37

*37:1–11***Joseph’s Dreams Anger His Brothers**

Gen 37:1**And Jacob lived in the land of his father’s sojournings, in the land of Canaan.**

**And Jacob lived**

“Now Jacob was {still} living” or “Jacob continued to live”. Chapter 37 continues the history about Jacob that left off at the end of chapter 35. Begin this chapter in a way that is natural in your language. Make sure the way you translate “lived” allows for the fact that Jacob was already living in Canaan and had settled near the city of Hebron, where his father and grandfather had lived previously (Gen 35:27).

**in the land of his father’s sojournings, in the land of Canaan.**

“in the land/region of Canaan,where his father *{Isaac}* had lived for a while {as a foreigner/outsider}.” See how you translated “sojourned” in Gen 35:27 and “the land of Canaan” in Gen 35:6.

Gen 37:2**These {are} the generations of Jacob: Joseph, a son of seventeen years, was shepherding the flock{s} with his brothers, and he {was} an assistant with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives, and Joseph brought a bad report about them to their father.**

**These {are} the generations of Jacob:**

“This/Here is {more of} the record/history about Jacob and his descendants/family:” or “What follows tells {more} about Jacob and his descendants/family:” Consider again how you translated “These are the generations of” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 2:4; 6:9; 11:27; 25:19; 36:1; 37:2, where what follows is a narrative or history of events. Compare that to Gen 5:1; 10:1; 11:10; 25:12; 36:9, where what follows is more of a genealogy (list of names). It may be necessary to translate this phrase in different ways, depending on the context.

**Joseph, a son of seventeen years,**

“{One day} {his} seventeen-year-old son Joseph” or “{Jacob’s/His son} Joseph, who was seventeen years old,” This verse may be referring to a single incident or it may be referring to what happened regularly.

**was shepherding the flock{s}**

“was taking care of the {family’s} flock{s} {of sheep and goats}” or “had the work/job of pasturing/tending the {family’s} flock{s} {of sheep and goats}”. See how you translated “flocks” in Gen 4:2.

**with his brothers, and he {was} an assistant with**

“Joseph was helping his brothers {who were}” or “as an assistant/helper for his brothers {who were}”

**the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives,**

“the sons of his father’s {servant-}wives Bilhah and Zilpah,” Be consistent here with how you spelled “Bilhah” in Gen 29:29 and “Zilpah” in 29:24.

**and Joseph brought a bad report about them to their father.**

“and he told their/his father about the bad things they were doing.” or “and he gave bad/negative reports to their/his father about them.” The Hebrew text does not specify what Joseph’s brothers had done wrong, so neither should your translation. Also, make sure your translation of “their father” does not sound like the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah had a different father than Joseph had. (See: writing-pronouns)

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Gen 37:3 **Now Israel loved Joseph more than all of his sons because he {was} a son of his old age. So he made a multicolored tunic for him.**

**Now Israel**

“Now {Jacob whose other name was} Israel” or “Israel {(whose other name was Jacob)}” or “Israel {(that is, Jacob)}”. This verse introduces background information for the events that happen next. Consider what is the best way to begin this sentence in your language. Make sure it is clear in your translation or in a footnote that Jacob (verse 1) and Israel (verse 3) refer to the same person, not two separate people. For a note about this, see Gen 35:10. (See: figs-explicit)

**loved Joseph more than all of his sons**

“loved Joseph more than any of his {other} sons”

**because he {was} a son of his old age.**

“because he/Joseph was born to him when he was old.” For some languages it is more natural to put this clause first in this verse and say, “Now Joseph was born to Israel when he was old, so he/Israel loved him more than all {the rest} of his sons.” Do what is best in your language. (See: figs-infostructure)

**So he made a multicolored tunic for him.** “So he made a{special/beautiful} tunic/robe for him that had many colors.” or “So he made a {special} colorful tunic/robe for him.” The meaning of the Hebrew text is not certain here. Many translations (including the Greek Septuagint and Latin Vulgate) say that the tunic or robe was “multicolored” or “colorful”. This “tunic” was probably full-length to the ankles and had long sleeves that reached to the hands. (See: translate-unknown)

Gen 37:4**And his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all of his brothers, so they hated him and were not able to speak to him peaceably.**

**And his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all of his brothers, so**

“Joseph’s brothers saw/realized that their father loved him/Joseph more than any of {the rest of} his sons, so” or “When Joseph’s brothers saw/realized that their father loved him/Joseph more than the rest of them,”

**they hated him and**

“they hated/despised him/Joseph so much that they”. Make sure it is clear here in your translation that the brothers hated Joseph, not their father. (See: writing-pronouns)

**were not able to speak to him peaceably.**

“could/would not speak/talk to him kindly/nicely.” or “refused to speak/talk to him in a friendly/kind manner/way.” or “and always spoke unkindly/disrespectfully to him.”

