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## Sabbath School.

# BIBLE LESSONS.

STUDIES IN GENESIS AND EXODUS.

**Second Quarter.**

**Lesson I. April 3. Gen. 37: 23-36.**

## JOSEPH SOLD INTO EGYPT.

GOLDEN TEXT.

But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy,—Gen. 39: 21.

INTRODUCTION.—Eleven years have passed away since the return of Jacob from Padan-Aram. The patriarch's tent is pitched at Hebron, where are the graves of his ancestors, and where soon he will lay his venerable father Isaac beside them. A crushing sorrow has come upon him, in the loss of his beloved Rachel, whose grave was hastily dug on the wayside, near Bethlehem. But he was consoled by the presence of her two sons: Joseph, the gentle, noble boy, already marked by integrity and capacity, and Benjamin, a child of four years, playing by his side. Over the hills of Canaan roam his vast flocks, watched by his ten sons.

I. THE OLDER SONS OF JACOB. The readers of Gen., chaps. 34, 35, 37, and 38, will see that they were "hard boys." Out of their father's sight they shook off any little restraint which his presence may have inspired. Their scandalous behavior became the talk of every neighborhood they chanced to visit; and Joseph hearing it, as in duty bound, reported it to Jacob.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH TENDED TO PRODUCE THIS CHARACTER. (1) They were brought up during the active worldly career of Jacob, when he was carrying out his shrewd plans for worldly wealth. (2) Their relatives were none too pious. They came in contact with an immoral heathen community.

II. JOSEPH AT HOME. (1) Joseph was born at Padan-Aram, *B.C.* 1735. He was Jacob's youngest son, except Benjamin, who was but a little child at this time. (2) *His training.* Joseph could not have been more than 6 or 7 years old when the family removed to Canaan, so that he had been brought up under better influences than his brethren; for his father's character and spirit were very much changed for the better by his experiences on the fords of the Jabbok. (3) *His character.* Joseph seems to have been a truly pious young man, bright and cheerful, active and trustworthy, earnest to do good and make others good, full of wise commonsense, and of great business capacity. (4) *Jacob's partiality.* Jacob had a special love for Joseph, as the younger of his sons, as the child of his beloved Rachel, whose beauty and piety and loveableness he may have seen in the boy. He unwisely showed this partiality by dressing him more richly than the other children. He made him "a coat of many colors,"—*i.e.*, a tunic of parts. "This was a coat, reaching to the hands and feet, worn by persons not much occupied with manual labor, according to the general opinion."

III. THE PLAN TO MURDER JOSEPH. The older brothers were pasturing their flocks in the fields of Shechem, 70 miles away from home. "Probably the field which their father had purchased (chap. 33: 19). They showed considerable courage in thus returning into the neighborhood of Shechem after their attack upon the city (chap. 34: 26); and it was this, probably, which awakened Jacob's anxiety about them, and determined him to send Joseph to ascertain that they were safe." When he reached Shechem he found that they had gone 15 or 20 miles further north to Dothan, and accordingly he went on to Dothan. When his brothers saw him coming in the distance, their envious feelings rose up against him, and they "proposed to one another to kill him, and throw his remains into some pit, and report to their father that some wild beast had killed him; but Reuben thought it better that his blood should not be upon their hands, and proposed, therefore, that they should throw him into some pit from which he could not escape, and leave him there to die of starvation. To this they all agreed, not knowing that Reuben's real design was to find some way to restore him safe to his father."

24. *And they took him, and cast him into a pit.* They first stripped off his coat of many colors, and then cast him into one of the many reservoirs excavated out of the solid rock for the purpose of holding rain water. They were bottle-shaped, so that it was almost impossible to escape. A recent traveller thus describes them: "There are trap-like and deceptive cisterns, the mouths of which are about the size of the coal-hole in the pavement of a London street, of a demijohn shape, and with smooth sides, from which escape would be hopeless." *And the pit was empty.* Joseph was safe from drowning; but his brothers left him without raiment, food, or drink, to die of hunger, thrist, and exposure.

25. *They sat down to eat bread.* Joseph's brethren probably sat down to a joyous feast, eating, drinking, and making merry, regardless of the tears and anguish of the victim of their envy. For it was at this time, as they afterwards confessed in the Egyptian prison (Gen. 42: 21) that they "saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought them, and they would not hear."

CAUSES OF THIS INTENSE ENVY OF JOSEPH. (1) Its foundation lay in their own character. They were worldly, selfish, and indulging in bad habits. (2) Their knowledge that Joseph was better than they. His good character, his refusal to join in their evil doings, was a rebuke to them. (3) This feeling was increased by the marks of divine favor denied to them. They would not see that the difference was in themselves, not in any favoritism of God. (4) In his innocence, Joseph confided to his brothers his dreams, which seemed to give him a superiority over them. (5) The open and unwise partiality of Jacob for Joseph increased the feeling. (6) Joseph reported, and rightfully, their wrong deeds to their father. (7) It is possible, it would be quite natural, that Joseph should, at this early, immature stage of his character, have shown some symptoms of spiritual pride, and have made his goodness a little supercilious, and offensive to his brethren.

