

empty. He cried, and begged them to save him; but they would not. They calmly sat down to eat their dinner on the grass, while their brother was calling to them from the pit.

After the dinner, Reuben chanced to go to another part of the field; so that he was not at hand when a company of men passed by with their camels, going from Gilead, on the east of the river Jordan, to Egypt, to sell spices and fragrant gum from trees to the Egyptians.

Then Judah, another of Joseph's brothers, said, "What good will it do us to kill our brother? Would it not be better for us to sell him to these men, and let them carry him away? After all, he is our brother, and we would better not to kill him."

His brothers agreed with him; so they stopped the men who were passing, and drew up Joseph from the pit, and for twenty pieces of silver they sold Joseph to these men; and they took him away with them down to Egypt.

After awhile, Reuben came to the pit, where they had left Joseph, and looked into it; but Joseph was not there. Then Reuben was in great trouble; and he came back to his brothers, saying: "The boy is not there! What shall I do!"

Then his brothers told Reuben what they had done; and they all agreed together to deceive their father. They killed one of the goats, and dipped Joseph's coat in its blood; and they brought it to their father, and they said to him: "We found this coat out in the wilderness. Look at it, father, and tell us if you think it was the coat of your son."

And Jacob knew it at once. He said: "It is my son's coat. Some wild beast has eaten him. There is no doubt that Joseph has been torn in pieces!"

And Jacob's heart was broken over the loss of Joseph, all the more because he had sent Joseph alone on the journey through the wilderness. They tried to comfort him, but he would not be comforted. He said: "I will go down to the grave mourning for my poor lost son."

So the old man sorrowed for his son Joseph; and all the time his wicked brothers knew that Joseph was not dead; but they would not tell their father the dreadful deed they had done to their brother, in selling him as a slave.

(END OF STORY)

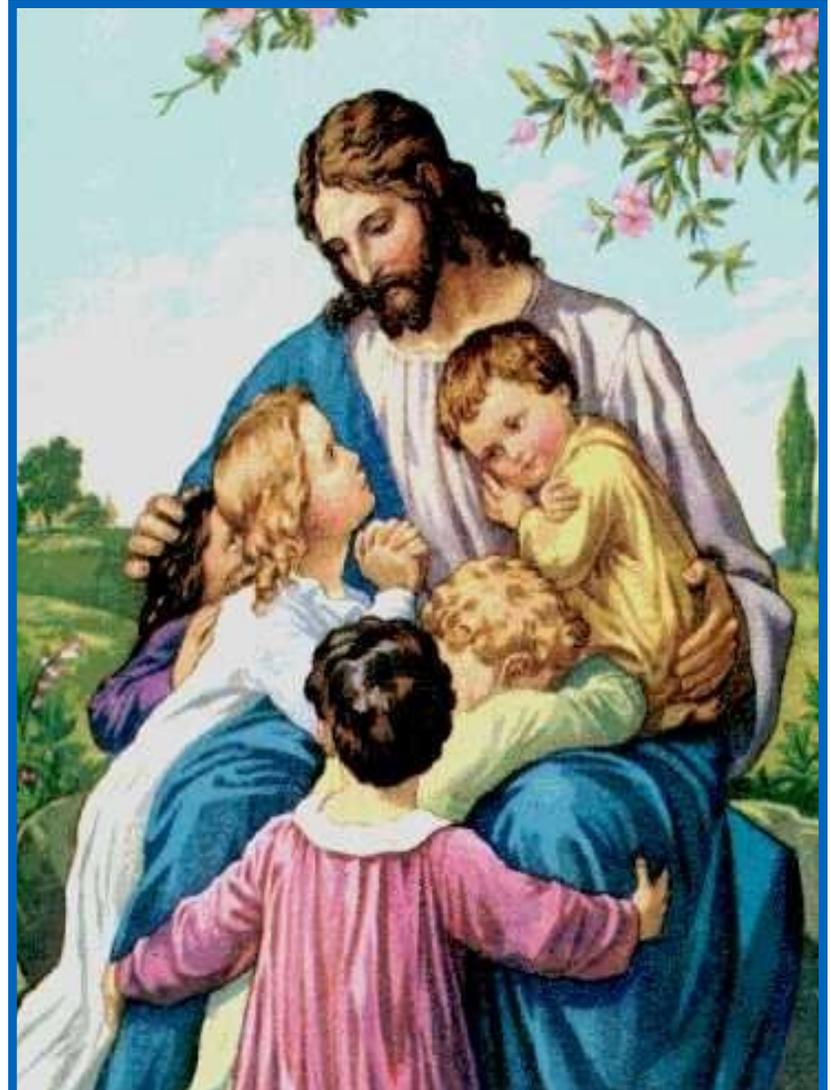
WHY DID JACOB LOVE JOSEPH THE BEST?



