



Joseph

“In the Beginning”

“Now Israel (Jacob) loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors.” Genesis 37: 3

Joseph, the son of Jacob (Israel) and Rachel, was a favorite of his father. Jacob had 12 children. Joseph was the 11th one. According to the Bible, because Jacob favored Joseph, he made him a coat of many colors. This made the other brothers jealous. Then he had a dream and told the other brothers about it so their jealousy was kindled and they decided to get rid of him. They stripped him of his coat of many colors, put him in a pit and then sold him to some traveling merchants. Then they dipped his coat into blood and led Jacob to believe that Joseph had been killed.

According to some lyrics from the well-known musical “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” Joseph pranced around in his coat and sang “ I look handsome, I look smart, I am a walking work of art, Such a dazzling coat of colours, How I love my coat of many colours.” I think this is Broadway’s version and doubt that Joseph did that, but even still to be the one brother picked out of the twelve to have a special coat along with favoritism from his father must have caused some stir among the family.

Joseph was taken into Egypt by the people who bought him. He was bought by a rich man named Potiphar. We actually have no name for Potiphar’s wife, but she has a lot to say in the story of Joseph and his time in Egypt. The Lord was with him and he prospered, as did all around him. Eventually Potiphar’s wife wanted Joseph to be with her, but Joseph declined her request. Probably because she was unsuccessful in her attempt, she told her husband that he had slept with her and so the master put Joseph in prison, and again the Lord continued to bless him because he was a good man and an honest man..

After some time, some of the people had dreams, and Joseph was able to interpret them, but they were not satisfied with his interpretation. One day the Pharaoh had a dream and Joseph was called to interpret it. Joseph told the Pharaoh there was going to be a great famine after years of plenty. Joseph gathered together all the things he could to help the people during the famine until he could not even number them anymore.

When the famine came, people went to Joseph for help, even people from other countries. As the time of the famine spread, eventually the brothers of Joseph also went down from Canaan to buy. These were the same brothers who had sold Joseph and had led their father to believe that he had been killed. Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. He used an interpreter to talk with them. He gave them the grain and put their money back in the sack with the grain. He had done this on purpose to test them. He had also asked them to bring Benjamin with them the second time. Even Jacob was afraid to let Benjamin go, but eventually they were so hungry they had to take him with them and return.

The second time Joseph put a silver cup in the grain and then caused them to be checked on their way home. Since they had supposedly stolen the cup, they were brought back to Joseph. Eventually they were told by Joseph who he was. At first they did not believe, and then they were afraid. But Joseph loved them and only wanted to see his father again. He and his family were given everything they could want including some land, and he was able to have his father go down to Egypt. Jacob, now called Israel, did not want to be buried in Egypt so Joseph was able to take him and his whole family back to Canaan where his father was buried. Joseph lived to be 110 years old and was always faithful to God in his caring for those that had wronged him.

Prayer: Our Heavenly Father, we read the story of Joseph and know that trusting you, we will still be challenged by other people. But help us to see also, that you will always be with us and help us if we only believe. Strengthen us as we face opposition in little things that we may have strength to witness for you and love those around us. Amen.

1. How does jealousy help us to do things to hurt not only the one person, but others also?
2. How did jealousy affect the treatment Joseph received from the Pharaoh’s wife?
3. Was it right for Joseph to trick his brothers when they came for grain?
4. Through all of this Joseph never lost his trust and dedication to God?
5. Would we be the same if thrown into a pit by our brothers and then into prison?

Joseph: Joseph's birth is first mentioned in Genesis 30. His story is long as was his influence, and it continues until his death in Genesis 50. Brief references are made to his lineage throughout the rest of the Old Testament. His place in the lineage of Christ and his being one of the fathers of Israel are mentioned in the New Testament. 15

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