

## 11.01 Joseph—Coat and Dreams (Genesis 37:1–11)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows  
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

### Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- (optional) Flash cards from “Joseph,” Genesis Series 5, A Beka Book, Pensacola, FL
- (optional) Herein Is Love Commentary Series; *Genesis, A Commentary for Children*, by Nancy Ganz, Shepherd Press, 2002.

**Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:** Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *coat of many colors*: It “was interwoven with threads of divers colours, or painted, or embroidered with divers figures, or made with different pieces of various colours: according to Jerome, it was a garment which reached down to the ankles, and was distinguished with great variety by the hands of the artificer, or which had long sleeves reaching to the hands” (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/genesis-37-3.html>)
- *sheaf*: a bundle of grain stalks tied together
- *dreams*: they figure heavily in the story of Joseph

### Scripture—(NASV)

Genesis 37:1 Jacob lived in the land of his father’s sojournings, in the land of Canaan.

2 These are the generations of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father’s wives. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. 3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors. 4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.

5 Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. 6 He said to them, “Hear this dream that I have dreamed: 7 Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf.” 8 His brothers said to him, “Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?” So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

9 Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, “Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” 10 But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, “What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?” 11 And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

### Introduction/Review:

After the twenty-years’ tension of wondering how Esau would receive him, Jacob was blessed by God when Esau welcomed him. After these brothers parted, Jacob lived for short periods near Shechem before heading south to Hebron, where his father still lived. On the way, before reaching Bethlehem, Rachel died as she delivered Baby Benjamin. Later, Isaac died at the age of 180 years.

Sad to say, sometimes parents favor one child over others. Maybe after having all girls, they have a boy or vice versa. Maybe the child looks and/or acts like a special loved one. For whatever reason, that child is the favorite, and all the other children know that's the situation even if the parent doesn't outwardly express the favoritism. Sometimes the other children respond with a negative attitude towards the favored one.

## **Story:**

### ***The favorite***

Joseph was the favorite of all of Jacob's thirteen children. The Bible gives a reason for this: Joseph was the son of his old age, for ✓he was ninety-one years old when Joseph was born. ✓We can surmise another reason: he was the firstborn of Rachel, Jacob's best-loved wife. Maybe Joseph even resembled his mother enough to make Jacob think of her every time he looked at Joseph.

### ***Bad report***

Joseph didn't get out of work by being the favorite. When he was seventeen years old, he worked with his brothers in the field, pasturing sheep. Specifically, he was working with the sons of Bilhah\* and Zilpah, the servant wives of Jacob. The brothers' names were Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. We don't know what went wrong, but Joseph reported his brothers' misdeeds to their father, Jacob. Probably Joseph saw this report as necessary information, but his brothers didn't like be "ratted on." They certainly didn't love him better for being a tattle-tale.

### ***Special coat***

Even when parents have a favorite, they often try to treat all the children equally, but sometimes they just let it all hang out that they love one over the others. Jacob did the latter, obviously making Joseph his "pet." He did it by getting Joseph a very special coat. In contrast to the other sons' outer garments, which were plain-colored, reaching to the knees, Joseph's outer garment was multi-colored and reached to his ankles and wrists (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/genesis-37-3.html>). It distinguished him from the other brothers much like a prince's robe distinguishes him from the common folks.

This coat caused even more jealousy. The Bible states, "When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him." Do you see? They could hardly talk civilly to Joseph because they hated him so much.

### ***Two dreams***

Then two things happened to make them hate Joseph even more. Joseph had two dreams. Listen as Joseph tells the first dream: "Hear this dream that I have dreamed: Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf."

How would you interpret that dream? I wouldn't know, but Joseph's brothers figured out the meaning. They said to him, "Are you indeed going to reign over us? Or are you to rule over us?" Ah! They understood Joseph to say his dream meant he would rule over them. They thought, "What a preposterous idea!" Hatred for him welled up even more in their souls because of his "foolish" dream and words.

But a second dream supported the first. Despite his brothers' reaction, Joseph didn't keep quiet about the dream but told it to his brothers: "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

### ***The response***

Can you imagine the hatred *that* dream aroused?! When Joseph told it to his father as well as his brothers, even Jacob rebuked Joseph: "What do mean to say by this dream you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?" How foolish an idea

that was!

So Joseph's brothers were jealous of and despised him. Perhaps they had good reason. ✓However, even though the Bible says Joseph told the dreams, it does not say he proudly flaunted his beautiful coat and his dreams. ✓Maybe he simply innocently relayed them.

Although even Jacob rebuked Joseph, the Bible tells us he wondered about the meaning of the dream.

