

# Genesis 37:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

## Analysis

**And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?** This passage is part of the Joseph narrative, a masterfully crafted account demonstrating God's sovereign providence working through human choices and circumstances to accomplish His redemptive purposes. The Joseph cycle shows how God transforms evil intentions into instruments of salvation.

Central themes include divine providence orchestrating events toward redemptive ends, the testing and refinement of character through suffering and success, forgiveness overcoming betrayal and injustice, and the preservation of God's covenant people through famine. Joseph's rise from slavery to second-in-command of Egypt illustrates how God exalts the humble and uses seeming disasters for ultimate good.

Theologically, these chapters reveal:

1. God's meticulous sovereignty over all events, even evil human actions
2. suffering as preparation for future service rather than punishment
3. forgiveness as reflecting divine character and enabling reconciliation
4. God's covenant faithfulness across generations ensuring the survival and blessing of His people

5. how present suffering gains meaning when viewed from the perspective of God's larger purposes.

Joseph's words "you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" (50:20) epitomize biblical theodicy and providence.

## Historical Context

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The patriarchal narratives (Genesis 12-50) reflect the cultural, social, and legal customs of the ancient Near East during the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1500 BCE). Archaeological discoveries including the Mari tablets, Nuzi tablets, and Egyptian records confirm many details: nomadic pastoralism, covenant-making ceremonies, marriage customs, property laws, and international travel patterns described in Genesis.

The cultural practices reflected include: treaty/covenant forms (Genesis 15), bride-price customs (Genesis 24, 29), inheritance laws favoring firstborn sons (Genesis 25, 27), adoption practices (Genesis 15, 30), levirate-type arrangements (Genesis 38), and Egyptian administrative systems (Genesis 41, 47). These parallels confirm Genesis's historical reliability while showing how God worked within ancient cultural frameworks to accomplish His purposes.

For later Israelites, these narratives established their identity as Abraham's descendants, explained their claim to Canaan, justified their possession of Joseph's bones (Exodus 13:19), and provided models of faith despite imperfection. The patriarchs' failures and God's faithfulness encouraged Israel that covenant relationship depended on God's grace rather than human merit. The movement from Mesopotamia to Canaan to Egypt set the stage for the Exodus and conquest narratives.

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

1. What does this passage reveal about God's sovereignty and human responsibility?
2. What specific changes in thinking or behavior does this verse call us to make?
3. How does this passage point forward to Christ and the gospel of redemption?

## Interlinear Text

אָמַרְתִּי	לֹא	אָמַרְתִּי	תִּמְלֹךְ	תִּמְלֹךְ	עַל יְכוֹנֵן	אָמַרְתִּי
<b>said</b>	H0	<b>And his brethren</b>	<b>reign</b>	<b>reign</b>		H518
H559		H251	H4427	H4427		H5921
לְתִמְשָׁל	לְתִמְשָׁל	לְתִמְשָׁל	עַד	עַד	עַד	עַד
have dominion	have dominion	have dominion	וְנִזְמָן	וְנִזְמָן	וְנִזְמָן	וְנִזְמָן
H4910	H4910	H4910	H0	him yet the more	him yet the more	H5750
				H3254		
אָשַׁנָּה	אָשַׁנָּה	אָשַׁנָּה	וְעַל	וְעַל	וְעַל	וְעַל
over us	And they hated	over us	אֶת זֶה	אֶת זֶה	אֶת זֶה	אֶת זֶה
H8130	H853	H853	H5921	for his dreams	H5921	and for his words
				H2472		H1697

## Additional Cross-References

**Acts 7:35** (Parallel theme): This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

**1 Samuel 10:27** (Parallel theme): But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.