Genesis

**The Promise Sold (37:12-36)**

*From a study of Luther’s Works: Lectures on Genesis, Paul Kretzmann’s Popular Commentary of the Bible, and the Lutheran Study Bible*

## **The Brothers Plot (37:12-22)**

* The pastures near Shechem
  + A reminder of the atrocities that took place earlier by Simeon and Levi
* The sending of Joseph
  + “Here I am”
    - Genesis 22:1
    - 1 Samuel 3:4
    - The obedience of Joseph.
      * 17 at the time.
  + A trusted messenger
    - 1 Samuel 17:17-18
    - Matthew 21:33-41
  + The flock is missing
    - Matthew 10:5-7
    - Luke 15:4
    - Luke 19:10
    - Dothan
      * 2 Kings 6:11-14
    - “It’s a trap!”
      * Luther jumps the gun
        + “Why does God allow this?”

But it is great and noteworthy consolation for us that we see God governing the saintly patriarchs exactly as He governs us. For He does not lead the patriarch Jacob only by miracles and lofty exercises of the Spirit exceeding the common grasp of godly men, but He confronts him also with the daily dangers, misfortunes, and accidents that can befall anyone of us.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Matthew 5:4, 11-12

* “Here comes the tattletale.”
  + How deep is their hatred?
    - 2 Corinthians 4:4
    - Psalm 37:12,32
    - John 11:53
    - Acts 23:12
    - Genesis 4:6-7
    - God is not feared, indeed, He is mocked and crucified.[[2]](#footnote-2)
  + “Here comes the dreamer”
    - Genesis 28:12
    - tAmïl{x]h; l[;B;² hNE©hi
      * בַּעַל means “lord,” properly, “husband,” “master of a house.”[[3]](#footnote-3)
        + From this the cult of Baal derived the most renowned name of idolatry. [[4]](#footnote-4)
    - Who is speaking here?
      * Reuben (23), Simeon (22), Levi (21), Judah (20)?
        + Others too young for such leadership?
        + To be sure, dear Lord God, it often happens that a scoundrel can make a whole city go wrong.[[5]](#footnote-5)
        + Nor do I think that Christ was killed by any others excepting these two tribes, the rulers and the scribes. The chief priests were from the tribe of Levi, and the scribes from the tribe of Simeon. Therefore just as they tortured Joseph, so their posterity crucified Christ[[6]](#footnote-6)
    - Who is the giver of dreams?
  + Blame it on an animal
    - Luther calls this “Mr. Nobody”
    - John 18:31
  + “We will see what becomes of his dreams!”
    - What did the dreams convey?
      * If they do not bow down to Joseph, who will they bow down to?
        + Matthew 2:1-3
  + Luther continues to take in the account as a whole.
    - Why does God allow suffering?
    - What are Christians today to take from this that is being done to Joseph and Jacob?
      * Remember God’s promises!
      * But faith, on the contrary, says: “You have not perished; remember that you still have the promise which has been spread out over you just like a very broad heaven. God is taking care of you even if you do not see it or feel it.[[7]](#footnote-7)
      * whatever clouds and darkness may stand in our way, we should break through into the light of the Word and the promises and say: “In the name of God I confess that I have sinned, but I still believe that I have been baptized and that Christ is sitting at the right hand of the Father.”[[8]](#footnote-8)
      * Therefore, when the ungodly threaten us with death, the cross, sword, and fire by which they plan to kill us and bury us, let us know for certain that God, who said (Gen. 15:1): “I will be your Protector,” is laughing at their folly and setting the opposite in motion.[[9]](#footnote-9)
    - The pains of a father
      * And grandfather
        + Luther considers this trauma hastened Isaac’s death
    - Sin’s real consequence
      * If we do not carefully and correctly estimate the magnitude of sin, God Himself will do so; if we do not judge ourselves, the Lord will judge us. But it is a great blessing that He judges and punishes for salvation and not for damnation, as Judas and Saul were judged. But if you idly think and say: “Even though I have offended my parents, what of it?” Then sin is of course asleep, but it will awaken and drive you to say: “How wretched I am! What have I done? Why have I despised God in my father, mother, and teacher? Why have I not obeyed their admonitions?” This will eventually take place; it cannot be otherwise![[10]](#footnote-10)
      * Then follows the itching of the neck, the bad little black dog Remorse, who bites you all your life without ceasing, even though your sin is forgiven.[[11]](#footnote-11)
* A voice of reason?
  + Reuben speaks
    - The sting of his sin still remains.
      * Thus, to be sure, Reuben’s incest is still dormant, and now he wishes to enter into favor with his father. But it is not the time for placating his father, and so he obtains nothing.[[12]](#footnote-12)
  + Matthew 27:24

## **The Brothers Take Action – Part 1 (37:23-28)**

* Joseph arrives
* Reuben’s advise is taken… sort of?
  + For although they do not strangle the youth immediately, as they had decided, they still throw him into a pit, an act sadder and more cruel by far, for they plan to kill him in this solitude by hunger and thirst. How much more tolerable it would have been to be killed suddenly than to be exposed for such a long time to so many tortures![[13]](#footnote-13)
  + Christ’s descent into hell?
    - Zechariah 9:11
  + Stripped of his robe
    - This tunic which was previously a sign of the father’s love towards his son now becomes a hard and abominable sign to sadden and torment the father who has been especially delighted by it and with special zeal has adorned his son with this tunic.[[14]](#footnote-14)
    - Matthew 27:28
    - What would this say of Jacob’s future “church?”
  + Sit down to eat.
    - They sit down to eat bread as though they had carried off a successful transaction. Their conscience is secure, and sin is asleep.[[15]](#footnote-15)
* God rescues Joseph
  + There is a balm in Gilead!
    - A funny coincidence?
      * A caravan of Ishmaelites
        + To this must be added the very grave scandal which arose from this outrageous crime among the neighboring Ishmaelites, Midianites, and the rest, to whom this report had to spread of necessity. For Joseph is sold to them by his brothers, and so they could not help thinking: “Behold, these men are sons of the blessing; we are cast out of the church of Abraham, as though we were spurious and strangers to the promise and the church. These men who have perpetrated such a crime are the heirs.”[[16]](#footnote-16)

Hope for Joseph from extended family?