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Gen 37:5**Then Joseph dreamed a dream and told it to his brothers, and they continued to hate him even more.**

**Then Joseph dreamed a dream**

“Then {one night} Joseph had a dream” or “{One night} Joseph had a dream”

**and told it to his brothers,**

“and he told his brothers about it” or {The next day} he told his brothers what he dreamed”

**and they continued to hate him even more.**

“and they became even more hateful toward him.” or “That made them hate/despise him even more {than before}.”

Gen 37:6**And he said to them, “Please hear this dream that I dreamed:**

**And he said to them,**

“He told them,” or “{This is what} he told them:”

**“Please hear this dream that I dreamed:**

“Please listen to {me tell about} this dream that I had:” or “I had a dream {that I want to tell you about}. Please listen to {me tell} it.”

Gen 37:7**And behold, we were binding sheaves in the middle of a field, and behold, my sheaf got up and also stood upright, and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf.”**

**And behold,**

“{In it} I saw” or “{In my dream} I saw”

**we were binding sheaves in the middle of a field,**

“that we {all} were out in the middle of a field {cutting stalks of grain/wheat and} tying the stalks into sheaves/bundles” or “us {working together} out in a field {cutting and} tying sheaves/bundles {of grain/wheat stalks},” A sheaf of grain is a bunch of grain stalks that have been cut and tied together in a bundle, with the heads of grain at the top. Wheat and barley were the grains that were common in this region at that time, not corn or oats.

**and behold,**

“Then suddenly”

**my sheaf**

“my sheaf/bundle {of grain/wheat}” or “the sheaf/bundle that I had made”

**got up and also stood upright,**

“stood up straight” or “stood up on its end”

**and behold,**

“Then behold/amazingly,” or “Then I saw that”

**your sheaves**

“your sheaves/bundles {of grain/wheat}” or “the sheaves/bundles that you had made”

**gathered around**

“gathered around {my sheaf/bundle}” or “stood in a circle around {my sheaf/bundle}”

**and bowed down to my sheaf.”**

“and bowed down {to the ground} to/before my sheaf/bundle {to show respect/submission}.” or “and bowed {respectfully} to my sheaf/bundle.” or “and bowed down in front of it {in respect}.” (See: translate-symaction)

Gen 37:8 **Then his brothers said to him, “Will you really reign over us? Will you really rule over us?” And they continued to hate him even more because of his dreams and because of his words.**

**Then his brothers said to him,**

“His brothers responded to him,” or “His brothers retorted {angrily},”

**“Will you really**

“Do you really expect to” or “Certainly you don’t think you will” or “You will never”. The brothers use two rhetorical questions in this verse to express their disagreement with Joseph and to emphasize that they are not happy with him. Do what is best in your language. (See: figs-rquestion)

**reign over us?**

“reign over us!” or “be our king!” For languages that mark inclusive and exclusive pronouns, “us” excludes Joseph in this sentence. (See: figs-exclusive)

**Will you really rule over us?”**

“You will never rule over us!” (See: figs-rquestion)

**And they continued to hate him**

“So they hated/despised him”. Consider again how you translated “hate” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 24:60; 26:27; 29:31, 33; 37:4-5, 8. It may be necessary to translate this term in different ways, depending on the context.

**even more**

“even more {strongly/intensely} {than they did before}”

**because of his dreams and because of his words.**

“for his dreams and for what he told them about the/his dreams.” or “because of what he had said {to them} about his dreams.” For some languages, it is more natural to switch the order of clauses in this sentence and say, “So because of what he/Joseph had told them about his dreams, his brothers hated him even more {strongly/intensely} {than they did before}.” Do what is best in your language. (See: figs-infostructure)

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Gen 37:9**Then he dreamed yet another dream, and he related it to his brothers. And he said, “Behold, I dreamed another dream, and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.”**

**Then he dreamed yet another dream, and he related it to his brothers.**

“Then Joseph had another dream that he {also} told to his brothers.” or “Sometime after that, Joseph told his brothers about another dream that he had.”