IV. JOSEPH SOLD TO THE MIDIANITES. 25. *And, behold a company* (or caravan) *of Ishmaelites.* Dothan was situated on the great caravan line by which the products of India and Western Asia were brought to Egypt. The Ishmaelites were the leaders and most numerous portion of the caravan, and gave their name to it, though other bands were joined with them; for those who bought Joseph are called, in ver. 28, "Midianites," and in ver. 36 (Heb.), "Medanites." *Came from Gilead.* A country on the east of the Jordan. *Spicery.* From India. A species of resinous gum called storax, a perfume. *Balm.* Balm of Gilead, the juice of the balsam-tree, a native of Gilead. *Myrrh. Ladanum*, the resin of the cistus-rose, an Arabic gum of a strong, fragrant smell. It was burned in the temple, and employed in embalming. *Down to Egypt.* The practice of embalming in Egypt probably created a market for all these different kinds of spices.

26. *And Judah.* The fourth son of Jacob and Leah. His name means "praise of the Lord." He was a leader among the eleven brothers.

Judah's motive was undoubtedly a mixed one. (1) He may have been troubled in his conscience. (2) They could gratify their envious feelings and benefit their purses by the bargain. (3) Thus Joseph would be removed from them, so that he could not reprove them or report their doings.

27. *Come, and let us sell him.* The proposal, of course, was founded on their knowledge that the Arabian merchants trafficked in slaves; and there is the clearest evidence furnished by the monuments of Egypt that the traders who were in the habit of bringing slaves from the countries through which they passed found a ready market in the cities of the Nile.

28. *Then there passed by* (as a part of the caravan) *Midianites merchantmen.* The particular part of the caravan which bought Joseph. They were joined with the Ishmaelites, from whom the caravan took its name (see on ver. 25). *Sold Joseph.. for twenty pieces of silver.* The money was probably in ringe or pieces (shekels), and silver is always mentioned in the records of that early age before gold, on account of its rarity.

V. THE FATHER'S SORROW FOR HIS LOST SON. 29. *Reuben returned unto the pit.* Reuben had planned to rescue Joseph, and send him home safely, as soon as his brothers had left him. He probably went into another part of the field to attend to the sheep, and to draw off the rest. When he returned he found his brother gone. *And he rent his clothes.* The Oriental sign of grief.

30. *And he returned unto his brethren*, who, having finished their dinner, had gone away to their work. *And said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go? i.e.*, what will become of me? How shall I account to his father for his disappearance? But Reuben, though thus affected at the moment, had not courage afterwards to disclose the crime committed by his brothers.

31, 32. *And they took Joseph's coat*, etc. They know that they must again meet their father, and to him some reason must be assigned for the non-appearance of his beloved son. If the truth be told, how can they escape his resentment? They therefore make lies their refuge. *Sent the coat*, by a servant. *And they brought it to their father; and said.* All this was done and said through their servant whom they had sent. *This have we found.* Almost every sin requires lying to be added to it.

33. *Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.* The original here is very energetic, and may be literally rendered, "rent, rent in pieces is Joseph."

34. *Put sackcloth upon his loins.* The "sackcloth" was a coarse, rough garment, made sometimes of camel's hair (Rev. 6: 12), and from its being said to have been "put on the loins," it was probably worn inwardly, next the skin, both as a sign and an instrument of humiliation. *And mourned for his son many days.* It was 22 years before he saw him again, and his grief was not healed till then.

35. *All his daughters.* Only one daughter of Jacob's is mentioned by name, Dinah, but it is probable that he had others. Daughters-in-law may be included. *Rose up to comfort him.* There is no limit to human hypocrisy. That it was hypocrisy is shown by the fact that they refused to tell the truth for 22 years. *I will go down into the grave unto my son*, to Sheol, the state of the dead, to the invisible world.

36. *Unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's.*

GOOD OUT OF EVIL. God overruled the crime of Joseph's brothers for good. But this in no wise lessens the crime. Nor must we imagine that the crime was necessary to God's plans. He could have easily produced the results in another way.

### A Hard Winter.

The question was, Should Dick remain at school?

"I'm afraid you'll have to give it up, Dick, my boy. I'm sorry, old fellow, but there doesn't seem to be a way out; and mamma and myself have talked it over and over until we are exhausted. It breaks my heart to disappoint your Dick." It was papa who spoke, rather sorrowfully.

