

# (Genesis) Genesis 37:27-28

by J. Vernon McGee

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*The Bible explains the contradictions in the text by showing that the Ishmaelites and Midianites are related and joined forces to travel to Egypt.*

**Duration:** 3:56

**Scripture:** Genesis 37:25-28, Genesis 37:36, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Genesis"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the story of Joseph being sold into slavery by his brothers. He explains that the Ishmaelites and the Midianites had joined together, making them stronger and more capable of doing business. The speaker emphasizes that the word of God makes sense if we allow it to, and that contradictions often arise from ignorance and misinterpretation. He addresses the apparent contradiction in the Bible regarding the identity of the merchants who bought Joseph, explaining that the Ishmaelites and the Midianites were actually related and considered brethren.

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## Transcript

And he makes this suggestion, Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he's our brother, and our flesh, and his brethren were content. Well, they said, what we want to do is to get rid of him, and if we sell him to these Ishmaelites, they'll take him down to Egypt, that's where they'd go and sell him into slavery, and that to us is just the same, it's getting rid of him, and slavery in many places was a living death anyway, certainly they'd never hear from him again. And so we read verse 28, Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen, and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver, and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

Now I'm sure that at this point you are saying, well, Moses, make up your mind. You called them Ishmaelites at first, then you called them Midianites, now you come back and call them Ishmaelites again. What are they? And isn't this an error in the Bible? I was handed many years ago now by a student, and it had been handed to him a little blue paperback book that showed I think a thousand or two thousand errors in the Bible.

I looked it over, I never found any errors except in that little book. And one of the errors was here, that one place it says Ishmaelites, another place Midianites, which is accurate. Well, let's look at this for a moment, because this is quite interesting, and it reveals how the critic, and those that hate the Bible, how they can manufacture actually that which reveals something of the accuracy of it.

Now, who were the Ishmaelites? Who was the father of the Ishmaelites? Abraham. Who's the father of the Midianites? Well, Abraham. You see, Ishmael was the son of Abraham by Hagar.

Midian was the son of Abraham by Keturah that he married after the death of Sarah. Now, these are brethren, actually, Ishmaelites and Midianites. And they're akin to this crowd here, boys that are selling their brother, too, by the way.

And after all, at this particular time, even an Israelite, there are naught but twelve of them. And how many Ishmaelites do you think there'd be at this time? I doubt whether there'd be over a hundred of them. That is, of all of them.

And Midianites, how many of them would it be? Midian was born after Isaac was born, so that there could not probably have been maybe a dozen Midianites. Well, with small groups like that, tribes in that day, and they're related, and the desert was traveling to Egypt, at least in that day, was dangerous, so they just joined together. And what Moses is trying to make clear to us as we read this is that the Ishmaelites and the Midianites had joined together, a small band of each made them stronger, and they're related, they understand each other, so they're on the way down to Egypt to do business.

Now, I say that the Word of God makes good sense if you just let it make good sense. We are the folk that don't make good sense with it. And of course, ignorance adds a great deal to the contradictions that people think they find.

The contradiction is not in the Bible, but it's in the ignorance of people who read. And this, of course, is a good example. You can see how whoever wrote this knew exactly what the situation was in that day.

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