

**Friday, January 18**

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**Genesis 37:1 - 38:30**

**37** **1** So Jacob settled again in the land of Canaan, where his father had lived as a foreigner. **2** This is the account of Jacob and his family. When Joseph was seventeen years old, he often tended his father's flocks. He worked for his half brothers, the sons of his father's wives Bilhah and Zilpah. But Joseph reported to his father some of the bad things his brothers were doing. **3** Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other children because Joseph had been born to him in his old age. So one day Jacob had a special gift made for Joseph—a beautiful robe. **4** But his brothers hated Joseph because their father loved him more than the rest of them. They couldn't say a kind word to him. **5** One night Joseph had a dream, and when he told his brothers about it, they hated him more than ever. **6** "Listen to this dream," he said. **7** "We were out in the field, tying up bundles of grain. Suddenly my bundle stood up, and your bundles all gathered around and bowed low before mine!" **8** His brothers responded, "So you think you will be our king, do you? Do you actually think you will reign over us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dreams and the way he talked about them. **9** Soon Joseph had another dream, and again he told his brothers about it. "Listen, I have had another dream," he said. "The sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed low before me!" **10** This time he told the dream to his father as well as to his brothers, but his father scolded him. "What kind of dream is that?" he asked. "Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow to the ground before you?" **11** But while his brothers were jealous of Joseph, his father wondered what the dreams meant. **12** Soon after this, Joseph's brothers went to pasture their father's flocks at Shechem. **13** When they had been gone for some time, Jacob said to Joseph, "Your brothers are pasturing the sheep at Shechem. Get ready, and I will send you to them." "I'm ready to go," Joseph replied. **14** "Go and see how your brothers and the flocks are getting along," Jacob said. "Then come back and bring me a report." So Jacob sent him on his way, and Joseph traveled to Shechem from their home in the valley of Hebron. **15** When he arrived there, a man from the area noticed him wandering around the countryside. "What are you looking for?" he asked. **16** "I'm looking for my brothers," Joseph replied. "Do you know where they are pasturing their sheep?" **17** "Yes," the man told him. "They have moved on from here, but I heard them say, 'Let's go on to Dothan.'" So Joseph followed his brothers to Dothan and found them there. **18** When Joseph's brothers saw him coming, they recognized him in the distance. As he approached, they made plans to kill him. **19** "Here comes the dreamer!" they said. **20** "Come on,

let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns. We can tell our father, 'A wild animal has eaten him.' Then we'll see what becomes of his dreams!" **21** But when Reuben heard of their scheme, he came to Joseph's rescue. "Let's not kill him," he said. **22** "Why should we shed any blood? Let's just throw him into this empty cistern here in the wilderness. Then he'll die without our laying a hand on him." Reuben was secretly planning to rescue Joseph and return him to his father. **23** So when Joseph arrived, his brothers ripped off the beautiful robe he was wearing. **24** Then they grabbed him and threw him into the cistern. Now the cistern was empty; there was no water in it. **25** Then, just as they were sitting down to eat, they looked up and saw a caravan of camels in the distance coming toward them. It was a group of Ishmaelite traders taking a load of gum, balm, and aromatic resin from Gilead down to Egypt. **26** Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain by killing our brother? We'd have to cover up the crime. **27** Instead of hurting him, let's sell him to those Ishmaelite traders. After all, he is our brother—our own flesh and blood!" And his brothers agreed. **28** So when the Ishmaelites, who were Midianite traders, came by, Joseph's brothers pulled him out of the cistern and sold him to them for twenty pieces of silver. And the traders took him to Egypt. **29** Some time later, Reuben returned to get Joseph out of the cistern. When he discovered that Joseph was missing, he tore his clothes in grief. **30** Then he went back to his brothers and lamented, "The boy is gone! What will I do now?" **31** Then the brothers killed a young goat and dipped Joseph's robe in its blood. **32** They sent the beautiful robe to their father with this message: "Look at what we found. Doesn't this robe belong to your son?" **33** Their father recognized it immediately. "Yes," he said, "it is my son's robe. A wild animal must have eaten him. Joseph has clearly been torn to pieces!" **34** Then Jacob tore his clothes and dressed himself in burlap. He mourned deeply for his son for a long time. **35** His family all tried to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. "I will go to my grave mourning for my son," he would say, and then he would weep. **36** Meanwhile, the Midianite traders arrived in Egypt, where they sold Joseph to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Potiphar was captain of the palace guard.