**And he said,**

“He said,” or “This/Here is what he said:”

**“Behold, I dreamed another dream,**

“Listen, I {just} had another dream,”

**and behold,**

“and there/amazingly {in this dream}” or “and {in it} I saw that”

**the sun and the moon and eleven stars**

“the sun, the moon and eleven stars”

**were bowing down**

“were bowing down {to the ground}” or “bowed down {to the ground}”. See how you translated “bowed down” in verse 7.

**to me.”**

“to/before me {to show respect}.” or “in front of me {to honor me}.” Bowing down to someone was a way of showing respect and honor to that person. If that is not clear in your culture, you could make that information explicit in your translation or in a footnote. If it is understood, you can leave it implied (as the Hebrew text does). (See: translate-symaction)

Gen 37:10 **And he related it to his father and to his brothers, but his father rebuked him and said to him, “What {is} this dream that you dreamed? Will your mother and I and your brothers really come to bow down to the ground to you?”**

**And he related it to his father and to his brothers, but**

The Hebrew text is ambiguous here. Verse 10 could refer to: (1) a second time that Joseph told his dream. Alternate translation: “Then/Later Joseph told {the same dream} to {both} his father and his brothers, but”. (2) the same time that he told this dream to his brothers in verse 9. Alternate translation: “When Joseph related/told {the dream} to his father and his brothers,”

**his father rebuked him and said to him,**

“his father rebuked/scolded him by saying,” Your translation of this quote margin should not sound like two separate events; the verbs “rebuked” and “said” refer to the same event.

(See: writing-quotations)

**“What {is} this dream that you dreamed?**

“That {is} a strange dream that you had!” or “Your dream {is} ridiculous/outrageous!” Jacob uses a rhetorical question here to show that he is not happy about Joseph’s dream. Decide the best way to translate this in your language. (See: figs-rquestion)

**Will your mother and I and your brothers really**

“Do you really expect your mother and me and your brothers to” or “Certainly you don’t think that your mother and I or your brothers will”. See how you translated a similar rhetorical question in verse 8. (See: figs-rquestion)

**come to bow down to the ground**

“come {to you} and bow down to the ground” or “bow down”. See how you translated “bow down” in verse 7.

**to you?”**

“before you” or “in front of you”

Gen 37:11 **And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter {in mind}.**

**And his brothers envied him,**

“So Joseph’s brothers were envious/jealous of him,” or “{Because of Joseph’s dreams} his brothers were envious/jealous of him,” See how you translated “envied” in Gen 26:14; 30:1.

**but his father kept the matter {in mind}.**

“but his father continued to think/wonder about what it all could mean.” or “but his father kept thinking about the dreams and wondered what they meant.”

*37:12-36* **Joseph’s Brothers Sell Him As A Slave**

Gen 37:12 **Then his brothers went to shepherd the flock{s} of their father near Shechem.**

**Then his brothers**

“Sometime after that, his/Joseph’s brothers” or “One time/day, his/Joseph’s brothers”

**went to shepherd the flock{s} of their father**

“took their father’s flock{s} {of sheep and goats} to graze {in the fields}”

**near Shechem.**

“near {the city of} Shechem.” Be consistent here with how you spelled “Shechem” in Gen 35:4.

Gen 37:13**And Israel said to Joseph, “Aren’t your brothers shepherding near Shechem? Come and I will send you to them.” And he said to him, “Behold me.”**

**And Israel said to Joseph,**

“Then/So {one day} Israel said to Joseph,”

**“Aren’t your brothers shepherding**

“As you know, your brothers are pasturing/tending {our flocks/animals}”. Jacob uses a rhetorical question to remind Joseph of something he already knows and to introduce what he wants Joseph to do. Decide the best way to communicate this in your language. (See: figs-rquestion)

**near Shechem?**

“near {the city of} Shechem.” See how you translated this phrase in verse 12.

**Come and I will send you to them.”**

“Get ready so that I can send you to them.”

