

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

Sometimes being the favorite child can cause problems for that child. It did for Joseph. Although Joseph was loved he also was able to love others and especially his brothers who had wronged him. 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 Genesis 37:3, 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 caused some stir among the family. 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 been difficult for the other brothers.

“We have flown the air like birds and swum the sea like fishes, but have yet to learn the simple act of walking the earth like brothers.”
Martin Luther King Jr.

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. Joseph was

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

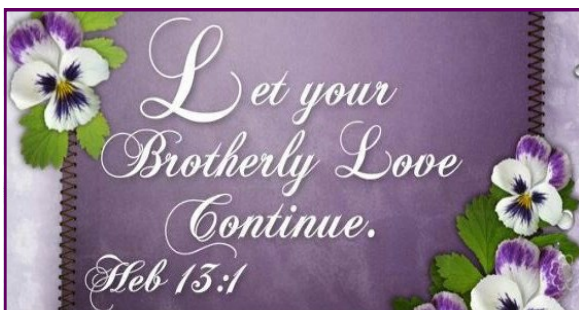
Jesus Christ

called to interpret it. He told the Pharaoh there would 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.



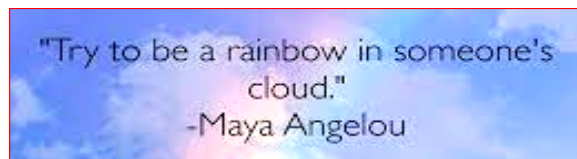
Who would throw his brother into a cave and leave him? Who would sell his brother into slavery?

It is hard to imagine that a person who was treated this way would still love his brother enough to give him food and protection. But let's stop and think about the way we are still treating our brothers today. I am not sure that much has changed. Listening to the news for a short time tells us that things are still the same. We can harm our brothers in many ways and we do. We all sin. Our sins are not written down in public for everyone else to read, but I truly believe that God sees them all. The wonderful thing about our God is that He forgives us if we ask seventy times seven times. He loved us enough to sacrifice his life for us.

There are so many good people in this world that we don't recognize, but we seem to always know about the bad ones. We need to focus on the ones like Joseph who gave far beyond what was required.

I see people signing organ donor cards and people willing to give bone marrow or part of a liver, or a kidney to someone they hardly know. This is brotherly love at its finest.

I once had the opportunity to work on a dinner to help a family that had a member who required a double transplant. People came "out of the wall" to help. Working on that dinner was a blessing because people worked with love in their hearts. Strangers walk for various causes or ride motorcycles. They may or may not know someone with that illness, but they know they can be a help in finding a cure.



After reading Joseph's story it is easy to understand why he was in the lineage of Christ. We have that same opportunity to help our brother every day.

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.

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?

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