

## 11.02 Joseph Sold (Genesis 37:12-36)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

### Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- Wear a brightly colored or ornamented robe. Take it off at the appropriate point in the story.
- A piece of burlap or a burlap sack
- (optional) Flash cards from “Joseph,” Genesis Series 5, A Beka Book, Pensacola, FL
- (optional) Herein Is Love Commentary Series; *Genesis, A Commentary for Children*, by Nancy Ganz, Shepherd Press, 2002.

**Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:** Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *20 silver shekels*: worth, in days of labor, about two months and eighteen days (math figured from information that a man earned 30 shekels in about 4 months found at <https://truthsaves.org/articles/the-value-of-a-shekel/>)
- *to tear one’s garments*: a sign of utter grief; often covering one’s head with ashes and clothing oneself in burlap (sackcloth) accompanied this act of sadness
- *Sheol*: in the Old Testament, the dark place of the dead; the grave
- *to mourn*: to grieve, often because of the death of someone
- *patriarchs*: the ancestral fathers of a family; in the book of Genesis, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob’s sons were patriarchs

### Scripture: (NASB)

Genesis 37:12 Then his brothers went to pasture their father’s flock in Shechem. 13 Israel said to Joseph, “Are not your brothers pasturing *the flock* in Shechem? Come, and I will send you to them.” And he said to him, “I will go.” 14 Then he said to him, “Go now and see about the welfare of your brothers and the welfare of the flock, and bring word back to me.” So he sent him from the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

15 A man found him, and behold, he was wandering in the field; and the man asked him, “What are you looking for?” 16 He said, “I am looking for my brothers; please tell me where they are pasturing *the flock*.” 17 Then the man said, “They have moved from here; for I heard *them* say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’” So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.

18 When they saw him from a distance and before he came close to them, they plotted against him to put him to death. 19 They said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer! 20 Now then, come and let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; and we will say, ‘A wild beast devoured him.’ Then let us see what will become of his dreams!” 21 But Reuben heard *this* and rescued him out of their hands and said, “Let us not take his life.” 22 Reuben further said to them, “Shed no blood. Throw him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but do not lay hands on him”—that he might rescue him out of their hands, to restore him to his father. 23 So it came about, when Joseph reached his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the varicolored tunic that was on him; 24 and they took him and threw him into the pit. Now the pit was empty, without any water in it.

25 Then they sat down to eat a meal. And as they raised their eyes and looked, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing aromatic [or spices] gum and balm and myrrh,

on their way to bring *them* down to Egypt. 26 Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is it for us to kill our brother and cover up his blood? 27 Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our *own* flesh.” And his brothers listened *to him*. 28 Then some Midianite traders passed by, so they pulled *him* up and lifted Joseph out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty *shekels* of silver. Thus they brought Joseph into Egypt.

29 Now Reuben returned to the pit, and behold, Joseph was not in the pit; so he tore his garments. 30 He returned to his brothers and said, “The boy is not *there*; as for me, where am I to go?” 31 So they took Joseph’s tunic, and slaughtered a male goat and dipped the tunic in the blood; 32 and they sent the varicolored tunic and brought it to their father and said, “We found this; please examine *it* to *see* whether it is your son’s tunic or not.” 33 Then he examined it and said, “It is my son’s tunic. A wild beast has devoured him; Joseph has surely been torn to pieces!” 34 So Jacob tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. 35 Then all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, “Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son.” So his father wept for him.

### **Introduction/Review:**

Jealousy and hatred by his brothers raged against Joseph. Why? [He had reported two brothers’ poor work; their father had given Joseph a special coat; Joseph had told them dreams indicating they would bow to him.] Nevertheless, Jacob, even though he rebuked Joseph for his dreams, took notice and tucked away the dreams in his memory.

### **Story:**

#### ***Pasturing in Shechem***

Jacob lived in Hebron [locate] and sent his sons, Joseph’s brothers, with his flocks all the way to Shechem [locate] so that the flocks could pasture. Why they went so far away I am not sure, but we know Jacob had purchased some land up there. ✓Perhaps, like modern ranchers and farmers in our American West, he moved livestock away from home for the summer and brought them back in the fall.

