

EXPLORING GOD'S WORD

LESSON 3b (Teacher Guide)

[Assigned Reading: Genesis 37-50]

[Themes to Teach: Forgiveness]

(Read Acts 7:2-10)

God called Abraham into a covenant relationship with Him. He promised that He would build out of Abraham and his descendants a great nation and that through this nation, He would bring a blessing to all the families of the earth (Genesis 12:1-3).

- **GOD'S CHOSEN NATION WAS ESTABLISHED THROUGH THE PATRIARCHS:**

The Old Testament, from this point on, focuses on God's working with a select group of people – the descendants of Abraham. His purpose was to use this nation to bring about His plan of redemption for mankind.

- Abraham begat Isaac, the son of the promise.
- Isaac begat Esau & Jacob.
 - Jacob was a deceiver, yet God saw something in him.
 - Jacob convinced his brother to sell him his birthright. (Read Gen 25:29-34)
 - Jacob tricked his father into giving him the blessing. (Read Gen 27:18-23)

After securing the birthright and the blessing, Jacob fled the wrath of his brother. While running he encountered God at a place called Bethel. God offered to Jacob the same covenant that He had made with his father and grandfather.

(Read Genesis 28:10-22)

Jacob, however, is still self-willed and fled instead to Haran (the place God had called Abraham out of). He struggled for 21 years and is cheated by his father-in-law Laban (Genesis 29-31). Jacob reaped what he had sown.

But then, God called him back to Bethel:

Genesis 31:13 (NKJV)

13 I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.' ”

- After an encounter with God, Jacob's name was changed to Israel. (Read Genesis 32:24-28)
- Jacob had twelve sons. They would become the twelve tribes of Israel:
 -

Reuben
Simeon
Levi
Judah
Zebulun
Issachar

Dan
Gad
Asher
Naphtali
Joseph
Benjamin

- **JOSEPH WAS THE FAVORED SON:** (Read Genesis 37:1-5)

Joseph is the oldest son of Rachel. He was his father's favorite. Joseph dreamed dreams that he did not understand, but they pointed to his future. His brothers hated him because of his father's favor and for his dreams.

- Joseph's Struggle:
 - Betrayed and attacked by his brothers (Genesis 37:17-20 & 26-28)
 - Enslaved in Egypt (Genesis 39:1-5)
 - Falsely accused by Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:7-14)
 - Imprisoned in the dungeon (Genesis 39:20-23)
 - Forgotten by the king's butler (Genesis 40:21-22)
- Joseph's Advantage:
 - Yet, the Lord was with Joseph. (Read Genesis 39:2, 21)
 - God's presence is not always indicated by our ease of life.
 - Joseph lived his life *Coram Deo* – before the face of God.
 - He was a man of integrity.
- **JOSEPH IS A POWERFUL EXAMPLE OF FORGIVENESS:**

Joseph could have thwarted the purpose of God in his life by:

- Allowing himself to become bitter.
- Seeking to avenge himself when he had the power.

Instead, he became a beautiful Old Testament picture of Christ's forgiveness.

- **KEY PRINCIPLES OF FORGIVENESS FROM THE LIFE OF JOSEPH:** (Read Genesis 45:1-8)
- Forgiveness is a decision made in faith.
- Forgiveness is a recognition that God alone has the right to avenge our enemies (Read Genesis 50:19).
- Forgiveness does not mean the pain goes away. (V.2 "he wept aloud")
- Forgiveness is not forgetting. (V.4 "I am your brother, whom you sold into Egypt")
- Forgiveness is not always immediate reconciliation. Joseph did not immediately reconcile with his brothers.
 - Sometimes reconciliation takes time.
 - Sometimes reconciliation is not possible.
 - Forgiveness takes one, reconciliation takes two.

- **JOSEPH SAVED HIS FAMILY & PRESERVED GOD'S PLAN:**

God used Joseph to save his family from the famine and to bring them into Egypt, so they could grow into the nation God planned for them to be: (Read Genesis 47:11-12 & 27)

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