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The Story of Joseph and His Coat of Many Colors

After Jacob came back to the land of Canaan with his eleven sons, another son was born to him, the second child of his wife Rachel, whom Jacob loved so well. But soon after the baby came, his mother Rachel died, and Jacob was filled with sorrow. Even to this day you can see the place where Rachel was buried, on the road between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Jacob named the child whom Rachel left, Benjamin; and now Jacob had twelve sons. Most of them were grown-up men; but Joseph was a boy seventeen years old, and his brother Benjamin was almost a baby.

Of all his children, Jacob loved Joseph the best because he was Rachel's child; because he was so much younger than most of his brothers; and because he was good, and faithful, and thoughtful. Jacob gave to Joseph a robe or coat of bright colors, made somewhat like a long cloak with wide sleeves. This was a special mark of Jacob's favor to Joseph, and it made his older brothers envious of him.

Then, too, Joseph did what was right, while his older brothers often did very wrong acts, of which Joseph sometimes told their father; and this made them very angry at Joseph. But they hated him still more because of two strange dreams he had, and of which he told them. He said one day: "Listen to this dream that I have dreamed. I dreamed that we were out in the field binding sheaves, when suddenly my sheaf stood up, and all your sheaves came around it and bowed down to my sheaf!"

And they said scornfully, "Do you suppose that the dream means that you will some time rule over us, and that we shall bow down to you?"

Then, a few days after, Joseph said, "I have dreamed again. This time, I saw in my dream the sun, and the moon, and eleven stars, all come and bow to me!"

And his father said to him, "I do not like you to dream such dreams. Shall I, and your mother, and your brothers, come and bow down before you as if you were a king?"

His brothers hated Joseph, and would not speak kindly to him; but his father thought much of what Joseph had said.

At one time, Joseph's ten brothers were taking care of the flock in the fields near Shechem, which was nearly fifty miles from Hebron, where Jacob's tents were spread. And Jacob wished to send a message to his sons, and he called Joseph, and said to him: "Your brothers are near Shechem with the flock. I wish that you would go to them, and take a message, and find if they are well, and if the flocks are doing well; and bring me word from them."

That was quite an errand, for a boy to go alone over the country, and find his way, for fifty miles, and then walk home again. But Joseph was a boy who could take care of himself, and could be trusted; so he went forth on his journey, walking northward over the mountains, past Bethlehem, and Jerusalem, and Bethel—though we are not sure those cities were then built, except Jerusalem, which was already a strong city.

When Joseph reached Shechem, he could not find his brothers, for they had taken their flocks to another place. A man met Joseph wandering in the field, and asked him, "Whom are you seeking?"

Joseph said, "I am looking for my brothers; the sons of Jacob. Can you tell me where I will find them?" And the man said, "They are at Dothan; for I heard them say that they were going there."

Then Joseph walked over the hills to Dothan, which was fifteen miles further. And his brothers saw him afar off coming toward them. They knew him by his bright garment; and one said to another: "Look, that dreamer is coming! Come, let us kill him, and throw his body into a pit, and tell his father that some wild beast has eaten him; and then we will see what becomes of his dreams."

One of his brothers, whose name was Reuben, felt more kindly toward Joseph than the others. He said: "Let us not kill him, but let us throw him into this pit, in the wilderness, and leave him there to die."

But Reuben intended, after they had gone away, to lift Joseph out of the pit, and take him home to his father. The brothers did as Reuben told them; they threw Joseph into the pit, which was