However, Jacob wanted to find out how his flocks and sons were doing. He said to Joseph, “Are not your brothers pasturing the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will send you to them.”

Joseph answered, “I will go.”

“All right,” said Jacob, “go now and see about the welfare of your brothers and the welfare of the flock, and bring word back to me.”

So Joseph walked the fifty-mile distance from the valley of Hebron to Shechem (like from Lamar to past LaJunta) [Teacher, do a local distance comparison], but when he arrived, he could not find his brothers. As he was wandering in the field, looking here and there, a man found him and asked, “What are you looking for?”

Joseph answered, “I am looking for my brothers. ✓There were ten of them, pasturing sheep. If you have seen them, please tell me where they are.”

The man responded, “I did see them. They have moved from here. I heard them say, ‘Let’s go to Dothan.’”

✓“Thank you,” said Joseph and went after his brothers, finding them fifteen miles farther at Dothan (a similar distance as from here almost to Granada) [use a local comarison].

#### ***Brother’s plotting***

From a distance those brothers saw Joseph coming. How do you suppose they recognized him? [By his multicolored coat.] Before Joseph got very close, they plotted against him. They said to each other, “Here comes that dreamer! Let’s do away with him and throw him into one of these dry wells. We can tell our father that a wild beast devoured him. Then we will see what will become of his dreams!”

“Oh, no!” Reuben said. “Let us not take his life. Do not shed blood. Go ahead and throw him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but do not lay hands on him.” You see, Reuben thought he might be able to rescue Joseph later and take him back to their father. ✓Being the oldest brother, he might have felt more responsibility than the others for the well being of Joseph.

### ***Brothers’ carrying out the plot***

As Joseph approached, instead of a warm welcome, he received rough treatment from his brothers. They stripped him of, what was to them, his disgusting coat and threw him into an empty well. Then, with no concern for Joseph and no conscience, they sat down and ate a meal.

### ***Brothers’ selling***

The brothers happened to lift their eyes and saw on the horizon a caravan of camels coming from the east. “Hey, look; there is a caravan is heading for Egypt to sell spices and ointment.”

Judah had an idea. “Brothers,” he said, “what profit is it for us to kill our brother and cover up his blood? Why don’t we sell Joseph to the people of this caravan. We don’t have to slay him, for, after all, he *is* our brother, our own flesh.”

✓“Good idea!” answered all the other brothers except Reuben, who must have been away from them and was unaware of what was going on.

So these nine brothers pulled Joseph out of the pit and sold him to the traders for twenty shekels of silver (worth about two months and eighteen days of labor—at wages of \$1000 per month, that would be \$2600; at \$2000 per month, \$4600). [Wipe hands.] They were rid of Joseph and his dreams!

### ***Reuben’s concern***

Now, what about Reuben? Since he was not part of the sale of his brother, when he came back to the pit, ✓perhaps at night, with the intent of taking Joseph back to Jacob, he looked for and called for but could not find Joseph. “Where is Joseph?” he thought. “He is not in the pit. Surely, he is dead!”

Distraught, Reuben tore his clothes. He found his brothers and cried out, “The boy is not there. What am I to do? Where am I to go? How can I face my father without my young brother?” ✓We assume the brothers then told Reuben what they had done.

### ***Brothers’ deceit***

These callous, hateful men then devised a sadistic plan to deceive their elderly father. They slaughtered a male goat and dipped Joseph’s multi-colored coat in the blood to make it look as if an animal had attacked and killed Joseph. Then they sent the coat, ✓perhaps with some servants, to Jacob with the following words: “We found this coat. Please check it to see whether it is Joseph’s coat or not.”

### ***Jacob’s mourning***

Jacob examined the coat and believed the brothers’ lie. He said, “It is my son’s. A wild beast has devoured him; Joseph has surely been torn to pieces!” Then he tore his clothes, put rough sackcloth on for clothing, and mourned for his son many days. In fact, all his children did their best to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted, saying, “Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son.”

What a terribly sad scene! What will happen to Joseph? To Jacob? Is God working through all of this?