**38** **1** About this time, Judah left home and moved to Adullam, where he stayed with a man named Hirah. **2** There he saw a Canaanite woman, the daughter of Shua, and he married her. When he slept with her, **3** she became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and he named the boy Er. **4** Then she became pregnant again and gave birth to another son, and she named him Onan. **5** And when she gave birth to a third son, she named him Shelah. At the time of Shelah's birth, they were living at Kezib. **6** In the course of time, Judah arranged for his firstborn son, Er, to marry a young woman named Tamar. **7** But Er was a wicked man in the LORD's sight, so the LORD took his life. **8** Then Judah said to Er's brother Onan, "Go and marry Tamar, as our law requires of the brother of a man who has died. You must produce an heir for your brother." **9** But

Onan was not willing to have a child who would not be his own heir. So whenever he had intercourse with his brother's wife, he spilled the semen on the ground. This prevented her from having a child who would belong to his brother. **10** But the LORD considered it evil for Onan to deny a child to his dead brother. So the LORD took Onan's life, too. **11** Then Judah said to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, "Go back to your parents' home and remain a widow until my son Shelah is old enough to marry you." (But Judah didn't really intend to do this because he was afraid Shelah would also die, like his two brothers.) So Tamar went back to live in her father's home. **12** Some years later Judah's wife died. After the time of mourning was over, Judah and his friend Hirah the Adullamite went up to Timnah to supervise the shearing of his sheep. **13** Someone told Tamar, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." **14** Tamar was aware that Shelah had grown up, but no arrangements had been made for her to come and marry him. So she changed out of her widow's clothing and covered herself with a veil to disguise herself. Then she sat beside the road at the entrance to the village of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah. **15** Judah noticed her and thought she was a prostitute, since she had covered her face. **16** So he stopped and propositioned her. "Let me have sex with you," he said, not realizing that she was his own daughter-in-law. "How much will you pay to have sex with me?" Tamar asked. **17** "I'll send you a young goat from my flock," Judah promised. "But what will you give me to guarantee that you will send the goat?" she asked. **18** "What kind of guarantee do you want?" he replied. She answered, "Leave me your identification seal and its cord and the walking stick you are carrying." So Judah gave them to her. Then he had intercourse with her, and she became pregnant. **19** Afterward she went back home, took off her veil, and put on her widow's clothing as usual. **20** Later Judah asked his friend Hirah the Adullamite to take the young goat to the woman and to pick up the things he had given her as his guarantee. But Hirah couldn't find her. **21** So he asked the men who lived there, "Where can I find the shrine prostitute who was sitting beside the road at the entrance to Enaim?" "We've never had a shrine prostitute here," they replied. **22** So Hirah returned to Judah and told him, "I couldn't find her anywhere, and the men of the village claim they've never had a shrine prostitute there." **23** "Then let her keep the things I gave her," Judah said. "I sent the young goat as we agreed, but you couldn't find her. We'd be the laughingstock of the village if we went back again to look for her." **24** About three months later, Judah was told, "Tamar, your daughter-in-law, has acted like a prostitute. And now, because of this, she's pregnant." "Bring her out, and let her be burned!" Judah demanded. **25** But as they were taking her out to kill her, she sent this message to her father-in-law: "The man who owns these things made me pregnant. Look closely. Whose seal and cord and walking stick are these?" **26** Judah recognized them immediately and said, "She is more righteous than I am, because I didn't arrange for her to marry my son Shelah." And Judah never slept with Tamar again. **27** When the

time came for Tamar to give birth, it was discovered that she was carrying twins. **28** While she was in labor, one of the babies reached out his hand. The midwife grabbed it and tied a scarlet string around the child's wrist, announcing, "This one came out first." **29** But then he pulled back his hand, and out came his brother! "What!" the midwife exclaimed. "How did you break out first?" So he was named Perez. **30** Then the baby with the scarlet string on his wrist was born, and he was named Zerah.

