

## Scene 2: The Dreamer

- \* The plot line is developed from Jacob's two dreams in vv. 5-11
- \* HW Assignment #1: Beyond the obvious message of "preeminence" what do the two dream metaphors symbolize or communicate?
  - ◆ The two ways that Jacob will exercise his preeminence over the family
  - ◆ First in [providing for his family](#) ... dream #1 (vv. 5-8)
  - ◆ Second in [ruling over his family](#) ... dream #2 (vv. 9-11)

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## Scene 2: The Dreamer

- \* Now — What or who is the source of the dreams?
  - ◆ We are not told!!
- \* Why not?
  - ◆ Because God wants us to focus on the [content of the dreams](#) and what they "set up" over the [source of the dreams](#)
- \* So let's look at the content

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## Scene 2: The Dreamer

- \* Dream 1 in vv. 5-8 employs an agricultural illustration to communicate its truth
- \* OT dreams share some literary similarity with the NT parables in that ...
  - ◆ They use common and true to life analogies (comparisons) to make their point “vivid” ...
  - ◆ They can be expressed as similitudes (generally shorter and pithy) or stories (longer and greater development)
  - ◆ They have one major point of comparison, intended to ...

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## Scene 2: The Dreamer

- ◆ Communicate one main idea
- ◆ They are designed to **conceal truth** from the hard hearted — and reveal truth to those who **embrace it**
- ◆ They differ primarily in that NT parables communicate spiritual truth
- \* So Joseph’s first dream uses a “harvest” motif to communicate the truth ...
- \* And we see most of the attributes I just described

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## Scene 2: The Dreamer

- ◆ The brothers are in the field binding the grain stalks into sheafs ... something we might still see today in the less developed countries of the world
  - Even here in America — I'm reminded of a college experience harvesting tobacco ...
- ◆ We see the comparison element — Each sheaf represents one of brothers
- ◆ We see some pithy language — that is, forceful and expressive language that expresses Joseph's exuberance over the content of the dream, namely ...

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## Scene 2: The Dreamer

- "PLEASE" ... translates the emphatic Hebrew particle of entreaty (נָא)
- "BEHOLD" (2x's) and "LO" ... both English words translating the demonstrative Hebrew particle — הִנֵּה
- ◆ The main point of the dream is preeminence — the brothers sheafs bow down to Joseph's sheaf
- \* What aspect of the dream is revealed ... or better, What part of the dream do the brothers fully grasp?
- ◆ Joseph's preeminence over them!!

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## Scene 2: The Dreamer

- \* How do we know they “get” this meaning?
  - ◆ “They hated him even more”
- \* Look at vv. 5b and 8b (an “inclusio”)
  - ◆ The dream starts with the end in sight
  - ◆ Before we even get the content we are told its impact ... it generates hatred — STRONG EMOTION
- \* Then in v. 8b the “hate” is reinforced along with the reason(s) — What are they?

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## Scene 2: The Dreamer

- ◆ First they hate him for the content — the dream itself, and
- ◆ Second they hate him for “announcing” it — perhaps alluding to his exuberance of expression
- \* Now — What aspect of the dream’s meaning, is concealed at this point?
  - ◆ The expression of Joseph’s preeminence — He will provide for his family in the famine ...
  - ◆ Which is not revealed until Gen 42!

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## Scene 2: The Dreamer

- \* Well — if this wasn't enough Joseph has another dream
- \* Which he also announces exuberantly
  - ◆ Note again the words “Lo” and “Behold” in v. 9
- \* This dream employs a “celestial” metaphor and now includes not only the brothers but also his mother and father
- \* Again, the preeminence is revealed, but **what part is concealed?**

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## Scene 2: The Dreamer

- ◆ The means by which Joseph's preeminence will come about
- ◆ Which is not revealed until Joseph's appointment as “Prime Minister” of Egypt in Gen 42:38ff
- \* **What is interesting about Jacob's response to the dream?**
  - ◆ His rebuke is quite mild, expressed in the form of two questions and ...

