

## A BOY WHO DREAMED



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**BOYS** and girls, and almost everybody else, have dreams. Most dreams are not important. Whether our dreams are good or bad, it is usually best to forget about them as soon as we can. But in the long, long ago some of the people who were especially loved by God were given dreams from him which had important meanings. A young man by the name of Joseph was given such a dream from the Lord. In fact, he had two dreams. In both of these dreams God showed to Joseph some of the things that were to come into his life when he grew older. This young man, Joseph, was a son of Jacob. Jacob was, you will remember, the one who bought the birthright from Esau. After Jacob obtained the birthright from his father, Isaac, his twin brother Esau was very angry with him, and he had to flee for his life. He went into the land of his grandfather's and his mother's people. In fact, he found his uncle's home.

This uncle was named Laban.

Jacob stayed at Laban's home for many years. He had twelve boys who are spoken of in the Bible as the twelve sons of Jacob. Joseph was next to the youngest one of these boys. When they grew up they were herdsmen, or keepers of cattle and sheep. Jacob loved his son Joseph very much. Joseph loved God and the promises of

God. In order to show how much he loved Joseph, his father made him a beautiful coat of many colors.

This made the other boys jealous of Joseph.

I have told you in other stories how terrible it is to be jealous. It was jealousy that caused Cain to kill his brother Abel. And now these older brothers of Joseph became jealous of him, and the Bible says that they hated him.

Just about this time Joseph had his first dream. He dreamed that he and his brothers were all out in a field gathering grain. Each of them had gathered up a bundle of grain called “shocks.” Joseph’s bundle stood straight up in the field, and all the other bundles bowed down toward it.



It might have been better for Joseph if he had kept this dream to himself. But he was so excited about it that he told his brothers, and when he told them of this dream they understood it to mean that Joseph expected that some day they would all bow down to him, and that made them more jealous than ever, and they hated him even more.

A little later Joseph had another dream. In this dream, which was even more wonderful than the first one, Joseph saw the sun and the moon and eleven stars bow down to him. Joseph told this dream to his brothers, and also to his father.

His father was just a little angry about it because it seemed to mean that some time in the future he, as the father of Joseph, would, have to bow down to his son. Of course Joseph’s brothers were made more angry than ever.

Not long after this Joseph's brothers went to a part of the country called Shechem to find better fields for their flocks. They were too far away from home to come back each night, so after they had been gone for a while, Jacob wondered how his sons were getting along, and how their flocks were faring.

Joseph was too young to work in the fields with his brothers, so he had stayed at home. His father asked him if he would go to Shechem, find his brothers, learn how they were getting along, and bring back word to him. Well, Joseph had the Boy Scout spirit, and he was willing to do this errand for his father. So he started on his way to Shechem.

When he arrived there he couldn't find his brothers, and he was wandering around in the fields when a man came up to him and asked:

"What seekest thou?"

Joseph told the man he was looking for his brothers, and the man replied:

"I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan."

So Joseph traveled still farther until he came to Dothan, and here he found his brothers taking care of their flocks.

His brothers saw him coming. He was probably walking, and it took him some time to reach them. So this gave his brothers a chance to make some plans. They decided that they would kill their brother, just as Cain, because of jealousy, decided that he would kill Abel. Jealousy, you see, always leads people into trouble.

They called their brother a dreamer. So instead of letting him go back to his father, they seized him, and were ready to take his life.

The name of the oldest son was Reuben. Evidently Reuben was not quite so wicked as the others, and he pleaded with his brothers not to kill Joseph. He suggested that they put Joseph in a pit. Reuben's plan was that when the others were not watching, he would rescue Joseph so he could go back to his father again.

Reuben's brothers agreed to this, not knowing, of course, what Reuben was hoping to do. But after they had put Joseph into the pit the brothers noticed that traveling nearby was a group of what the

Bible calls Midianites. They were merchants, or storekeepers, from the country called Midian. Joseph's brethren decided to sell Joseph to them. These Midianites were on their way to Egypt, and Joseph's brethren knew that in Egypt, Pharaoh the king, and probably other rich people there, bought slaves.

So they sold Joseph to the Midianites, who took him to Egypt, where he was sold to an officer of the king as a slave. Then the brothers took Joseph's coat of many colors which his father had made for him and dipped it in the blood of a goat, and returned it to their father. When their father saw this coat covered with blood he was sure that his beloved boy Joseph had been killed by a wild beast. So years and years went by, and Jacob thought that Joseph was dead, while all the time his brothers knew that he was a slave in Egypt. Yes, Joseph's brothers called him a dreamer. Those two wonderful dreams that God gave to Joseph had caused him a lot of trouble. No doubt his brothers thought that those dreams would never come true. How could Joseph ever rule over them now that he was away down in Egypt, working for some rich man as a slave?

But there was one thing Joseph's brothers did not know. They did not know that those wonderful dreams were given to Joseph by God, and that God would be sure to make them come true.

As year after year went by, no doubt Joseph's brethren would remember what they had done, and perhaps they said to themselves with a little chuckle:

"We fixed him, all right. He thought that we would have to bow down to him, but he was mistaken."

But was he?

## **QUESTIONS**

- Who was Joseph, and why did his father, Jacob, love him more than he did his other sons?
- What were the two dreams of Joseph, and why did the telling of these dreams make his brothers angry?

- Why did Joseph's brothers sell him to the Midianites, and how did they make their father believe that Joseph had been killed?

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***Dawn Bible Students Association***