

# Joseph Envied by His Brethren

*Key Verses: “Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.”*  
—Genesis 37:3,4

*Selected Scripture:  
Genesis 37:3-35*

**TODAY’S LESSON COMMENCES** in Canaan and is a reminder of the heritage of faith possessed by the patriarchs. They held fast to God’s wonderful promise that through Abraham and his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed.—Gen. 22:15-18; 37:1; Heb. 11:8-22

Our Key Verses assert that Jacob, whose name God had changed to Israel, loved and esteemed his son Joseph most highly. He had been born through Rachel, Jacob’s favorite wife. Having received from his father a coat of many colors as an evidence of special status, Joseph’s brethren envied him.

Resentment towards Joseph continued as he told them of matters about which he dreamed. “Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the

field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.”—Gen. 37:5-8

Joseph recounted another dream in which he described how the sun, moon and eleven stars made homage to him. Not only did his words evoke his brethren’s continued anger, but even Jacob rebuked him by inquiring whether his dream implied that his parents also would be required to bow down to him. Nevertheless, Jacob reflected upon the matter, possibly considering that God may have had some plans for Joseph’s future exaltation.—vss. 9-11

When Joseph was seventeen years of age, Jacob sent him to Shechem to check upon the wellbeing of his brothers who had traveled from home to feed their flocks. Eventually, Joseph found them in Dothan, and as he approached them their anger and jealousy towards him overflowed and they conspired to kill him. Through the intervention of Reuben and Judah, Joseph’s life was spared, and after being cast into a pit he was sold to traveling merchants and taken to Egypt. Joseph’s brothers took his beautiful coat of many colors, dipped it into the blood of a young goat and showed it to their father. Upon seeing the blood-stained coat, Jacob was distraught, thinking that his beloved son had been killed by a wild beast.—vss. 12-35

Although the details of this narrative are very painful and happened during Old Testament times, the conduct of Joseph’s brethren provides an important lesson as to the type of individuals we ought to be. “Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful.” (I Cor. 13:4, *Revised Standard Version*) May the import of this admonition be daily made manifest in all of our dealings with our brethren as well as the world of mankind with whom we come in contact. ■