

019 Joseph and his brothers

MEMORY VERSE: For it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.

Duet. 31:6

SCRIPTURES: Genesis 37

AIM: God is with us

Jacob had twelve Sons but he loved Joseph best. His brothers knew Joseph was their father's favorite son and they were jealous.

Jacob gave Joseph a special gift, a brightly colored coat. This made the brothers angry. "He never gave us a coat like that," they said.

Because Jacob loved Joseph so much his brothers hated him.

One night Joseph had a dream in which he told to his brothers. "All twelve of us were in the field tying up sheaves of wheat. Suddenly my sheaf stood up straight and tall while all of yours bowed down to it," he said.

His brothers got angry. They said, "Do you think we are going to bow down to you? Never!" Now they hated him even more.

Then Joseph had another dream in which the sun, the moon, and eleven stars all bowed down to him. He told everyone in the family about it. Even his father questioned this dream. "Do you really think that your mother, brothers and I will bow down to you?" he asked.

Some time later the brothers had gone to Shechem, a good distance away, to find pasture for their sheep.

Jacob began to worry. "Joseph, your brothers have been gone so long. Please go see if they're all right."

So Joseph set out. He reached Shechem safely but there was no sign of his brothers or the animals.

As Joseph stood wondering what to do, a man spoke to him. "Are you looking for someone?"

"Yes," Joseph said, "my brothers."

"I heard them say they were going to Dothan," the man replied.

By this time Joseph was very tired and hungry but he hurried on his way. When he was still in the distance his brothers caught sight of him coming toward them. They saw his brightly colored coat and they said to each other, "Look! Here comes the dreamer. Let's kill him while we have the chance."

But Reuben, the oldest, said, "Let's not kill him. We can put him in this pit."

"All right," the others agreed. Secretly Reuben planned to rescue Joseph later when the others had left.

What a shock for Joseph when he arrived and saw his brothers angry faces. They seized him, tore off his beautiful coat and threw him into the deep pit. There was no way Joseph could climb out.

"Please let me out," he pleaded, but his brothers only laughed and sat down to enjoy their meal. How very cruel jealousy is!

While they were eating, a camel caravan of traders came riding by on their way to Egypt.

"Let's sell Joseph to the traders," Judah suggested. "Then we won't feel guilty about leaving him to die." Reuben was not there to hear this suggestion.

The other brothers thought it was a good plan. They would be rid of Joseph and they would make some money as well.

When a rope was dangled into the darkness of the pit, Joseph thought he was being rescued. But he was sadly mistaken.

“What will you pay for this strong young man?” Joseph’s brothers asked the traders.

The traders looked at Joseph. He was healthy and strong. “We’ll give you twenty pieces of silver,” they offered. The deal was made and Joseph was led away.

When Reuben came back to the well and found Joseph gone, he was horrified. “The boy isn’t here,’ he exclaimed. What am I going to do?”

The brothers explained to Reuben what they had done. Now they must decide what to tell their father.

They killed a goat and took the coat they had ripped off Joseph and dipped it into the goat’s blood.

When they reached home they showed the coat to Jacob saying, “We found this. Does it belong to Joseph?”

Jacob cried out, “My son has been torn into pieces by wild animals! All my life I shall mourn for him.” Jacob wept and no one could comfort him.

Even though Joseph’s brothers knew he was still alive and they saw how sad their father was, they still didn’t tell Jacob the terrible thing they had done.

Deception is never the right choice. One lie leads to another. God can help us to keep deception out of our lives if we ask Him.