“Dear friends, I am your cousin, help to rescue me! I am the brother of these men who have sold me to you.” But he found them to be no milder than his brothers. In this way the Ishmaelites and Midianites conspire with Israel and kill the son of God, as is described in the Second Psalm.[[17]](#footnote-17)

* + - Three gifts?
  + Judah’s got an idea.
    - What profit is it for him to die here?
      * Genesis 25:32
      * Matthew 16:26
      * Judas
        + Believed to be of the tribe of Judah
  + Sold for 20 pieces of silver.
    - For facts and circumstances agree excellently, and there cannot be a greater similarity than that between Christ crucified and Joseph; the selling and death of both are in agreement. For as Isaiah (53:8) says of Christ, “He was cut off out of the land of the living,” so also Joseph is removed from the land and sight of his father, just as if he would never return to his father or see him again.[[18]](#footnote-18)
    - Taken to Egypt
      * Matthew 12:13-15
  + No words from Joseph
    - Moses says nothing about what Joseph did and said in his great peril. He speaks of him just as if he were dumb or a stone or a tree trunk who said nothing, asked nothing, did not cry out, and plainly did nothing that he could have done to placate his brothers. But he leaves it to the reader to imagine all these things which cannot be expressed or described in words. Therefore let each one imagine for himself how sad his gestures were and how mournful his words, groans, and sighs were as he made supplication.[[19]](#footnote-19)

## **The Brothers Take Action – Part 2 (37:29-36)**

* Reuben missed the transaction
  + Tears his robes
    - A greater fear?
      * For self?
        + Restoration in the family by saving Joseph?
      * For brothers?
      * For nation?
* Taking care of the robe
  + Blood to cover their sin
    - No mention of tearing this robe or teeth marks
  + Shown to Jacob
    - Jacob mourns Joseph
      * Jacob and Joseph do not see the crown of the kingdom, nor do the brothers adore him on bended knees, as will happen later in Egypt, but by this selling future events are being prepared, and before God they are regarded as past and over. With our God this is as if it had already taken place. It certainly comes to pass![[20]](#footnote-20)
      * And old Father Isaac is also compelled to look upon this. The grief and sorrow of Isaac must also be added here, for he lived for 12 years after the selling of Joseph and at last was undoubtedly brought to his end by heartache on account of his lost grandson.[[21]](#footnote-21)

1. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.15-17&off=793), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 350–351. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.18-20&off=25188&ctx=athenish+barbarism.+~God+is+not+feared%2c+i), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 367. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.18-20&off=37247&ctx=inventor+of+dreams.%0a~%D7%91%D6%BC%D6%B7%D7%A2%D6%B7%D7%9C+means+%E2%80%9Clord%2c%E2%80%9D), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 372. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.18-20&off=37449&ctx=master%E2%80%9D+(cf.+22%3a1).+~From+this+the+cult+o), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 372. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.18-20&off=24223&ctx=ilential+scoundrels.~+To+be+sure%2c+dear+Lo), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 367. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.21-22&off=4269&ctx=n+(cf.+Gen.+42%3a24).+~Nor+do+I+think+that+), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 378. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.18-20&off=19751&ctx=%3b+we+are+done+for!%E2%80%9D+~But+faith%2c+on+the+co), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 365. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.18-20&off=11719&ctx=rds%2c+etc.%3b+and+yet%2c+~whatever+clouds+and+), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 362. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.18-20&off=45379&ctx=+not+convince+them.%0a~Therefore%2c+when+the+), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 375. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.18-20&off=27773), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 368–369. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.18-20&off=30373&ctx=es+of+her+parents.%E2%80%9D+~Then+follows+the+itc), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 369. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.21-22&off=2872), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 377. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.23-24&off=2405&ctx=complishes+nothing.+~For+although+they+do), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 379. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.23-24&off=3531&ctx=y+wretched+old+man.+~This+tunic+which+was), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 379. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.25), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 381. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.18-20&off=3003), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 358–359. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.26-27&off=14770&ctx=close+tie+of+blood.+~%E2%80%9CDear+friends%2c+I+am+), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 389. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.28&off=517&ctx=shekels+of+silver.%E2%80%9D+~For+facts+and+circum), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 391–392. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.26-27&off=5751&ctx=+their+own+cruelty.%0a~Moses+says+nothing+a), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 386. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.31-33&off=14011&ctx=+borne+and+endured.+~Jacob+and+Joseph+do+), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 401. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Martin Luther, [*Luther’s Works, Vol. 6: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 31-37*](https://ref.ly/logosres/lw06?ref=Bible.Ge37.34-36&off=1503&ctx=+father+and+mother%3f+~And+old+Father+Isaac), ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 6 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999), 403–404. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)