph is young**, add **three more ingredients from the story** and we will get an explosive cocktail. These three things are **first**, it says that "**Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father**" (**37:2**). Most through church history have seen this as these boys doing something bad, and so faithful good little Joseph goes and tells Jacob, thus upholding

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<sup>4</sup> They would have been close to Joseph's age. Jasher at this point tells us that all of these boys were in the fields while their older brothers were out fighting in wars against the Amorites. It tells many tales of the great exploits of the older boys.

righteousness and integrity. This is certainly possible. He gave a bad report because they did something bad. It would then have been his right and probably responsibility to tell Jacob what they did.

On the other hand, it is possible that Joseph is not telling the truth or that what he said was done with **evil intent**. The term used here for “bad report” (*dibbah*) is used elsewhere in a rather negative light. For example, when the spies came back to Moses, they gave a bad report (**Num 13:32**). It wasn't that they were lying, but that their intent was to scare the people with the facts, so that they would not go and take the Promised Land, because they were themselves scared. Wenham summarizes the two other possibilities, “It seems likely that Joseph misrepresented his brothers to his father, his father believed him, and his brothers hated him for his lies. If his account was true, it would doubtless have enraged his brothers, especially since their father had never held them in high regard anyway.”<sup>5</sup> Whatever the case, the important thing is that these half-brothers from the lesser wives of Jacob did not appreciate (to say the least) what Joseph had told their father.

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<sup>5</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, vol. 2, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 350.

The next fact is vital to the story. “Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age” (37:3). This family doesn’t seem to learn. Remember, we saw that Isaac loved Esau, Rebekah loved Jacob, and most importantly, Jacob loved Rachel. Each loved them more than the other that they should have loved equally. What kinds of troubles have occurred because of this kind of favoritism? What kind of heartache? What kind of turmoil? The favoritism came before any of the hatred from those loved less. This theme becomes the major point for the actions in the rest of Joseph’s life story.

It begins with that most famous of sentences: “And he made him a robe of many colors” (37:3). From Sunday School to Broadway, the story of Joseph and his coat is still known by many Americans. I can still see my Sunday School teacher from when I was a kid putting the colorful felt robe onto that little boy Joseph. But what is the purpose of this robe? This is actually the important question.

The word is only used **one other time** in the Bible where it refers to the robe of a princess (2 Sam 13:18–19). In other words, **royalty**. The idea that it was multi-colored

is due in no small part to the translators of the LXX, who certainly understood Hebrew. However, it is possible that the robe was different than others because it was long, going down to the feet. Perhaps it is both.



Image from the tomb of Beni Hassan shows troupe of Semitic merchants coming down to Egypt.<sup>6</sup>



“Camp-Stool” Fresco, depicting a royal banquet  
1450 - 1300 BC, The Palace of Minos 4.2

<sup>6</sup> John H Walton, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Old Testament): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 121.

Obviously, the robe was a symbol of Jacob's favor towards his son, for that is what the Scripture implies. However, it also was a symbol of something else, and that something, along with Jacob's love for Joseph, made his brothers very, very angry. That something is connected in an important way to what we will see coming out of Joseph's mouth in a couple of verses.

But let us look at the reaction of the brothers to the robe. “When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him” (Gen 37:4). This will be the first of three statements about Joseph's brothers “hating” him. This word (*sane*) has appeared a few times in Genesis before this. A blessing was given to Rebekah, “May your offspring possess the gate of those who hate him!” (Gen 24:60). Isaac said to Abimelech, “Why have you come to me, seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you?” (26:27). And Leah, who was hated (29:31), named her child Simeon, “Because the LORD has heard that I am hated, he has given me this son also” (29:33). In these usages, we can see that the word can mean anything from “loved less” to the hatred of an enemy. In the case here, it

seems that his brothers are full of great displeasure caused by their jealousy of Joseph and their longing to be loved by their father as he was. And it says that they “**could not speak peacefully to him**” (4).

