

RUSSELL SANDERS

4-24-2021

THE LIFE OF JOSEPH – LESSON 5

COULD IT GET ANY WORSE?

Yesterday we left Joseph in the deep dry well (“pit”) where the brothers had left him to die. That was their alternate solution as eldest son Reuben had talked them out of killing him outright. Reuben secretly intended to save him. (Genesis chapter 37.)

That night Reuben went back alone to pull Joseph from the pit and send him home. However, Joseph was not there. What could have happened to him? Reuben was so distraught that he rent (tore off) his clothes in grief.

He did not know what his brothers had done. It is obvious they were not all camping together because they did not have consistent communication between all of them. I suppose that some camped by the cattle, others by the sheep, and others by the goats, because the herds could not mingle. They each needed their own grazing area.

So, what had become of Joseph? During the day, the other brothers had seen a camel caravan of Ishmaelite traders taking their spices to Egypt to sell. Judah proposed something more sensible. He said in Genesis 37: 26-27, **“What profit is it if we slay our brother? ... Let us sell him to the Ishmaelites...”** and the others agreed. Reuben had no knowledge of their scheme.

These merchants were called Ishmaelites because they had descended from Abraham’s oldest son, Ishmael. They were also called Midianites because they lived in the land of Midian while other descendants of Ishmael lived other lands. The trading practices of these merchants had made them very wealthy, so they were very “profit” motivated. They saw the opportunity. They bought Joseph as a slave for 20 pieces of silver, being fully confident they could sell him in Egypt for much more. Joseph looked good and had the best education his father could provide for him. He had value.

The brothers killed a goat and put the blood on Joseph’s “coat of many colors” which they had kept. When they returned home, they presented their father with Joseph’s bloodied coat without an explanation saying, (lying) that they had simply found it along the way.

Jacob assumed the worst believing that his beloved son had become the victim of wild beasts. His grief was unbearable. He rent his clothes, sat in sackcloth (the garment of mourning), and spent many days mourning Joseph’s death. All his daughters and sons tried to comfort him. It was useless. Jacob said he would go to his grave mourning.

Benjamin was now all he had remaining of his beloved late wife Rachel. He became very protective of Benjamin. In God’s plan, sometimes He allows that which is evil to happen in order to bring out the greater good. We shall see proof of it as we continue with the life of Joseph.

Perhaps something bad has happened in your life or the life of a loved one. Keep your eyes on Jesus. God can bring something beneficial to you or to someone else out of it. You might not understand how, but just know that God's ways are "higher" than our ways.