

Joseph is sold by His Brothers

Genesis 37

Israel lived in the land of Canaan. It's the land where his father had stayed.

Joseph was a young man. He was 17 years old. He was taking care of the flocks with some of his brothers. Joseph brought their father a bad report about them.

Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons. Joseph had been born to him when he was old. Israel made him a beautiful robe.

Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them. So they hated Joseph. They couldn't even speak one kind word to him.

Joseph had a dream. When he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. He said to them, "Listen to the dream I had. We were tying up bundles of grain out in the field. Suddenly my bundle rose and stood up straight. Your bundles gathered around my bundle and bowed down to it."

His brothers said to him, "Do you plan to be king over us? Will you really rule over us?" So they hated him even more because of his dream. They didn't like what he had said.

Then Joseph had another dream. He told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said. "I had another dream. This time the sun and moon and 11 stars were bowing down to me."

He told his father as well as his brothers. Then his father objected. He said, "What about this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers really do that? Will we really come and bow down to the ground in front of you?"

His brothers were jealous of him. But his father kept the matter in mind.

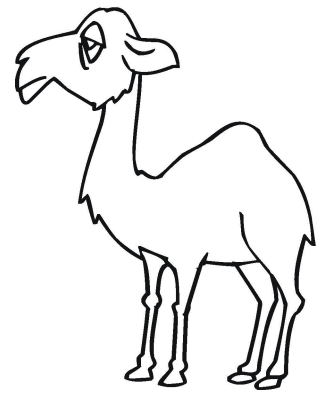
Joseph's brothers had gone to take care of their father's flocks near Shechem. Israel said to Joseph, "As you know, your brothers are taking care of the flocks near Shechem.



Come. I'm going to send you to them."

"All right," Joseph replied.

So Israel said to him, "Go to your brothers. See how they are doing. Also see how the flocks are doing. Then come back and tell me." So he sent him away from the Hebron Valley.



Joseph arrived at Shechem. A man found him wandering around in the fields. He asked Joseph, "What are you looking for?"

He replied, "I'm looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are taking care of their flocks?"

"They've moved on from here," the man answered. "I heard them say, 'Let's go to Dothan.' "

So Joseph went to look for his brothers. He found them near Dothan. But they saw him a long way off. Before he reached them, they made plans to kill him.

"Here comes that dreamer!" they said to one another. "Come. Let's kill him. Let's throw him into one of these empty wells. Let's say that a wild animal ate him up. Then we'll see whether his dreams will come true."

Reuben heard them. He tried to save Joseph from them. "Let's not take his life," he said. "Let's not spill any blood. Throw him into this empty well here in the desert. But don't harm him yourselves."

Reuben said that to save Joseph from them. He was hoping he could take him back to his father.

When Joseph came to his brothers, he was wearing his beautiful robe. They took it away from him. And they threw him into the well. The well was empty. There wasn't any water in it.

Then they sat down to eat their meal. As they did, they saw some Ishmaelite traders coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, lotion and myrrh. They were on their way to take them down to Egypt.

Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and try to cover up what we've done? Come. Let's sell him to these traders. Let's not harm him ourselves. After all, he's our brother. He's our own flesh and blood." Judah's brothers agreed with him.

The traders from Midian came by. Joseph's brothers pulled him up out of the well. They sold him to the Ishmaelite traders for eight ounces of silver. Then the traders took him to Egypt.

Later, Reuben came back to the empty well. He saw that Joseph wasn't there. He was so upset that he tore his clothes. 30 He went back to his brothers and said, "The boy isn't there! Now what should I do?"

Then they got Joseph's beautiful robe. They killed a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. They took it back to their father. They said, "We found this. Take a look at it. See if it's your son's robe."

Jacob recognized it. He said, "It's my son's robe! A wild animal has eaten him up. Joseph must have been torn to pieces."

Jacob tore his clothes. He put on black clothes. Then he sobbed over his son for many days.

All of Jacob's other sons and daughters came to comfort him. But they weren't able to. He said, "I'll be full of sorrow when I go down into the grave to be with my son." So Joseph's father sobbed over him.

But the traders from Midian sold Joseph to Potiphar in Egypt. Potiphar was one of Pharaoh's officials. He was the captain of the palace guard.