**And he said to him,**

“He/Joseph responded,” or “He/Joseph answered him,”

**“Behold me.”**

“I’m here {and ready to go}.” or “I’m ready {to go}.” or “Yes, {sir}.”

Gen 37:14**Then he said to him, “Please go and see the well-being of your brothers and the well-being of the flock{s}, and bring me word.” So he sent him from the valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.**

**Then he said to him,**

“Then Israel told him/Joseph,”

**“Please go and see**

“Please go and check on” or “Please go find out”

**the well-being of your brothers and the well-being of the flock{s},**

“how your brothers and the flock{s} are doing” or “whether {or not} things are going well for your brothers and the flock{s}”

**and bring me word.”**

“Then come tell me {how they are doing}.” or “Then report back to me {what you find out}.”

**So he sent him from**

“So/Then Israel sent him/Joseph {on his way} from”

**the valley of Hebron,**

“{their home in} the valley near {the city of} Hebron,” Be consistent in how you spell “Hebron” throughout the book of Genesis. See Gen 13:18; 23:2, 19; 35:27; 37:14.

**and he went to Shechem.**

“and he/Joseph went/traveled to {the city of} Shechem.” The trip from the city of Hebron to the city of Shechem was about 100 kilometers (60 miles).

Gen 37:15**And a man found him, and behold, he was wandering around in the fields. So the man asked him, saying, “What are you looking for?”**

**And a man found him, and behold, he was**

“There he met a man who had seen/noticed him” or “{When he arrived there,} a man saw him”. In this context “found” means the man happened to meet Joseph as Joseph was walking around looking for his brothers; the man was not intentionally looking for him. Also, for some languages it is clearer or more natural to change the order of the clauses in this sentence and say, “He started wandering around {searching} in the fields {near there}, where/and he met a man who asked...” or “As he was wandering around {searching} in the fields {near there}, he met a man who asked…” Do what is best in your language. (See: figs-infostructure)

**wandering around in the fields. So the man**

“searching around in the {nearby} fields/countryside and”. The word “fields” refers here to large, open places with no fences and few trees, where sheep and goats could easily graze.

**asked him, saying, “What are you looking for?”**

“asked him, “What/Who are you looking for?” or “asked him what/who he was looking for.” Consider whether it is better to use a direct or an indirect quote here in your language. (See: figs-quotations)

Gen 37:16**And he said, “I am looking for my brothers. Please tell me where they are shepherding.”**

**And he said, “I am looking for my brothers.**

“He/Joseph responded/replied, “I am looking/searching for my brothers.”

**Please tell me**

“Can you tell me” or “Do you know”

**where they are shepherding.”**

“where they are pasturing/tending {their flocks}?” For some languages it is more natural to put this clause earlier in the verse and say, “I am looking for my brothers who were somewhere around here shepherding/pasturing/tending {their flocks}. Do you know where they are {now}?” Do what is best in your language. (See: figs-infostructure)

Gen 37:17**Then the man said, “They set out from here. For I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’ ” Then Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.**

**Then the man said,**

“The man answered {him},” or “The man replied,” (See: writing-quotations)

**“They set out from here.**

“{I saw them, but then} they left from here” or “They were here and then left”

**For I heard them say,**

“In fact, I heard/overheard them say {to each other}” or “but I overheard them say {to each other}”

**‘Let us go to Dothan.’ ”**

“ ‘Let’s {move on and} go to {the town of} Dothan.’ ” or “that they were going to {the town of} Dothan.” Consider whether it is better to use a direct or indirect quote here in your translation. (See: figs-quotations)

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**Then Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.**

“So Joseph followed his brothers and caught up with them near {the town of} Dothan.” or “So Joseph went to {the town of} Dothan and found his brothers {near} there.”

Gen 37:18 **But they saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them, then they conspired against him to kill him.**

**But they saw him from a distance,**

“But they saw him while he was still some distance away,” or “While he was still some distance away {from them}, they saw him,”

**and before he came near to them,**

“and before he reached them,” or “and before he got close to where they were,”

**then they conspired against him to kill him.**

“they plotted to kill him.” or “they made plans to kill him.”