## **Matthew 12:22 - 45**

**12 22** Then a demon-possessed man, who was blind and couldn't speak, was brought to Jesus. He healed the man so that he could both speak and see. **23** The crowd was amazed and asked, "Could it be that Jesus is the Son of David, the Messiah?" **24** But when the Pharisees heard about the miracle, they said, "No wonder he can cast out demons. He gets his power from Satan, the prince of demons." **25** Jesus knew their thoughts and replied, "Any kingdom divided by civil war is doomed. A town or family splintered by feuding will fall apart. **26** And if Satan is casting out Satan, he is divided and fighting against himself. His own kingdom will not survive. **27** And if I am empowered by Satan, what about your own exorcists? They cast out demons, too, so they will condemn you for what you have said. **28** But if I am casting out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you. **29** For who is powerful enough to enter the house of a strong man like Satan and plunder his goods? Only someone even stronger—someone who could tie him up and then plunder his house. **30** "Anyone who isn't with me opposes me, and anyone who isn't working with me is actually working against me. **31** "So I tell you, every sin and blasphemy can be forgiven—except blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which will never be forgiven. **32** Anyone who speaks against the Son of Man can be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, either in this world or in the world to come. **33** "A tree is identified by its fruit. If a tree is good, its fruit will be good. If a tree is bad, its fruit will be bad. **34** You brood of snakes! How could evil men like you speak what is good and right? For whatever is in your heart determines what you say. **35** A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. **36** And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. **37** The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you." **38** One day some teachers of religious law and Pharisees came to Jesus and said, "Teacher, we want you to show us a miraculous sign to prove your authority." **39** But Jesus replied, "Only an evil, adulterous generation would demand a miraculous sign; but the only sign I will give them is the sign of the prophet Jonah. **40** For as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart

of the earth for three days and three nights.**41** “The people of Nineveh will stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for they repented of their sins at the preaching of Jonah. Now someone greater than Jonah is here—but you refuse to repent. **42** The queen of Sheba will also stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for she came from a distant land to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Now someone greater than Solomon is here—but you refuse to listen. **43** “When an evil spirit leaves a person, it goes into the desert, seeking rest but finding none. **44** Then it says, ‘I will return to the person I came from.’ So it returns and finds its former home empty, swept, and in order. **45** Then the spirit finds seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they all enter the person and live there. And so that person is worse off than before. That will be the experience of this evil generation.”

### **Psalm 16:1 - 11**

**16** **1** Keep me safe, O God, for I have come to you for refuge. **2** I said to the LORD, “You are my Master! Every good thing I have comes from you.” **3** The godly people in the land are my true heroes! I take pleasure in them! **4** Troubles multiply for those who chase after other gods. I will not take part in their sacrifices of blood or even speak the names of their gods. **5** LORD, you alone are my inheritance, my cup of blessing. You guard all that is mine. **6** The land you have given me is a pleasant land. What a wonderful inheritance! **7** I will bless the LORD who guides me; even at night my heart instructs me. **8** I know the LORD is always with me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me. **9** No wonder my heart is glad, and I rejoice. My body rests in safety. **10** For you will not leave my soul among the dead or allow your holy one to rot in the grave. **11** You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.

### **Proverbs 3:27 - 32**

**3** **27** Do not withhold good from those who deserve it when it's in your power to help them. **28** If you can help your neighbor now, don't say, “Come back tomorrow, and then I'll help you.” **29** Don't plot harm against your neighbor, for those who live nearby trust you. **30** Don't pick a fight without reason, when no one has done you harm. **31** Don't envy violent people or copy their ways. **32** Such wicked people are detestable to the LORD, but he offers his friendship to the godly.