

The Brothers of Joseph
Genesis 37:1-4
By Russell Earl

Thesis: I want to show what we can learn from the character of Joseph & his brothers.

Introduction

I. The character of Joseph & His brothers (Ch.37)

A. Joseph's character in Ch.37

1. Joseph was dependable as we see he is sent to check on his other brothers later **(37:13-14)**
2. 3. He is called a "tattle-tale" by some because of his report on his brothers **(v.2)**
3. Neither Joseph or his father (Jacob) found no error in being openly recognized as the favorite son **(v.3-4)**
 - i. Joseph was the 11th one in line as heir but was chosen because he was the first born to Rachel and Jacob's favorite (v.3a)

B. The character of Joseph's brothers (Ch.37)

1. Past Incidents

- i. **Reuben** – was "disavowed" because of his forbidden relation with one of his father's concubines **(Gen 35:22; 49:3-4; 1 Chron 5:1)**
 - a. Reuben - the oldest son of Jacob by Leah (1 Chron 5:1a)
 - ii. **Simeon and Levi** – were passed over because of their actions at Shechem **(Gen 34:25-30; 49:5-7).**
 - a. **Too wicked not to mention** – Judah bore two sons so evil & rebellious that God killed them both **(Gen 38:6-8,10 - [v.6-10])**
2. The brothers as they are discussed in ch.37 view Joseph as arrogant, annoying and a tattle tale **(Gen 37:2,4,8,11)**
 3. The brothers (excluding Reuben) wanted to kill Joseph, but settled for selling him as a slave. **(Gen 37:18-22;26-28).**

II. The Character of the brothers when they meet again

A. The character of Joseph later in life

1. **After being sold into slavery he met a severe test of his integrity and faithfulness, being tempted by the wife of Potiphar (Gen 39).**
2. **He was unjustly imprisoned but made the best of the situation (Gen 40).**
3. **He interprets the dreams of Pharaoh and becomes prime minister over all the land of Egypt (Gen 41).**

B. The character of Joseph's brothers later in life

1. **They had seen the effect of Joseph's faked death on their father (44:27-29)**
2. **They did not want to cause their father additional pain (44:30-32)**
3. **Judah was willing to be Joseph's slave to free Benjamin and to prevent hurting their father further (44:33-34)**

III. Lessons for us today.

A. Wicked deeds have a price

- 1. Because of their actions and attitudes the brothers of Joseph were easily passed over and made it possible for Joseph to become the favorite of Jacob.**
- 2. The actions of these men prevented them from being Jacob's heir, but it didn't have to result in their complete downfall.**

B. Favoritism and poor choices cause bitterness

- 1. The actions of Jacob and Joseph in 37:2b-4 does not create a good situation with the Brothers.**
- 2. The dreams of Joseph only add fuel to the fire of bitterness (v.8,10)**

C. People can change

- 1. The brothers of Joseph seem to have had a change of heart when they appear before Joseph.**
- 2. Joseph, after testing their character, invited them to join him in Egypt.**

Application & Conclusion:

1. Let us learn from the examples of all these men.
2. Favoritism creates bitterness and resentment.
3. Hatred due to possible future events (dreams) can cause anger in some, especially if not expressed with care.
4. Sinful actions, though forgiven, can still bear stiff consequences.
5. Let us seek to have the type of character fitting for one professing obedient faith in Christ.
6. Full Invitation

Non-Christians must:

Hear – James 1:22, Romans 10:15,17

Believe – Jn 12:44, Jn 8:24, Mt 16:16

Repent – Luke 13:2-3

Confess – John 12:42, Romans 10:9

Be Baptized – 1 Pt 3:21, Acts 22:16, Col 2:11, Mk 16:16, Rom 6:3-4

Live faithfully – John 14:15, Rev 2:10

Christians must:

Repent: Acts 17:20, Acts 8:37, Lk 13:3

Pray: James 5:16, 1 Jn 1:9