Gen 37:19**And they said each to his brother, “Behold, that master of dreams is coming!**

**And they said each to his brother,**

“They said to each other {about him},”

**“Behold, that master of dreams is coming!**

“Look/See, here comes that master/expert dreamer!” or “Look who’s coming! It’s that master/expert of dreams!” Make sure it is clear in your translation that Joseph’s brothers are being sarcastic and disrespectful here as they make fun of Joseph.

Gen 37:20 **So now, come and let us kill him and throw him into one of the cisterns. Then we will say an evil animal devoured him, and we will see what his dreams become!”**

**So now, come and let us kill him**

“Come on, let’s kill him”

**and throw him**

“and throw his body”

**into one of the cisterns.**

“into one of the {empty} pits/wells {here}.” A cistern was a large hole or pit that had been dug in the ground to catch rain water and store it there. It was wide at the bottom and had a small opening at the top. The sides of the hole were covered with plaster so that it would hold water. (See: translate-unknown)

**Then we will say an evil animal**

“Then we will/can tell {people} that a fierce/vicious/ferocious {wild} animal”

**devoured him,**

“has devoured/eaten him,” or “ate him up/down,”

**and we will see**

“and we/everyone will see/watch”

**what his dreams become!”**

“what will become of his dreams!” or “what happens to his {great} dreams!” or “if his {great} dreams come true!” Joseph’s brothers are speaking here in a disdainful way, continuing to mock him.

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Gen 37:21 **But Reuben heard, and he rescued him from their hands and said, “Let us not strike his life.”**

**But Reuben heard, and**

“But Reuben heard {their plan}, so” or “When Reuben heard {what they were planning,}”

**he rescued him from their hands**

“he {tried to} rescue/save Joseph from them”. The phrase “their hands” refers to Joseph’s brothers and their power to harm him. Consider whether you have a similar figure of speech in your language. (See: figs-synecdoche)

**and said,**

“and said {to them},” or “by urging them,” (See: writing-quotations)

**“Let us not strike his life.”**

“We should/must not take his life.” or “We should/must not kill him.” Consider again how you translated the idiom “strike” in Gen 4:15; 34:30; 37:21. (See: figs-idiom)

Gen 37:22 **And Reuben said to them, “Do not shed blood. Throw him into this cistern which {is} in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him,” in order to rescue him from their hand{s}, to return him to his father.**

**And Reuben said to them,**

“Then Reuben/he continued/added,” Some translations do not include this phrase, possibly because Reuben is still speaking to the same people. However, he may have paused between verses 21 and 22 to see the effect of what he said in verse 21. Also, the repeated quote margin helps emphasize what he says in verse 22. Do what is best in your language. (See: writing-quotations)

**“Do not shed blood.**

“Do not kill him.” or “You must not take his life.” See how you translated the idiom “shed blood” in Gen 9:6. (See: figs-idiom)

**Throw him into this cistern**

“{Instead} put him into this {dry/empty} pit/well”. See how you translated “cistern” in verse 20.

**which {is} in the wilderness,**

“{here} in the wilderness/desert,” Consider again how you translated “wilderness” or “desert” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 14:6 (and note); 16:7; 21:14, 20-21; 36:24; 37:22. Also see when it occurs as implied information in Gen 12:9-10; 13:1, 3; 20:1; 24:62.

**but do not lay a hand on him,”**

“but you must not harm him {in any way}.” The phrase “lay a hand on” is an idiom that emphasizes that they are not to harm him at all, not even in the smallest way. (See: figs- idiom)

**in order to rescue him from their hand{s},**

“Reuben was planning to rescue/save him/Joseph from them” or“{He/Reuben said that} in order to save him/Joseph from being killed by them”. See how you translated “rescued him from their hands” in verse 21. (See: figs-synecdoche)

**to return him to his father.**

“so that he could return him {safely} to his/their father.” or “and take him back {home} to his/their father.” Make sure your translation of “his father” does not sound like Joseph had a different father than his brothers had.

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Gen 37:23**Then it happened when Joseph came to his brothers, then they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the multicolored tunic that {was} on him.**

**Then it happened when Joseph came to his brothers,**

“When Joseph reached his brothers,” As usual, the phrase “Then it happened” introduces and emphasizes an important set of events. Many translations leave it implied. Do what is natural in your language.

**then they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the multicolored tunic**

“they {took hold of him and} stripped/ripped/tore off the/his colorful robe”. See how you translated “multicolored tunic” in verse 3.