This word is *shalom*, and there is a big difference between not being able to speak peacefully vs. not being able to speak civilly. **Civility is an outward appearance** that does not have to have the heart be in it. People can act civilly towards one another due to peer pressure, public taboos, or legal constraints. I would dare say that even Satan can be civil (see Job 1). But the civil words of a serpent merely hide the forked tongue.

Speaking peacefully first necessitates that a man is *at peace* in his heart with another. For it is only out of the heart that a person can speak peace to someone and mean it, for peace is not merely the absence of a war, it is the presence of friendship between two parties. Peace seeks reconciliation. One can always tell when civility but not peace is being spoken. For there is a darkness that broods over the meeting of people that feels like a storm about to break open. Please remember, that this hatred and lack of peace was itself caused inadvertently by Jacob’s failure to

love his sons as he should. But it was also caused **inadvertently by Joseph himself**, either in his righteousness or in his own petty youthful stupidity in giving the bad report. It almost always takes two to create the animosity we see here.

But let me also say, beloved, that where there is not peace, there is often hatred. And where there is hatred, there is not love. God's people must be full of love and peace and must rid themselves of hatred of malice towards one another. **"If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men"** (**Rom 12:18** NAS). If you will not, and if you must pursue the way of malice, retribution, revenge, payback, belittling, humiliation, being right, getting even, justifying yourself, or anything else, then you are not behaving as a Christian and you are begging for trouble to be brought down on your head. If you have a difficult time with anger, then the only solution that can save you is to look to the Savior who died for a sinner such as you, and who continually acts in longsuffering and love towards *you* in the midst of your sin. If you know such love and peace from him, then you can surely extend it to others. I say all of this in the context of Joseph, who I think

probably was acting poorly towards his brothers, for as a child of Adam, the man was much more like me than he was like Jesus.

## **Joseph the Dreamer**

Nevertheless, he is also **a type of Christ** in the sovereign plan of God over his life. This begins to come out in the events that transpire next. “**Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more**” (**Gen 37:5**). Notice here how the dream and the telling of the dream cause them to respond in **greater hatred**. Why? We need to move slowly here.

First, there is a correspondence between Joseph’s **telling his father** about his brothers, and now Joseph **telling his brothers** about his dream. My guess would be that whatever you think about Joseph’s actions in the first tale-telling is how you should view this one. So, if you think he was righteous in what he did before, then he would be righteous here. If you think that his motives were less than stellar previously, then the same would be true here. The way the story is written causes us to see the parallels in Joseph’s behavior. Frankly, given his age and the content of his dream, and knowing human nature the way I do, I’m



guessing he was probably not just conveying information to them. Rather, he was rubbing it in.

This interpretation is more firm in my mind because of the nature of the dream and how it is parallel to the giving of the coat. **Jacob gives** his son a coat. **God gives** Joseph a dream. Here is where we need to know the most important purpose of that coat according to scholars. The coat was not merely a symbol of Israel's love for his son, it was a **symbol of authority** that he was placing upon Joseph. This is why I told you about the *royal* robe of the princess Tamar. This is why the brothers get so angry.

In giving Joseph that coat of many colors, Jacob was effectively saying to the other boys, I love him and he will bear my authority when I am gone.<sup>7</sup> I might even suggest that it bore certain affinities to the priestly robes, the prophetic robes, and the kingly robes we see later on. Given that the oldest usually had this responsibility and privilege of authority (but remember what Reuben had done to Bilhah previously), given that God's choice has been the younger (Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau), and given the reaction to the robe, this makes the best sense of

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<sup>7</sup> This is similar to what he was probably doing in naming Benjamin (the other son of Rachel): "Son of My Right Hand." It was a name of authority. Jacob loved Rachel's sons more than the others.

the passage to me.

So now, let us think about the content of this dream to see why the brothers became even more angry at Joseph. He said to them, “Hear this dream that I have dreamed: 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” (Gen 37:5-7). Curiously, the normal domain of seeing the future in a dream in the Bible comes from priests (the Urim and Thummim), prophets (visions and dreams), and kings (think of Nebuchadnezzar for example). Of course, this is not always true, but it is often true.