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## Scene 2: The Dreamer

- ◆ It is notably absent of any strong “emotion” — **Why?**
  - Because he understands the import of dreams from his own life experience ... and that it may be from God
- \* **What else is interesting about his response?**
  - ◆ He interprets the dream — note v. 10b
- \* Not so the brothers — **What is their response?**
  - ◆ They add jealousy to their hatred

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## Scene 2: The Dreamer

- \* The Bible has a lot to say about jealousy — let's do a little survey b4 we leave the dreams ...
  - ◆ Start with Proverbs — 6:34; 14:30 (translated envy or passion, same Hebrew word); 27:4
  - ◆ Act 5:17 ... noting the source of their jealousy — the apostles “preeminence” with the people
  - ◆ 1 Cor 3:3 ... a source of division; James 3:14-16 ... wisdom from “below”
  - ◆ The antidote — 1 Cor 13:4 (LOVE); Ps 37:1-4 (Delight yourself in God)

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## One BIG Implication

We might resent who God places over us, but we should accept his sovereignty in this matter — WHY?

Turn to 1 Sam 16:7

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## Scene 2: The Dreamer

- \* We leave the “dream” scene with a clear sense of the family’s reaction to the dreams ...
- \* But we are left with one tension — What is it?
  - ◆ While Joseph is clearly exuberant — perhaps naively so — about his dreams ...
  - ◆ We don’t know if his [preeminence](#) will find its expression in [benevolence](#) or [cruelty](#)
  - ◆ Remember — this is a developing story ...
  - ◆ While we may have the “Paul Harvey” data — that is, the rest of the story — the characters in the story DO NOT!

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## Scene 3: The Errand

- \* The new scene opens with the brothers departure to pasture the flock — Joseph apparently being **left behind** or **held back**
  - ◆ The text is not determinative, though given his father's "favoritism" I'd lean towards held back
- \* **What is interesting about where the brothers choose to pasture?**
  - ◆ Back to the scene of their "dirty deeds"
- \* With all the land available, I have many questions about their choice —
  - ◆ Maybe they like to live dangerously

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## Scene 3: The Errand

- ◆ Maybe they are exerting their "strength," or maybe
- ◆ They are "camping" on the land that Jacob bought ...
- ◆ The text does not say — it just reports
- \* Jacob dispatches Joseph to check on the brothers and the flocks "welfare" and bring back a report
- \* **What is interesting, or troubling, about the Jacob's request?**
  - ◆ Does not seem to have any regard for Joseph's safety, or ...

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## Scene 3: The Errand

- ◆ He is oblivious to the possibility that Joseph would be harmed — again, the text offers us no insight ... just reports!
- \* What is notable about Joseph's response?
  - ◆ Simple OBEDIENCE along with an element of FAITH — seemingly having no concern for his safety ... which arguably could also be naivete
- \* Joseph departs for Shechem from Hebron and then on to Dothan when he discovers his brothers have moved

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## Scene 4: The Conspiracy

- \* The scene opens with a summary statement that gives us, the reader, a full preview
- \* The brothers reaction to Joseph proceeds in 2-stages — What are they?
  - ◆ The first was emotional ... “Let’s kill him!”
  - ◆ The second was pragmatic ... “Let’s sell him”
- \* Verse 19 seems to be a collective response to Joseph’s arrival — “They” purposed to kill him

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## Scene 4: The Conspiracy

- \* “They” were of one accord to get rid of “this dreamer” — note they won’t even call him by his name ... What words might you use to describe their reaction?
  - ◆ Disdain — Derision — Scorn — Contempt
- \* And of course we see the family DNA at work — deception ... “we’ll say a wild beast killed him”

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## Scene 4: The Conspiracy

- \* Now HW #2 — Who intervenes and why?
  - ◆ Who = Reuben purposes to prevent the murder of Joseph
  - ◆ Why is a little less straightforward ... could be one of two reasons
    - ▶ Could simply be to avoid more trouble with his father — as the firstborn he would have been chiefly responsible for Joseph’s safety ...
    - ▶ Could be to atone for his earlier wrong against his father, or ...
    - ▶ Some combination of the two!

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## Scene 4: The Conspiracy

- \* Whichever option you choose, Reuben's action draws some sympathy but it is not bold or — as the narrative will prove — timely, yielding an important implication ...
- 📖 If you are going to stand against sin — do it openly, early, and fully ... Half-hearted measures yield half-hearted results!
- \* Stage 1 of the conspiracy ends with the brothers buy-in to Reuben's plan — vv. 23-24

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## Scene 4: The Conspiracy

- \* After which they sit down to a “family meal”
- \* What descriptions come to mind from this reaction?
  - ◆ Complete indifference — No conscience — Hard hearted
  - ◆ Of course until later ... Turn to Gen 42:21-22
- \* So while the text of Gen 38 does not record Joseph's pleas, Gen 42 indicates he appealed to his brothers through-out the meal — to no avail
- 📖 Reminding us that God's justice might not be immediate ... but it will come!