### **Lessons from this lesson:**

- We see Jesus: (from <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/genesis-37-36.html>)
  - Joseph was sent by his father a long journey to visit his brethren, and know the welfare of them and their flocks. Christ was sent from heaven to earth to seek and save the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

- Joseph's brethren, when they saw him come to them, conspired to take away his life. The Jews, who were Christ's own, when he came to them, received him not, but said, this is the heir, let us kill him, and they consulted to take away his life.
- Joseph was stripped of his clothes, and sold for twenty pieces of silver at the motion of Judah. Christ, by one of the same name, was sold for thirty pieces of silver, and was stripped of his clothes by the Roman soldiers.
- Joseph being reckoned as dead by his father, and yet alive, may be herein an emblem of Christ's death, and his resurrection from the dead.

- Be careful not to be jealous and not to hate, for hate sometimes leads to violence.
- Be respectful of parents: willingly do their errands; do nothing to hurt them.

### Activities:

- Play dough: coat; goat; burlap (drag a comb through a flat piece of clay; crisscross)
- Add a statement and picture (Joseph in a pit) to the bulletin board, "Well, Lots of Things Happened at Wells." For printables and a photo of the finished bulletin board, go to the Extras page at [teachingthebibletokids.org](http://teachingthebibletokids.org).
- Sing "Joseph Was Sold" (tune: "Row, Row, Row Your Boat") (The second line in both stanzas is changed from the original found on the internet; I can't remember which site.)

Down, down, in a pit in the wilderness  
Joseph's brothers threw him there. He was in deep distress.

Then came sellers by; to Egypt they were bound.  
Twenty silver pieces, Joseph's price to them they found.

- Snack: ginger cookies (because the caravan was bringing spices); out of stiffer dough it might be possible to cut out camel shapes; an alternative is to bake spice cake or gingerbread cake.
- Sing Diana Dow's "Joseph" found at <http://www.biblesongsandmore.com/songs/old-testament-songs/josephsong/>, where an audio is available.
- Sing stanzas 1 and 2 of "Joseph" found at Lesson 10.01 or on the Songs page at [teachingthebibletokids.org](http://teachingthebibletokids.org), where an audio and a visual are available.
- Print and play the game found below. Provide markers for each player. Use a die or number wheel to determine how many spaces a player may advance. (A 2 allows two more places; -1 means to move backwards one place.)
- Review questions: (Game: Put a silver coin—dime or quarter—in a container for each correct answer.)
  1. Jacob had purchased some land in a place where he sent his sons to pasture the flocks. What was the name of the place? [Shechem.]
  2. Why did Jacob send Joseph to his brothers? [To see how they and the flocks were doing.]
  3. What happened when Joseph couldn't find his brothers at Shechem? [A man told him where the brothers were—at Dothan.]
  4. When did the brothers decide to do harm to Joseph? [When they saw him coming to them.]
  5. What harm did the brothers first intend to do to Joseph? [Put him to death and throw him in a pit.]
  6. Who tried to save Joseph from death? [Reuben.]
  7. What did Reuben suggest be done to Joseph until he could rescue him? [That he be put in a pit.]
  8. When Judah saw a caravan coming, what was his idea? [Sell Joseph to the traders.]
  9. What happened to Joseph's colorful coat? [The brothers slaughtered a goat, dipped the tunic in the goat's blood, and sent it to their father.]
  10. How did Jacob mourn for Joseph? [Tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, mourned many days, and

would not be comforted.]

**Memory Verse[s]:** (NASB)

- Acts 7:9—“ “And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but God was with him

**Handwork:**

- Color the clip art picture found below. Glue sand to the lower part of the picture.