It is important to point out that the setting of this dream is here on earth. They are in the fields. They are binding sheaves. But something mystical happens in the dream when the sheaves of the brothers begin to bow. Based on Psalm 126:6 which says, “He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him,” a popular folk hymn was written in the 1800s by Knowles Shaw which begins, “Sowing in the morning, sowing seeds of kindness | Sowing in the noontide and the dewy eve |

Waiting for the harvest, and the time of reaping | We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.”

**What is a sheaf?** The small town my wife grew up in has a newspaper called the *Warren Sheaf*. Not “Chief,” as a city slicker might think, as if named after an Indian but they were saying and spelling it wrong. But “Sheaf,” because warren is in the handle of the bread basket. A sheaf is a bundle of grain stalks that when tied together can give the impression of a tree, or perhaps even a person with a head of hair, if you are really imaginative.



The point of the dream, however, was not to talk about their work, but to show that Joseph’s sheaf became greater than their own.

The point was not missed by the brothers, “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” (Gen 37:8). It is interesting that most dreams in the Bible need some kind of an interpretation. But not this one. Yet, this is not entirely because the dream was clear. Rather, the dream was made more clear by the context of Jacob’s love and Joseph’s coat (and perhaps also by the way Joseph is now rubbing it all in).

This dream marks the third time we read about the hatred of his brothers. In each case, the events make their hatred begin to bubble and later in the chapter it will boil over with great rage and malicious sin. God and the gospel were hidden from them. The great early Father **Chrysostom** says,

See the extraordinary degree of their blindness: they themselves interpreted the dream. In fact, it is not possible to claim that it was in ignorance of the future that they bore him ill will; rather, it was learning the future from the dreams that added to their hatred. O

excess of stupidity! They should have shown Joseph greater favor after learning the facts, set aside any grounds for hatred, banished the passion of envy. But they were dulled in their thinking and could not see at a glance that everything they were doing rebounded on themselves, and so they aggravated their hatred of him.

(Homilies on Genesis 61.7).<sup>18</sup>

But Joseph was not done with his dreams. “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’” (Gen 37:9). This must have seemed like a red cloth to a raging bull in an arena. But the focus turns away from the brothers to Jacob now, for in this dream, not only are the brothers present, but so also is Jacob.

A few things need to be said about the dream. Notice that its setting is now in **heaven**. As one earth, so in heaven. Someone has written, “The doubling of the dream suggests ... the certainty of fulfillment, that ‘the thing is established by God’ (41:32). This is also suggested by the

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<sup>1</sup> 1FC 87:189-90\*.

<sup>8</sup> Mark Sheridan, *Genesis 12-50*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture OT 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 233.

complementarity of the dreams: one is set on earth (reaping in the fields), the other in heaven (sun, moon, and stars).”<sup>9</sup>

In the ancient world, dreams were considered very important, words from the gods. Like farming and sheaves, dreams are mostly an afterthought by most Americans. We are living here in a world very unfamiliar to our own in terms of what it did and what it believed.

The same would be true of the worldview being communicated in this dream. The sun, moon, and stars are, of course, not merely physical objects in the sky as a western materialist might think of them. They were viewed as veritable gods. We have seen how Jacob’s own family has come out of moon-worship. This would not have been lost on him. The way Joseph puts his dream is that the most important of all the gods were going to bow down to him. In other words, as important as the family was in God’s plan, still, Joseph was the highest of them all.

Do you think this information might have made Joseph’s head swell just a bit? Perhaps Jacob thought so, for “when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him” (37:10). Jacob was not happy about this, but

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<sup>9</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, vol. 2, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 351.

why? The symbolism of his family is obvious to Jacob. The sun is Jacob. The moon is his mother, and the eleven brothers are the stars. “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?” (10). A comment on the mother is probably obligatory here. Rachel, as we know, has died. It is possible that the “mother” here refers to Leah, but I doubt this very much. It is more probable that the moon is here to complete the image of the dream, and that as important as she was to Jacob, Joseph is greater.