**that {was} on him.**

“he had on.” or “that he was wearing.”

Gen 37:24**Then they took him and threw him into the cistern. And the cistern {was} empty; there was not water in it.**

**Then they took him**

“Then they grabbed him”

**and threw him into the cistern.**

“and put him into the pit/well.” See how you translated “throw him” and “cistern” in verse 20.

**And the cistern {was} empty; there was not water in it.**

“Now the pit/well {was} empty; it had no water in it.” or “The pit/well {was} empty and {completely} dry inside.”

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Gen 37:25**Then they sat down to eat bread, and they lifted their eyes and looked, and behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead. And their camels were carrying spices and balm and myrrh {that} they were going to take down to Egypt.**

**Then they sat down to eat bread,**

“Then {some of} Joseph’s brothers sat down to eat a meal,” It is clear from verse 29 that Reuben was not there when his brothers made the plan to sell Joseph to the traders. (See: figs-explicit)

**and they lifted their eyes and looked,**

“and {while they were eating,} they looked around”. See how you translated the idiom “lifted...eyes” in Gen 22:13. (See: figs-idiom)

**and behold,**

“and saw/noticed {that}” or “and they saw/noticed {that}”

**a caravan of**

“a {large} group/company of”. A “caravan” is a large group of people who are traveling together.

**Ishmaelites**

“Ishmaelite {traders/merchants}” or “{traders/merchants} from the Ishmael/Ishmaelite people group” or “{traders/merchants who were} descendants of Ishmael”. See how you translated the names of other people groups in Gen 15:19-21.

**was coming**

“was coming/traveling {toward them}” or “was coming/traveling {their way/direction}”. It may be clearer to change the order of some of the implied information in this sentence and say, “...and saw/noticed {that headed their way was} a {large} group of Ishmaelite {traders/merchants} {who were} coming/traveling from {the region of} Gilead.” Do what is best in your language. (See: figs-infostructure)

**from Gilead.**

“from {the region of} Gilead.” Be consistent here with how you spelled “Gilead” in Gen 31:21, 23, 25.

**And their camels were carrying**

“Their camels were loaded with”. Consider again how you translated “camel” in the book of Genesis. See Gen 12:16 (and note); 24:10-11, 14, 19-20, 22, 25, 30-32, 35, 44, 46, 61, 63-64; 30:43; 31:17, 18, 34; 32:7, 15; 37:25.

**spices and balm and myrrh**

“{expensive} spices, healing resin/salve and incense”. Gilead was a mountainous region east of the Jordan River that was famous as a source of balm (or balsam), which was a rare tree resin that was used for perfume and for medicine. Myrrh was another type of tree resin that was used as incense and as medicine. You could put some of that information in a footnote. (See: translate-unknowns)

**{that} they were going to take down to Egypt.**

“that they were taking/transporting down to {the country of} Egypt {to sell there}.” or “that they were taking {to sell} in {the country of} Egypt.”

Gen 37:26 **Then Judah said to his brothers, “What gain {is there} if we kill our brother and cover up his blood?**

**Then Judah said to his brothers,**

“Then/So Judah asked/urged his brothers,”

**“What gain {is there}**

“What will we gain” or “We will not gain anything”. Judah uses a rhetorical question here to emphasize his point. Do what is best in your language. (See: figs-rquestion)

**if we kill our brother and cover up his blood?**

“if we kill our brother and try to keep people from finding out about it” or “by killing our brother and trying to hide it!” The phrase “cover up” is an idiom that means to prevent people from knowing about something evil that was done. Also, the phrase “his blood” is an idiom that refers to Joseph’s death. (See: figs-idiom)

Gen 37:27**Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites so that our hand{s} will not be on him. For he {is} our brother, our flesh.” And his brothers listened.**

**Come and**

“{Instead,} come on,” See how you translated “come and” in verse 20.

**let us sell him**

“let’s sell him” or “we should sell him”

**to the Ishmaelites**

“to those Ishmaelites {over there}” or “to those Ishmaelite {traders/merchants} {over there}”. See how you translated “Ishmaelites” in verse 25.

