

Lesson IV.

JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT

April 27, 1913

BETWEEN THE LESSONS—Ch. 35 tells of Jacob's building an altar to the Lord at Bethel, in fulfillment of the vow of ch. 28: 20-22; of Jacob's removal to Hebron and the death of Rachel, on the way, in giving birth to Benjamin; and of Isaac's death and burial. In ch. 36 there is an account of Esau's descendants and of their dwelling place in the region about Mount Seir, east of the Dead Sea.

GOLDEN TEXT—Love envieth not.—1 Corinthians 13: 4 (Rev. Ver.).

Memorize vs. 26, 27. **THE LESSON PASSAGE**—Genesis 37: 23-36. Study Genesis, ch. 37. Read Genesis, chs. 35-37.

23 And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph out of his coat, ²his coat of many colours that was on him;

24 And they took him, and cast him into ³a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.

25 And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a ⁴company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spices and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.

26 And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?

27 Come, and let us sell him to the ⁵Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content.

28 Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the ⁶Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

29 And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold,

Revised Version.—1 Omit out; ² the; ³ travelling company of Ishmaelites; ⁴ Ishmaelites; ⁵ Omit and; ⁶ hearkened unto him; ⁷ And there; ⁸ he-goat, and; ⁹ not; ¹⁰ torn; ¹¹ garments; ¹² to; ¹³ And his; ¹⁴ the captain.

Daily Readings—(By courtesy of I. B. R. Association, Mr. S. C. Bailey, Secretary, 26 Old Bailey, London, England.)—M.—Joseph's dreams, Gen. 37: 1-11. T.—The brothers' plot, Gen. 37: 12-22. W.—Joseph sold into Egypt, Gen. 37: 23-36. Th.—The Lord directeth, Prov. 16: 1-9. F.—True love, Prov. 27: 4-10. S.—Confusion wrought by envy, Jas. 3: 13-18. S.—Speak not evil, Jas. 4: 5-12.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

How Joseph, the favorite son of Jacob, brought upon himself the jealous hatred of his brothers, so that they plotted to kill him, but at last sold him into slavery, we are told in vs. 1-22.

I. JOSEPH'S CAPTIVITY.—23, 24. Joseph . . . came; to Dothan, a place some fifteen miles north of Shechem, which was fifty miles north of Hebron. (See vs. 15-17.) About Dothan is found to this day the best pasturage of the whole region. Coat of many colors; Rev. Ver. Margin (v. 3), "a long garment with sleeves." A shirt or tunic is meant, reaching to the wrists and ankles, while the ordinary under garment was sleeveless and reached only to the knees. Tunics, like that of Joseph, were commonly worn only by the rich

and noble, who had no need to toil for their living. A pit; an empty cistern hewn out of the rock, shaped like a bottle, with a narrow mouth, rendering escape impossible without help. Such pits are common everywhere in Palestine.

25. A . . . company of Ishmaelites (Rev. Ver.): called also "Midianites" in v. 28. Either these were actual descendants of Abraham's sons (ch. 25: 2, 12), or the names had come to be used generally for merchants. Gilead; a lofty fertile plateau east of the Jordan. Spicery. A sort of gum is meant, obtained



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from a plant of the bean family. Balm; probably a secretion from the oliaster or wild olive tree. Myrrh; Rev. Ver. Margin, "ladanum;" the fragrant gum of the cistus or rock rose. These gums were much prized in Egypt for medicines, for incense and for embalming.

26-30. Judah said . . . What profit. Judah wished, not to save Joseph's life, but to get some money. Conceal his blood; cover it in the earth, that it might not witness against them (see ch. 4: 10). Our brother; a hypocritical pretence of affection. Twenty pieces of silver; about \$12.50, two-thirds of the price of an adult slave, but likely the usual price for a lad like Joseph. (See Ex. 21: 32; Lev. 27: 5.) Reuben re-

turned; meaning to set Joseph free, v. 22. Rent his clothes; a customary sign of grief in the East.

II. THE BROTHERS' DECEIT.—31-33. Dipped . . . coat in . . . blood; a trick not unlike Jacob's own (see ch. 27). This have we found. The lie acted in the staining of the "coat" was followed by the lie spoken. Thy son's; not "our brother's,"—with the exception of Reuben (vs. 29, 30), they were devoid of brotherly affection and a sense of brotherly responsibility. Evil beast; like the lion and the bear overcome, in later times, by David, 1 Sam. 17: 34, 35.