There were two ways that the dreams were taken. One is by the brothers. The other is by Jacob. “His brothers were jealous of him” (Gen 37:10). Why? Perhaps it is because they knew his father already had given his blessing to Jacob through the coat, and now that blessing was being confirmed by God through the dreams. It does not say they did not believe him, but rather that they were jealous.

Jealously fueled their rage, acting like kindling for a fire. Very soon, we will see that their solution, the way they would deal with their jealousy would be to burn Joseph’s sheaf and let Jacob see the smoke. That is how

jealous combined with such anger usually turns out. It is not for good, but for evil, Joseph will say to them many years later (**Gen 50:50**). And it is the reason why we must return again to the idea of peace, for only when you are at peace will you be certain that the war that rages in your heart does not spill outside of it to the world.

The Lord Jesus says, “**be at peace with one another**” (**Mark 9:50**). If you have committed some wrong to your brother, go now and make it right. Lay your gift at the altar, and reconcile with your brother. And know that you can do this if you have the peace of God abiding upon you. Turn to Christ so that you might know peace if you have not. Then trust his word that when you look to Christ alone, that God is at peace with you, that he does all things to you as a father to a son, meaning it for good even if others mean it for evil. Joseph himself will have to learn this lesson time and again.

The other reaction is that of his father. “**But his father kept the saying in mind**” (**Gen 37:11**). Though he rebuked Joseph, Israel was now a changed man. He had had enough dreams himself to know when God was speaking through them. However Joseph may have been behaving in telling



his dreams, Jacob knows deep down inside that this is a word from God. This ends the section of the story that we will look at today.

## Keep the Saying In Mind

Most of us know what happens next, and we will look at that next time. For now, I want us to finish by considering *how we also might keep the saying in mind*. We will learn from Genesis how in keeping this in mind, Jacob would eventually learn that God was telling the truth through the dreams of Joseph. We will come to see just how highly exalted Joseph was by God, but only after he had to suffer a great deal. Joseph will be God's key instrument in saving the people of Israel and years later, showing his glory in the Exodus.

But it is just in this that my thoughts cannot help but return to those planted long ago by Caesarius of Arles. Joseph, even here in what we have seen, prefigures something beyond himself, someone who would come, not from his own body, but from the body of one of his brothers whom he saved from starvation.

The Psalmist says, “*Praise the LORD! ... Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars! ... Let them*

praise the name of the LORD! For he commanded and they were created ... Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his majesty is above earth and heaven” (Ps 148:1, 3, 5, 13). Who created them? Well, of course, God did. But here, God is named Yahweh. We know from earlier in Genesis that Yahweh is the name of at least two Persons in the Godhead (Gen 19:24). Here, one of them is also called “the Name,” and we have seen him before.

“In these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs” (Heb 1:2-4). “By him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things were created through him and for him” (Col 1:16). In this way, the second dream of Joseph reveals very clearly that his God is

the ultimate source of authority to whom all worship is deserved. Joseph points to Christ even as his family points to Christ's worship. And soon, they will all worship him indeed.

But they not only worship the Son of God in the Psalm because he created all things. They also worship because the God's name becomes a great Horn for his people. "He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his saints, for the people of Israel who are near to him. Praise the LORD!" (Ps 148:13-14). So Luke says, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David" (Luke 1:68-69). Luke is talking about the Christ-child, whose name shall be Jesus.