**so that our hand{s} will not be on him.**

“so that we will/do not harm him.” or “so that we will not be guilty of harming him.” Translate this idiom in a way that is natural and clear in your language. (See: figs-idiom)

**For he {is} our brother, our flesh.”**

“After all, he {is} a member of our family, our own brother.” The phrase “our flesh” refers to the fact that they are closely related biologically. See how you translated a similar idiom (“my bone and my flesh”) in Gen 29:14. (See: figs-idiom)

**And his brothers listened.**

“Judah’s brothers agreed {with him}.” or “Judah’s brothers agreed {to do what Judah had proposed/suggested}.” See how you translated “listened” in Gen 34:24.

Gen 37:28**Then the Midianite men, traders, passed by, and they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the cistern and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty {shekels of} silver. Then they brought Joseph to Egypt.**

**Then the Midianite men, traders, passed by, and**

“So when/as the Midianite {(that is, Ishmaelite)} traders/merchants came by/near {them},” or “So when the {Ishmaelite} traders who were {also/sometimes called} Midianites were passing/going by {them},” The Ishmaelites (verses 25, 27-28; 39:1) and Midianites (verses 28 and 36) were the descendants of Abraham’s sons Ishmael and Midian (16:15; 25:1-2). However sometimes (as here) the names of those people groups are used interchangeably for the same people (also see Judges 8:22, 24, 26). Perhaps that was because the two people groups had intermarried. Or there may have been merchants from the two people groups in this caravan who bought and sold Joseph together. You could put some of that information in a footnote.

**they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the cistern**

“{some of} Joseph’s brothers pulled Joseph/him up out of the pit/well”. Not all of Joseph’s brothers were there, because we know from the next verse that at least Reuben was somewhere else when they sold Joseph. (See: figs-explicit)

**and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty {shekels of} silver.**

“and sold him to the Ishmaelite {traders/merchants} for twenty {shekels/pieces of} silver.” See the note about shekels at Genesis 20:16. Twenty shekels of silver was equal to about one-fourth of a kilo (half a pound) and was the average price for a slave. You could put some of that information in a footnote. (See: translate-bmoney)

**Then they brought Joseph to Egypt.**

“Then the Ishmaelites took him to {the country of} Egypt.”

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Gen 37:29**Then Reuben returned to the cistern, but behold, Joseph was not in the cistern, so he tore his clothes.**

**Then Reuben**

“Later Reuben {who had been gone for a while}”

**returned to the cistern,**

“returned to the pit/well,” or “came/went back to the pit/well {to get Joseph},” Consider again how you translated “cistern” in verses 20, 22, 24, 28-29.

**but behold, Joseph was not in the cistern,**

“but he was shocked to see that Joseph was not there!” or “but to his surprise/horror, Joseph was gone!”

**so he tore his clothes.**

“So/Then he tore his clothes {to show distress/grief}.” or “Then {he was so distressed/grieved that} he tore his clothes.” (See: translate-symaction)

Gen 37:30**Then he returned to his brothers and said, “The boy is not {there}! And I, where am I going?”**

**Then he returned to his brothers**

“Then he went back to where his brothers were” or “Then he went to his brothers”

**and said,**

“and said/exclaimed {to them},” (See: writing-quotations)

**“The boy**

“The lad/youth” or “Joseph” or “Our {younger} brother”. Joseph was seventeen years old (verse 2), so this phrase should be translated in a way that is appropriate for his older brother to refer to him here. See how you translated a different word that has a similar meaning in Gen 21:12.

**is not {there}!**

“is gone/missing!”

**And I, where am I going?”**

“Now what should/can I do?” or “Now I do not know what to do!” Reuben uses a rhetorical question here to express how distressed he is and to emphasize that he does not know what to do. Do what is natural in your language. (See: figs-rquestion)

Gen 37:31 **Then they took Joseph’s tunic, and slaughtered a kid of the goats and dipped the tunic in the blood.**

**Then they**

“So they” or “Then/So Joseph’s brothers”

**took Joseph’s tunic,**

“took his tunic/robe,” or “picked up his tunic/robe,”

**and slaughtered a kid of the goats**

“killed a male/young goat”

**and dipped the tunic in the blood.**

“and dipped the robe in its blood.” For some languages it is more natural to switch the order of clauses in this verse and say, “Then/So Joseph’s brothers killed a young goat, took Joseph’s/his tunic/robe, and dipped it in the {goat’s} blood.” or “Then/So Joseph’s brothers killed a young goat and dipped Joseph’s/his tunic/robe in the {goat’s} blood.” Do what is best in your language. (See: figs-infostructure)

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Gen 37:32**Then they sent the multicolored tunic and had it brought to their father and said, “We found this. Please examine whether it {is} your son’s tunic or not.”**

**Then they sent the multicolored tunic and had it brought to their father and said,**

“Then they had someone take/bring the colorful tunic/robe back to their father and say {to him} {for them},” Consider again how you translated “multicolored/colorful tunic/robe” in verses 3, 23, 32.

