



READ: Genesis 37:3-8 (NIV)

Now Israel [Jacob's new name] loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him. Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it." His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

ENTER THE STORY:

Abraham had Isaac, and Isaac had twin boys - Jacob and Esau. God chose to use Jacob's family to bring his really BIG promises to the world. Jacob had 12 sons, but he loved *ONE* son more than all of his other sons, Joseph. To show his love for Joseph, he gave him a special, colorful coat. This made Joseph's other brothers really mad.

Have you ever gotten mad when your brother or sister got something you didn't? Well, it's kind of like that.

Joseph's brothers were SO mad at him that they threw him in a pit, but later they decided it would be better to sell him for a few pieces of silver money. When the men who bought Joseph took him away, his brothers thought they would never see him again. "Good riddance to that dreamer," they said.

But Joseph's story was only getting started. God had BIG plans for him, and even though it was going to take a *LONG TIME* and lots of bad things were going to happen to Joseph along the way, God was right by his side, helping him and protecting him through it all, and Joseph *KNEW* it. This was his *SECRET* power! He knew God was up to something big because of his dreams, so he chose to *TRUST* God and have a good attitude no matter what.

Eventually, Joseph got a chance to see his brothers again. Let's see what happens.

READ: Genesis 50:15-21, (NIV)

When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?" So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: 'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly'... When their message came to him, Joseph wept. His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said. But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

CHRISTMAS CONNECTION:

There is another story in the Bible about a man who was mistreated by his family and sold for a few pieces of silver, and he too trusted God and had a good attitude no matter what. But there was *ONE* key difference, Joseph went through bad things and eventually reached a place of power where he could save people from a physical problem. This other special person left a really, really wonderful place where he was in a place of power so he could go through bad things, and eventually die to save people from a much bigger problem... their sin.

Do you know who this special someone is? It's Jesus, the Serpent Crusher and Abraham's special offspring!

- **PRAY:** *Heavenly Father, thank you so much for being with us through all of the bad things that happen in our world.*
- *Will you help us to be like Joseph and trust you no matter what? Thank you for sending Jesus to save us from our sins*
- *and fill the hunger in our hearts for a Savior. Amen.*
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