Like Joseph, this Christ child was also Shepherd. He was also the Beloved Son of his Father. He was also clothed by his Father with the Holy Spirit (Matt 3:16; even has he has clothed us his people, Gal 3:27). Commenting on Joseph, Cyril of Alexandria says:

The Pharisees were inflamed with anger against the beloved, that is, Christ, because he had been clothed by

God the Father with a multiform [multicolored] glory. He was admirable in different forms, partly as a vivifying God, partly as a light that was able to illuminate those who were in the darkness, and to purify the lepers, and to raise from the dead those who were already decomposing, and to reprove the seas and to be carried on the waves through his power. And the Jews being in difficulty and burning with the flames of envy, said to each other, “What are we to do? This man is performing many signs.” The multicolored garment is the symbol of the multiform glory with which God the Father clothed the Son made similar to us through his human nature.

(Glaphyra on Genesis, 6. 4.19)<sup>10</sup>

Cyril goes on to compare the sons of the bondwoman who will later seek to kill Joseph to the Pharisees who gnashed their teeth at Jesus, and who out of anger, sought to put him to death, for they were aware that he claimed to be the heir of his Father who would one day rule the world and all would bow down to him.

We will see next week how these same people took a **scarlet robe**, as if dipped in blood, as if mocking both

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<sup>10</sup> Mark Sheridan, *Genesis 12-50*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture OT 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 231–232.

Christ and their own Scriptures and Patriarchs whom they said they followed. Also, recall also how at that time, the wife of a certain man named Pilate had a **dream** also about the Christ, just prior to her own husband trying to wash his hands of the whole mess that was the Passion of Christ.

That's the life and death of Christ. **Ambrose** (333–397 AD) helps us to think about the resurrection:

Indeed, God's grace shone on Joseph even in his boyhood. For he had a dream that when he was binding sheaves with his brothers—so it appeared to him in the vision—this sheaf rose up and stood straight, while the sheaves of his brothers turned and bowed down to his sheaf.<sup>3</sup> Now in this the resurrection of the Lord Jesus that was to come was revealed. When they saw him at Jerusalem, the eleven disciples and all the saints bowed down; when they rise, they will bow down bearing the fruits of their good works, just as it is written, “Coming they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves” [seeing Psalm 126:6 that we cited earlier as a Messianic Prophecy]. Although his brothers disparaged the reliability of the dream out of their envy, still they

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<sup>3</sup> Gen 37:5–8.

expressed his interpretation of it in their own words when they replied, “Are you to be our king? Are you to rule over us?” For that vision indicated the King who was to come, and before him all human flesh would bow down with bended knee.<sup>5</sup>

(On Joseph 2.7)<sup>11</sup>

Our new friend Caesarius of Arles also sees the resurrection here [also using Psalm 148:3 as proof], and after commenting on it reminds us one last time of the brothers saying, “Truly, how could it happen to his brothers that they should adore him like the stars, since the night of envy had made them obscure and gloomy? They had lost the brightness of the stars, because they had extinguished in themselves the light of charity” (Sermon 89.4). This is the greatest reason why you must put anger, bitterness, jealousy, and hatred far from your heart. For if you will not, then you will be unable to see the true light of Christ and come to him for life.

“We truly believe,” he finishes, “that this was deservedly fulfilled in our Lord and Savior, for, as I already

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<sup>5</sup> See Phil 2:10.

<sup>11</sup> Mark Sheridan, *Genesis 12-50*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture OT 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 233–234.

said, we read that blessed Joseph, blessed Mary and the eleven apostles worshiped him quite frequently. That the apostles possessed the light of the stars our Lord himself tells us in the Gospel: ‘You are the light of the world.’<sup>12</sup> Again, he says concerning the same men and those who are similar: ‘When the just will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.’”<sup>12</sup> In the light, we see the light, we have the light, we shine the light, we worship the light.

The fact is, Joseph’s dreams and the authority he was granted because he was loved much were fulfilled in Christ, and today he calls everyone to bend the knee in order to receive mercy. But if not, one day, every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess that God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name—that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Php 2:9-11). Do not leave this place today unless you know this is now true for you.

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<sup>12</sup> Mt 5:14.

<sup>12</sup> Mark Sheridan, *Genesis 12-50*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture OT 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 234.