---

\*Bilhah, formerly Rachel's maid, likely was Joseph's and Benjamin's acting mother now (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/genesis-37-10.html>).

### Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:

Joseph was the son of his father's old age, Christ the son of the Ancient of days

Joseph was in a peculiar manner beloved by his father, Christ is the dear son of his Father's love

Jacob made for Joseph a coat of many colours, God prepared a body in human nature for Christ, filled and adorned with the various gifts and graces of the Spirit without measure.

Joseph was hated by his brethren, and they could not endure to think he should have the dominion over them. The Jews, of whom Christ was according to the flesh, hated him, and would not have him to reign over them (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/genesis-37-36.html>).

He spoke truth that was not accepted and prophesied of things to come.

- When blessed with special abilities, possessions, and honor, we must be careful not to be proud. (I personally don't believe Joseph was flaunting his privilege in this story.)
- When others are blessed with special abilities, possessions, and honor, ask the Lord to give grace to avoid jealousy and genuinely to be glad for the other person.

### Activities:

- Play dough: sheaves; sun, moon, eleven stars; a coat
- Sing Diana Dow's song, "Joseph," found with audio at <http://www.biblesongsandmore.com/songs/old-testament-songs/josephsong/>. Since today's story did not include throwing Joseph into a pit, change the last phrase of the song to "that they really hated him."
- Sing "Jacob" found at Lesson 10.01 or on the Songs page at [teachingthebibletochildren.org](http://teachingthebibletochildren.org), where there is also audio and a visual.
- Discuss dreams: Dreams figure heavily in the story of Joseph, first, in his own life and later as he interprets dreams. Generally, information given by dreams is unnecessary today because we have a complete revelation in the Word of God. However, God is currently using dreams throughout the world among people without access to the Bible for verification and instigation to search out the truths of Scripture. Publications that address persecuted people relay these experiences.
- Discuss jealousy. It can be hard for children and adults to rejoice in the good that happens to others. The tenth commandment tells us not to covet, the essence of jealousy. Ask for grace to have victory when we tend to dislike others who seem to do better or have more than we do. It might be helpful to remind students that even the rich and famous are human and have struggles, oftentimes more than the not-so-rich and famous do. God's grace and provision are sufficient.
- Sing the first stanza of "Joseph" found below. You can also access the audio and a visual aid on the songs page at [teachingthebibletochildren.org](http://teachingthebibletochildren.org).

- Review questions: (Game: Students may place a stalk of wheat or other grain in a container upon answering a question correctly. A craft store is a possible source for such stalks if you don't live in a rural area. Another idea is to place felt stars on a flannel board for each correct answer.)
  1. How old was Joseph when working with his brothers? [Seventeen.]
  2. Who were the brothers with whom Joseph worked? [Sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, or Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.]
  3. What did Joseph tell his father about these brothers? [He gave a bad report.]
  4. Give one reason why Jacob favored Joseph. [He was the son of his old age, of Rachel.]
  5. How did Jacob show his favoritism for Joseph? [Gave him a coat of many colors.]
  6. What was the response of Joseph's brothers to Jacob's favoritism? [Jealousy; hatred; inability to speak peaceably to Joseph.]
  7. Tell the first dream Joseph had. [The brothers' sheaves bowed to Joseph's.]
  8. Tell the second dream Joseph had. [The sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed to Joseph.]
  9. How did the brothers react to the dreams? [Hated Joseph all the more.]
  10. How did Jacob respond to the second dream? [Rebuked Joseph but wondered about the dream.]
  11. In what land were Jacob and his family living? [Canaan; more specifically at Hebron.]

### Memory Verse[s]:

- Proverbs 27:4—Wrath is cruel, anger is overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?

### Handwork:

- Make Joseph's coats out of paper grocery sacks. For each student, cut off the bottom of the sack (the folded and glued part). Cut along one of the creases so that the sack can be laid flat. Fold in half so that the inside is out. Now, prepare for messiness by providing students with smocks to protect clothing and newspapers to protect tables and floors from paint. Using tempera or other bright paint and large paint brushes, have students paint one side of the folded sack with several colors. When the paint has dried, cut a neck hole and a slit down the front.



*coat of many colors*

*sheaf*

*dreams*



<https://depositphotos.com/21964989/stock-photo-sheaf-of-ripe-wheat.html>



<http://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/josephs-dreams/#>



<http://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/josephs-dreams/#>





<http://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/josephs-dreams/#>



<http://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/josephs-dreams/#>



<http://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/josephs-dreams/#>



<http://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/josephs-dreams/#>