*20 silver shekels*  
*to tear one's clothes*  
*Sheol*  
*to mourn*  
*patriarchs*

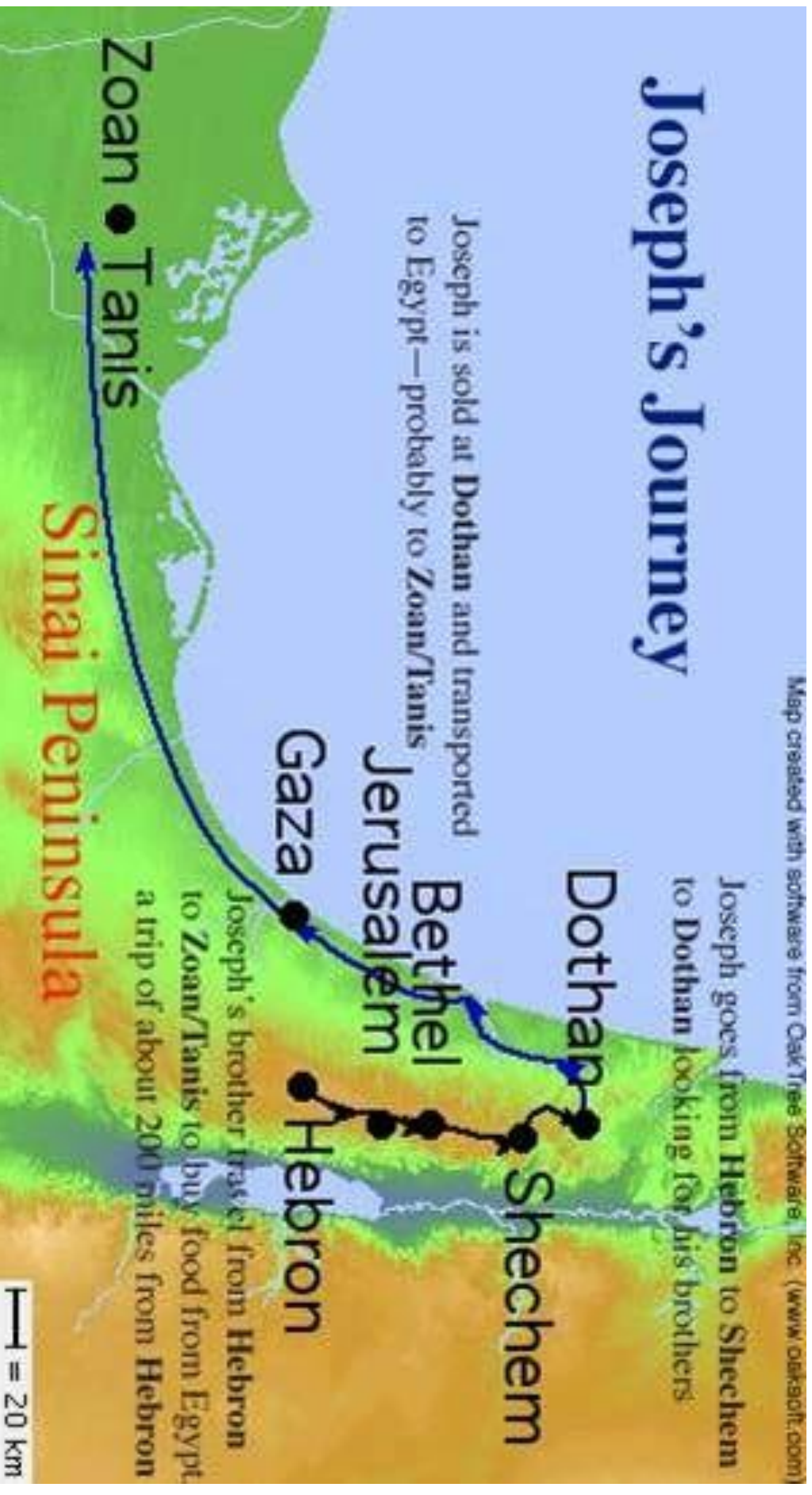
# Joseph's Journey

Map created with software from OakTree Software, Inc. (www.oaksoft.com)

Joseph goes from Hebron to Shechem to Dothan looking for his brothers

Joseph is sold at Dothan and transported to Egypt—probably to Zoan/Tanis

Joseph's brother travel from Hebron to Zoan/Tanis to buy food from Egypt a trip of about 200 miles from Hebron







from an old student book





(picture is in public domain)





(picture from an old Bible story book)









Joseph Thrown in the Pit

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