

perfumery for the living and spices to embalm the dead were in great demand. Egypt was wealthy and the great market, and Dathan lay on the caravan route thither.

Vs. 26, 27. *Judah said.* He evidently occupied a conspicuous place in the councils of his brethren. *What profit is it if we slay our brother?* Apparently, he was actuated not by a feeling of humanity, but by love of gain. *Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites.* (Rev. Ver.) By this means they would have Joseph taken completely off their hands. *For he is our brother and our blood; a pious cloak for selfishness and wickedness.*

V. 28. *Midianites.* The leaders of the caravan are called indifferently Ishmaelites or Midianites. *Twenty pieces of silver; by weight twenty shekels.* The price of a slave twenty years of age was thirty shekels, but Joseph was only seventeen years old.

### III. Deception, 29-35.

Vs. 29, 30. *Reuben returned unto the pit.* He had been absent during the sale, so his plan to rescue Joseph miscarried. *Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes.* He is overwhelmed with grief and expresses it in the customary way. (ch. 44 : 13; Josh. 7 : 6; Job 1 : 20; 2 : 12.) In later times there was a part of the garment specially made for rending. *The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?* What account could he give of Joseph's disappearance? He feels the responsibility

of seniority in the family.

Vs. 31, 32. *They took Joseph's coat . . . and dipped the coat in blood.* In this cruel device to deceive their father Reuben joined, from lack of courage to take the straight course. *Know now whether this be thy son's coat or no.* It was a clever device. The presentation of the blood-stained coat would prevent search being made.

V. 33. *It is my son's coat.* This touch shows how keen was his pang of sorrow. *Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.* The sight of Joseph's blood-stained coat convinced Jacob that his son had been devoured by a beast of prey, though he may afterwards have had doubts about the matter. (ch. 44 : 28.)

Vs. 34, 35. *Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins.* He put on signs of the deepest grief, and mourned for Joseph with long, sad mourning. *And all his sons . . . rose up to comfort him.* What a mockery of grief, when criminal sons become comforters of their injured father. The "daughters" mentioned were likely his son's wives.

### IV. Deception, 36.

V. 36. *And the Midianites sold him into Egypt.* An ordinary, everyday transaction, but God was working out His plan. *Potiphar . . . captain of the guard.* Egypt had a force of 410,000 men. A thousand served each year as the king's body-guard.

### APPLICATION

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*Come, and I will send thee . . . Here am I . . . So he sent him . . . and he came,* vs. 13, 14. "Is not all this full to overflowing of a yet loftier theme? Our Lord never wearied of calling Himself the Sent of the Father. There is hardly a page in the Gospel of John in which He does not say more than once, 'I came not of Myself, but My Father sent Me!' Thus it became a constant expression with the New Testament writers, 'God sent forth His Son;' 'The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.'"—Meyer.

*Come now . . . and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit,* v. 20. How quickly the evil seed of jealousy had sprung up and

ripened into a plot of murder. The time was when the brethren might easily have quenched the feeling that lay like a tiny spark in their bosom and stayed its progress. Instead of doing this they cherished it and soon the breath of a favorable opportunity fanned the spark into a fierce and consuming flame. "The lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and sin, when it is full grown, bringeth forth death." (Jas. 1: 15, Rev. Ver.) Not a single germ of sin should be allowed to alight and remain in the heart. To permit it to do so is almost certain ruin. Sooner or later it will acquire a power that we cannot break. The smallest germ of sin should be