Dick Hanford was standing beside his father, with an arm thrown lovingly over the latter's shoulder. Mr. Hanford was very pale and thin; and had a languid appearance. He was, in fact, recovering from a long siege of rheumatic fever, which had drained the little family of its savings, and owing to which Mr. Hanford had lost his position. It would be many weeks before he could undertake another place, even if one could easily be found, which was doubtful.

So when Mr. Hanford, knowing that Dick understood the situation perfectly, explained that the academy bills could no longer be met, Dick, setting his lips together, and bravely keeping back the tears, which came near starting, notwithstanding his fourteen years, made the best of it.

"I suppose, papa and mamma," he said, "that a fellow may keep on at school if he can pay his own bills? I've been thinking that perhaps I can earn the money myself."

Mamma looked up brightly. "That speech has the true ring, my boy. You have my consent to do anything honorable."

Papa held out his hand. "I wish you success, Dick; but don't be too sanguine."

Eva, his sister, said: "Please don't apprentice yourself to the livery-stable man, or become a newsboy, Dick, you would not make enough to pay for the hard work and the disagreeable associations."

"I am thinking of applying for a position in which the work is hard enough, but which will pay me very well. I am going up to Deacon Dale's to engage as sexton in the First church."

The new sexton found himself in business. There were the fires to be lighted and attended to on Sundays and on week-days too, for the church had meetings of one sort or another nearly every day. The bell had to be rung whenever there was a service, and the paths around the building to be kept clear, which of itself was no easy "chore," as the villagers said. It really seemed that winter as though the snow fell every day. All the coasting, the skating, the tobogganing, which the young people enjoyed so fully, was given up by Dick, who, as sexton, found no time for play. He protected his hands with leathern gloves and his pantaloons with overalls, and nobody saw a cloud on his face nor heard a sigh as he manfully attacked his duties. He *did* find time for his studies, though, and his place in his classes was higher than ever. The head-master complimented him openly at chapel exercises one day, and the boys, who had at first dubbed him "Old Mortality," and poked fun at his sextonship, began to be proud of him as a leader.

The cold came down one February night with a sharpness which the oldest inhabitant did not recollect. There came a long period of skating—such skating as sets the blood dancing, and paints the cheeks red, and makes life a splendid holiday. Poor Dick counted on one day's frolic in the season, but on the very day he selected, his duties gave an impromptu supper in the church parlor, which detained him, and that very night there came one of the heaviest snow-falls of the whole winter.

Disappointed as he was, the sight of his little bank-book, and the thought of the gold pieces deposited every month, and the bills promptly met comforted him very much. Then, too, his father was getting well, and Dick was not a baby to cry over a trifle.

The boys, however, held an indignation meeting one day after school.

"I vote that we all go up to the church with shovels to-morrow morning in a regular brigade—a relief party—and help him out with his work, on condition that he goes to Crystal lake with us in the afternoon, and skates in the annual match."

This proposition came from Ronald Dexter. It was received with acclamation and was carried out. So with a clear conscience and a light heart Dick joined the party to the lake.

The only drawback to full enjoyment was the fact that several fellows who did not know much about skating had insisted on being of the company. Of course they did not enter the lists with those who aspired for the prize—a silver pin presented by the sisters of the members of the club to the champion winner—but they skimished about on the edges, made a great deal of noise, and occasionally met with an accident.

The number who were competing for the prize had gradually lessened till only two, Ron Dexter and Dick Hanford, almost side, by side, with a long, sinuous, graceful sweep of motion, were nearing the goal. Suddenly there was a cry of distress in the rear. Ronald kept on steadily. Dick hesitated, paused, and turned back.

It was little Jack Mason, who, fired with ambition to do his best, had skated as near the course as he dared, determined to come in as close to the goal as the winners, if he could. His skate had caught in a seamy place, and he had been thrown violently down, and was unconscious. A crowd of frightened boys presently gathered about their prostrate comrade.

"He is dead," said Alick Prime.

"Not dead, only faint," said Dick. "Don't raise him; lay him down, so, his head a little lower than his body. He'll come to presently, and then we'll turn to, bear a hand and carry him home."

"Mother," said Dick, that evening, as he sat beside her for a few minutes' talk before bedtime, "this has been a very busy winter; but I fell as if I'd grown an inch every way, not in stature alone."

"My boy has gained in manliness by his experience," said the mother, softly.

Just then Ronald Dexter, Lewis Hunter, and a half dozen others made a call. They were the bearers of the silver pin, which they declared belonged to Dick for his humanity in resigning his chance of winning it, that he might go to the help of little Jack.

"Take it, Dick," insisted Ronald. "I should never enjoy keeping it, for you fairly gave me the race. The girls will like better that you should wear it than I. Next year we'll try again."