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## Scene 4: The Conspiracy

- \* “Opportunity knocks” in v. 25 ...
- \* Dothan was on one of the two major trade routes to Egypt (remember the other was to the East of the Jordan River)
- \* HW #3: Who takes the lead in part 2 ... and Why?
  - ◆ Who = Judah
  - ◆ Why = He has the most to gain from Joseph’s removal

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## Scene 4: The Conspiracy

- \* Sequentially, Judah was next in line to receive the birthright inheritance after Reuben, Simeon, and Levi’s disqualification
  - ◆ He does not succeed w/r/t the birthright inheritance
  - ◆ But he will head the “Messianic” line ...
- \* Now — how do you feel about Judah’s little speech in v. 26-27?

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## Scene 4: The Conspiracy

- \* The word “**sanctimonious**” comes to mind for me ... perhaps closely followed by “**insincere**” ... and of course “**deceptive**”
- \* So his brothers “buy-in” to the plan and they sell him to the passing caravan of Midianite traders for the price of a slave
  - ◆ Don't be troubled by “Ishmaelites” in v. 25 and “Midianites” in v. 28
  - ◆ Ishmaelites was a general name for the non-chosen descendants, while Midianites was a specific branch
  - ◆ Analogous to us labeling the Middle East beyond Israel as “Arabs” ... yet comprised of “Jordanians, Saudi Arabians, etc.”

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## Scene 4: The Conspiracy

- \* There is a great irony as we leave this scene — What is it?
  - ◆ Their actions to rid themselves of Joseph serve to **actualize** the very dreams they **sought to subvert** ...
  - ◆ Demonstrating once again God's sovereignty in the affairs of men!
  - ◆ God works to bring about His purposes in the midst of our failures ...
  - ◆ So, Joseph lived to “play another day” — and to advance God's redemptive plan

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## Scene 5: The Cover-Up

- \* The final scene opens with Reuben's discovery that the pit is empty ...
- \* Begging the question — *Where's Waldo* during all of this ... *What do you think?*
  - ◆ Most likely it was Reuben's watch ...
  - ◆ So he was in the field watching over the flock
- 📖 Which reminds us that God's providence extends to things *BIG* and *SMALL*

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## Scene 5: The Cover-Up

- \* DON'T ASK ME HOW THIS WORKS — The Bible does not tell us!!!!
- \* Anyway — Reuben bemoans his fate in v. 30
  - ◆ Essentially saying, what am I do say to Dad?
- \* To which the ever-ready deceptive brothers have a solution “ready at hand” — *What is it?*
  - ◆ A deceptive lie ...

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## Scene 5: The Cover-Up

### \* What is ironic about the ruse they employ?

- ◆ Jacob deceived his father with “goat meat” and “goat hair” ...
- ◆ And now himself is deceived by “goat blood”

### \* Now what is extra sneaky and sinister about the brothers implementation of the ruse?

- ◆ They cause Jacob to pronounce the outcome ... avoiding having to “voice the lie!”

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## Scene 5: The Cover-Up

### \* What is interesting about Jacob's response?

- ◆ He doesn't seem to be the least suspicious
- ◆ Nor does he seem to do a close examination ... of the robe or the brothers

### \* As we — and the brothers — would expect, Jacob responded with grief and mourning

### \* What is surprising about Jacob's mourning?

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## Scene 5: The Cover-Up

- ◆ Its extent and his inconsolability ...
- ◆ Jacob refused to be comforted by his surviving sons and daughters
- \* Why do you think this is so?
  - ◆ Obviously his “favoritism” and “deep love”, but ...
  - ◆ More-so, I think, because God wants to **sear** the brothers consciences ...

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## Scene 5: The Cover-Up

- ◆ He is prolonging their guilt and discomfort — perhaps giving them an opportunity to “come clean” and repent??? ...
- ◆ Or like Pharaoh — to harden their hearts!
- \* Act I ends with a summary statement as to Joseph’s fate in v. 36, which is ...
- \* So typical of Hebrew narrative — a big build up and a brief conclusion
- \* Which also will serve as a transition to the rest of the Joseph story after an “interlude” in Gen 38 ...

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