**“We found this. Please examine**

“We found this {tunic/robe}. Please look at it {to see/determine}”. See how you translated “examine” in Gen 31:32.

**whether it {is} your son’s tunic or not.”**

“whether/if it {is} your son’s tunic/robe.” or “whether or not it {is} your son’s.”

Gen 37:33**And he examined it and said, “{It is} my son’s tunic! An evil animal has devoured him! Surely Joseph was torn to pieces!”**

**And he examined it and said,**

“Jacob examined/recognized the robe and exclaimed,”

**“{It is} my son’s tunic!**

“{This is} my son {Joseph}’s tunic/robe!” or “This tunic/robe belongs to my son {Joseph}!”

**An evil animal has devoured him! Surely Joseph was torn to pieces!”**

“Surely/Clearly a fierce/vicious/ferocious {wild} animal has torn Joseph/him to pieces/bits and eaten him up/down!”See how you translated “an evil animal devoured him” in verse 20.

Gen 37:34**Then Jacob tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his loins, and he mourned for his son many days.**

**Then Jacob tore his clothes**

“Then Jacob tore his clothes {in grief/sorrow},” or “Jacob {was so grieved that he} tore his clothes”. See how you translated “tore his clothes” in verse 29. (See: translate-symaction)

**and put sackcloth on his loins,**

“put on sackcloth,” or “put on mourning clothes,” It was a Hebrew custom to wear sackcloth, which was a rough/coarse garment made/woven from black goats’ hair, to show that the person was mourning for someone’s death. If this custom is not familiar in your culture, you could put that information in a footnote. (See: translate-unknown)

**and he mourned for his son many days.**

“and for many days he mourned/grieved that his son had died.” or “and for a {very} long time he mourned/grieved that/because his son was dead/gone.” See how you translated “mourn” in Gen 27:41.

Gen 37:35**And all his sons and all his daughters got up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, “For I will go down to my son in Sheol mourning.” So his father wept for him.**

**And all his sons and all his daughters**

“All Jacob’s sons and daughters”

**got up to comfort him,**

“came {to him} {and tried} to comfort/console him,”

**but he refused to be comforted**

“but he did not want to be comforted/consoled” or “but he did/would not let them comfort/console him”

**and said,**

“Instead he said {to them},”

**“For I will go down to my son in Sheol mourning.”**

“{No,} I will continue to mourn until I {die and} join my son down in Sheol.” or “{No,} I will continue to mourn {for my son} until I {die and} go down to be with him in the afterworld.” Sheol is the Hebrew name for the world of the dead, that is, the place where the spirits of dead people lived. You could put that information in a footnote. Your translation of “Sheol” should not refer to hell or a place of punishment. Some translations have “the grave” here, but that leaves out the idea of an afterlife that this sentence implies. (See: translate-unknown)

**So his father wept for him.**

“So/Then Joseph’s father continued to mourn/grieve {deeply} for him/Joseph.”

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Gen 37:36 **And the Midianites sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an official of Pharaoh, the chief of the guards.**

**And the Midianites sold him in Egypt**

“Meanwhile in {the country of} Egypt, the Midianite {traders} sold Joseph” or “Meanwhile, when the Midianite {traders} got to {the country of} Egypt, they sold Joseph”. Verse 36 picks up where verse 28 left off and occurred during the time that the events in verses 29-35 happened.

**to Potiphar, an official of Pharaoh,**

“to Potiphar, {who was} an official/officer under Pharaoh {the King of Egypt};” See how you translated “Pharaoh” in Gen 12:15-20.

**the chief of the guards.**

“{he was} the captain over the {royal/palace} guards.” or “{he was} the leader of the soldiers who guarded the king.”