

Series: A New Beginning; Sermon: **A New Dream**

Delivered by: **Dr. Josh Moody**, senior pastor; Date: **April 2, 2017**

Bible text explored: Genesis 37:1–11

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

²These 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. ³Now 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. ⁴But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.

⁵Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. ⁶He said to them, “Hear this dream that I have dreamed: ⁷Behold, 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.” ⁸His 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.

⁹Then 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.” ¹⁰But 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?” ¹¹And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind. [ESV]

Review and application:

Verse 1 belongs with 36:40-41, contrasting Esau’s sons achieving power and prosperity with Jacob who, while living as a foreigner in the land, awaited the promised spiritual blessing. Verse 2a launches the concluding Genesis cycle, focused on Joseph.

1. Pastor Moody used lyrics from the musical “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat”—“I’m handsome, I’m smart, I’m a walking work of art”—to ask how we should view this story’s lead character. Would you guess that Joseph (v. 2b) was a.) being a spoiled tattletale, or b.) responsibly alerting his father to his older half-brothers’ sinister behavior?

Was Joseph (v. 5) being cocky and unwise in reporting his dreams to his family, or—since dreams were a frequent mode of revelation in Old Testament times—was divulging them warranted?

How did his response to his brothers, years later (*Gen. 50:19*), demonstrate growth in humility?

How can we combat smugness for ourselves and in our families?

2. Was the richly ornamented robe Jacob gave to Joseph (v. 3) a tip-off that he intended to shift to him the privileges reserved for the family’s firstborn? (See *Deut. 21:15-17*.)

As we saw earlier (in *Genesis 27:1-46*), by playing favorites, Isaac and Rebekah had separated Jacob from his own brother Esau. So how can we account for Jacob’s own open favoritism, provoking his other sons’ estrangement from Joseph?

Do the ways we relate to our children trigger competitiveness instead of mutual support?

3. How was the reaction of Joseph's brothers (vv. 8 and 11) true to human nature, and similar to that of Cain to Abel? (See *Gen. 4:6-7*.)

What can we do to minimize envy and malice both in our own family and in the wider church family?

4. How was the dream that the Dream Giver first gave (v. 6) especially suited to how it would be fulfilled? (See *Gen. 42:1-3*.)

Why would adding a second dream with obvious similarities (v. 9) underscore the divine origin of the dreams?

5. To Jacob's reproachful question (v. 10), what was the eventual response? (See *Gen. 42:6, 43:26, and 44:14*.)

How can God reshape our own ambitious human dreams into goals bigger and better than material success—ones that achieve our sanctification?

6. How did God use adversity to give dreams "a better, truer fulfillment" in . . .

. . . Joseph's life, after slavery and jail time? (See *Gen. 50:20*.)

. . . Jesus' suffering and death on the cross? (See *Phil. 2:5-11*.)

Have we learned to actually trust God to weave similar outcomes from the adversities we encounter?