

The Jealous Brothers of Joseph

Jacob returned to the land of Canaan where his father Isaac and grandfather Abraham had lived many years earlier. God had blessed Jacob and his wife Rachel with a large family of twelve sons. God appeared again to him and blessed him, saying: "You will no longer be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name. Many nations and kings will come from you. The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give to you and to your children after you." Soon after this, Jacob's father Isaac died, at the age of 180 years old, and Jacob and his brother Esau buried their father.

The sons of Israel were shepherds, so they spent much time living far away from home in the fields where they could find plenty of grass and water for their flocks of sheep. One day, Israel sent his younger son Joseph out to see how they were doing. He gave Joseph a beautiful coat to keep him warm during his journey. When Joseph's brothers saw him they were jealous because of the love that their father showed toward him and the gifts that he gave him. Joseph also had dreams that seemed to say that someday he would be the leader of the brothers. Now the brothers plotted to kill him, but Reuben, the oldest, said "No! Don't harm him. Put him into the pit, but do not kill him," for Reuben planned to rescue Joseph and return him to Jacob.

When Joseph drew near, the brothers took off his robe and threw him into the pit. They ignored his cries for help until a caravan of traders passed by on their way to Egypt. The brothers decided to sell Joseph to the traders, who later sold Joseph as a slave to Potiphar, the captain of the Pharaoh's guard. Potiphar trusted Joseph and put him in charge of the Pharaoh's household, but Potiphar's wife deceived Joseph and had him put into jail. Later, when the Pharaoh wanted someone to interpret his dreams, he was told that Joseph was able to tell him what they meant. Joseph told the Pharaoh that there would be seven good years of harvest followed by seven years of bad crops and famine. Joseph told the

Pharaoh to store up food during the good years so there would be enough to feed the people during the bad years. Pharaoh was so impressed that he put Joseph in charge and made him the most powerful man in Egypt, next to himself!