By next year Dick's father was completely restored to health, and there was no occasion for Dick's serving as sexton. He resigned in favor of a stout Irishman, who did not, for all his tough muscles and broad shoulders, give as much satisfaction as Dick had, for brains will tell everywhere.

The best outcome of Dick's hard winter was not reached until a few years afterward, when he was taken into Judge Arnold's office to study law.

"A plucky, trustworthy young man, with a clear purpose, and grit enough to hold on," said the Judge. "I've kept my eye on him ever since the winter when he lighted the fires and rang the bell for our church, and at the same time managed to have the best examination papers in the whole academy."—*Harper's Young People.*


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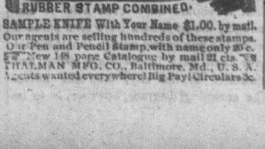


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## NOTICE OF SALE.

To William Garvin, of the City of Boston, in the United States of America, late of the City of Portland, in the City and County of Saint John and Province of New Brunswick, laborer, and John Mebermott, late of the City of Portland aforesaid, and Barbara McDermott, his wife, now residing in the City of Portland, and all others whom it may concern.

In pursuance of a power of sale given me in and by a certain proviso or agreement contained in a certain indenture of mortgage made between you, the said William Garvin, John Mebermott and Barbara Mebermott his wife, of the one part, and one Amos Melvin, of the City of Saint John, in the City and County of Saint John and Province aforesaid, gentleman, of the other part, bearing date the thirty-th day of December, A. D. 1885, and recorded in the office of the Registrar of Deeds in and for the City and County of Saint John, in Libro xix. of Records, folio 121, 122, 123, 124 and 125.

I, Amos Melvin, do hereby give you and each of you notice that I will on SUNDAY, the 28th day of MARCH next, at twelve o'clock, noon, at Chubb's Corner (so called) in the City of Saint John, for default in payment of the interest due and secured and made payable in and by the said Indenture of Mortgage, and also in default in payment of the premium on insurance, made payable in and by the said Indenture of Mortgage, sell or cause to be sold at Public Auction the leasehold lands and premises mentioned and described in the said Indenture of Mortgage as follows, namely:

"All that certain lot, piece and parcel of land, situate, lying and being in the Town of Portland, in the City and County of Saint John aforesaid, on the northwesterly side of that part of the city road called Lombard street, and bounded and described as follows, that is to say: Beginning on the said northern side of Lombard street (so called) at the southeastern corner of a lot heretofore leased by William Hazen and Sarah Elizabeth Hazen, executors of Robert F. Hazen, to John McDermott and the said Barbara McDermott; thence in a northerly direction along said McDermott's eastern line forty feet more or less, to the southern or rear line of a lot heretofore leased by Ward Chipman, since deceased, to James Millen, also since deceased; thence in an easterly direction along Millen's said southern line twenty-four feet; thence at right angles in a southerly direction forty feet more or less to Lombard street aforesaid; and thence in a westwardly direction along the said northerly side of Lombard street twenty-five feet to the place of beginning;" which said lot of land was demised and leased by Thomas B. Friselle of Yalding, in Kent, England, and Susan Frances Friselle, his wife, in her own right, by Indenture of Lease bearing date the twenth day of January, A. D. 1882.

And also: "All that certain lot, piece and parcel of land situate, lying and being in the Town of Portland, in the City and County of Saint John, on the northwesterly side of that part of the city road called Lombard street, and bounded and described as follows, that is to say: Beginning on the northwestern side of Lombard street (so called) at the eastern corner of a lot formerly leased to George H. Spence; thence in a northwesterly direction along Spence's northeastern line forty-seven feet more or less, to the southern corner of the heretofore leased lot; thence in a northeasterly direction along Millen's rear line twenty-four feet; thence at right angles southeasterly forty feet more or less, to the said northwestern side of Lombard street; and thence southwesterly along the said northwestern side the of Lombard street twenty-four feet to the place in the beginning;" which said last mentioned lot of land and premises was demised and leased by William Millen, of Saint John, in the City aforesaid, civil engineer, and Sarah Elizabeth Hazen of the same place, spinster, executors of the last will and testament of Robert F. Hazen, late of the City of Saint John aforesaid, deceased, to John McDermott, of Portland, of the Province aforesaid, ship carpenter, and Barbara his wife, by Indenture of Lease bearing date the first day of November, A. D. 1875, together with all and singular the right, title, interest, terms of years right of renewals to the said William Garvin, John McDermott and Barbara his wife, belonging or in any wise appertaining.

Dated this 26th day of January A. D 1887.

AMOS MELVIN, Mortgagee.
W. A. LOCKHART, Auctioneer.
J. J. FORREST, Solicitor to Mortgagee.


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