

STORY: GENESIS: JOSEPH THE BELOVED SON (Genesis 37)

REVIEW

So far we've learned of a few important people in the Bible:

- Abraham
- Isaac
- Jacob

How many sons did Jacob have? *12*

For the next few weeks, we're learning about one of Jacob's sons:

- Joseph

Abraham-Isaac-Jacob-Joseph are called the "patriarchs" or fathers of the Hebrew race.

The Hebrews, also known as Israelites, were God's special people, His chosen people, His covenant people.

Through this, God fulfilled His promise to Abraham that he will have more descendants than the stars in the skies or the sands on the seas.

STORY

So Jacob had 2 wives — Leah and Rachel.

Rachel could not have children for a very long time. Finally, she had 2 sons — Joseph and Benjamin. (Rachel passed away after giving birth to Benjamin.)

Of all his brothers, Joseph was his father's most beloved son.

Of course this didn't make his brothers happy, especially when 17-year-old Joseph caught them goofing off one day and told Dad.

One day, Jacob made a beautiful coat of many, many colours for Joseph.

Joseph was very happy with it. But this made his brothers even more jealous of him.

When his brothers realized that their father loved him more than them, they grew to hate him — they wouldn't even speak to him.

Joseph is also known as the Dreamer. Why? Because God gave him many dreams.

In one of the dreams, Joseph and his family were in the field gathering bundles of wheat. Suddenly Joseph's bundle stood straight up, and all the other bundles (belonging to his brothers) circled around it and bowed to it.

In another dream, the sun, moon and 11 stars bowed to Joseph. This was a picture of Joseph's father, mother and 11 brothers bowing to him.

Of course, when Joseph told his brothers about his dreams, they were furious. "So! You're going to rule us? You're going to boss us around?!"

But Jacob thought about all the Joseph said.

One day, Joseph's brothers went to Shechem to take care of their father's sheep.

Jacob told Joseph to go and check on them and bring back a report.

So Joseph goes to look for his brothers.

As he was approaching, his brothers spotted him in the distance. They started to think of a plot to get rid of him.

"Here comes that dreamer. Let's kill him and throw him into one of these old wells; we can say that a vicious animal ate him up. We'll see what his dreams amount to."

Reuben, the eldest, quickly said, "Don't kill him! We can just throw him into the well, but let's not harm him." Reuben was hoping he could rescue Joseph later and return him to his father.

So when Joseph came, the brothers stripped off his beautiful colourful coat and threw him into an empty well.

As they were sitting down to eat their meal, a caravan of Midianite traders came.

Judah said, "Let's just sell Joseph to these traders. We don't have to kill him. After all, he is our own brother, our flesh and blood." The others agreed.

So they sold Joseph to the traders for 20 shekels of silver.

When Reuben returned and saw that Joseph was gone, he was very afraid. What was he going to tell his father now?! After all, he's the eldest and responsible for his brothers.

So the brothers took Joseph's coat, slaughtered a goat and dipped the coat into the blood. Then they brought it home to show their father.

When Jacob saw the blood-soaked coat, he wailed and cried. "It is my son's robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces. And he mourned for many days, refusing to be comforted.

(The one who lied and cheated his brother was lied and cheated to by his uncle, and now lied and cheated to by his sons. Lying and cheating will only create more lying and cheating. So let's learn to speak the truth always!)

Meanwhile, Joseph was being brought to Egypt. And the story continues next week ...

LESSON

Joseph was Jacob's beloved Son; Jesus is God's beloved son & we are all God's beloved children.

Jacob trusted Joseph to check on his brothers and bring back reports for him.

Jacob blessed Joseph with a beautiful colourful coat as a mark that he was the beloved son.

This reminds us that Jesus was God's beloved son.

When Jesus was on earth, twice God spoke from heaven to declare, *"This is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased."*

But because of Jesus, we are all now God's beloved children. Unlike Jacob, God doesn't play favourites. So we don't have to be jealous of each other. God sees us in His beloved son, Jesus, so He loves all of us just the same!

So we can live each day knowing that our Father's favour and grace is on us always.

Romans 9:24, *"I will call those who were not my people, 'my people,' and he who was not beloved, 'beloved'."*

Joseph's brothers tried to kill the Dreamer. But God's dreams don't die.

God had a purpose for Joseph's life. And even though his brothers tried to stop it by selling him off, God continued to work in Joseph's life to bring it to reality (as we will find out more in the next few lessons).

Jesus also was rejected by his brothers. He was betrayed by his disciple for 30 pieces of silver, whipped and crucified.

The devil thought he had destroyed God's plan of saving the world. He thought he had won! But he was wrong.

God used the devil's evil plans to bring His own plan of salvation to reality.

Take-Home Lesson:

Because of Jesus, we are God's beloved children.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTION

Song: I am Special

(sing to the tune of "Are you sleeping?")

I am special (point to yourself)

I am special

Don't you see? (make binoculars with your fingers)

Don't you see?

Someone very special (hands out to the side, palms up)

Someone very special

'Cause God (point to heaven) made me (point to yourself)

God made me!

Colour Craft/Experiment:

Choose a colour-based activity or craft (depending on age group) to tie in with Joseph's colourful coat and remind the children that they are all God's beloved children.

E.g.

- Walking Water Science Experiment
<http://www.coffeecupsandcrayons.com/walking-water-science-experiment-kids/>
- Potato printing
- Filter paper colouring
<http://www.instructables.com/id/Coffee-Filter-Flowers-Great-for-Valentines-Day-and/>
- Coloured games: <http://www.learning4kids.net/2-years-3-years/>
- Colourful names: <http://happyhooligans.ca/salt-glue-watercolour-art/>