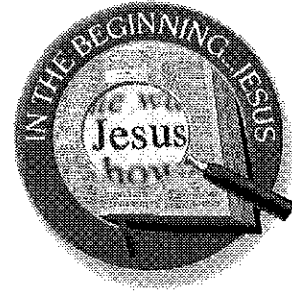


In the Beginning...Jesus



Lesson 13

God Preserves Israel in the Land of Egypt

Themes:

- God changed Jacob's name to Israel.
- God gave Jacob 12 sons, who became God's chosen nation, Israel.
- God causes evil to serve His good purposes.
- God preserved His people in the land of Egypt.

Scripture:

Portions of Genesis 37-50; Genesis 35:10-11

Memory Verse:

Isaiah 53:9 (and review verses 3-8)

Visuals for Lesson:

- Bible.
- *In the Beginning...Jesus* poster.
- Resource Packet:
 - GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM (from Lesson 12)—GOD'S DESIGN should still be taped on the middle of this visual.
 - ABRAHAM'S FAMILY TREE.
 - Bible Clue Card #15.
 - JESUS IS THE KEY visual (from previous lessons).
 - ISRAEL A-B.
 - NUMBERED WORD 1-8—If desired, color over the white (un-shaded) words with a light colored (e.g., yellow) marker.
 - NUMBERED TEMPLATE.
 - TO SHOW THAT GOD IS GREAT—Glue this sign to the back of NUMBERED TEMPLATE.
- Eight business-sized envelopes—On each envelope, write the words "Something great?" Place a NUMBERED WORD (mentioned above) in each envelope and then seal the envelopes.
- Magnifying glass (for use in reading the clue card).
- Optional: Family tree representing your family.
- Tape.

Pre-Class Preparation:

Hand out the eight “**Something Great?**” envelopes to children in the class. Explain that they are not to open the envelopes until you instruct them to do so during the lesson.

Lesson

Display GOD’S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM and quickly summarize the promise God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Remind the children that in the end of our last lesson we learned Jacob had fled his family and home. Why did he do this? [Esau was planning to kill him.] Why did Esau want to do this? [Because Jacob had tricked Isaac into giving him the blessing and promise.] Was God’s promise ruined because of Jacob’s deceit?

Display GOD’S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM. Emphasize that Jacob’s deceit could not ruin God’s plan. God caused Jacob’s deceit to serve God’s design. God was merciful to Jacob. The promises God made to Abraham and Isaac would be continued through Jacob.

Have the children turn in their Bibles to **Genesis 29**. Explain that chapters 29 through 33 tell how God blessed Jacob and watched over his life. God made Jacob prosper and, more importantly, God gave Jacob the offspring He had promised.

Tell the children you are going to show them a family tree. Ask the children if they know what a family tree represents. Point out that a family tree is a way of showing the members of a certain family—including children, parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. **Display ABRAHAM’S FAMILY TREE.** By studying it, can they find the number of sons God gave Jacob? Point out that God blessed Jacob by giving him not one or even two sons, but twelve sons!

Twelve is a lot of sons. Would God choose only one of these sons to inherit the special promises made to Abraham—just as God had chose only one son of Abraham and one son of Isaac? Who would God choose this time?

Display Bible Clue Card #15 and choose a child to insert it under the red paper of the **JESUS IS THE KEY** visual to reveal:

Clue under Window # 25

Open Window #25 to reveal: **ISRAEL—GOD’S CHOSEN NATION.**

Who or what is Israel? Look at the clue very carefully. What is pictured on

it? [Twelve figures.] *Who do you think those figures represent?*

Have the children turn to **Genesis 35:10-11**:

And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name." So he called his name Israel. And God said to him, "I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body."

Explain that Israel was the new name that God gave to Jacob. He gave him this new name that would now represent a special nation—God's chosen nation—a nation made from all twelve sons of Jacob and their offspring.

Display ISRAEL A-B and tape one over **JACOB** on **GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM** and the other within the outline of the **ABRAHAM** sign on the **GOD—MAN** visual.

In Abraham, God chose one man through whom God would some day bless the world. He passed on this promise through Isaac, Jacob, and then Jacob's twelve sons—a nation called Israel.

What would this great nation look like? When you think of great nations, what kinds of things would show that you are great? [Allow the children to give a few responses.]

Tell the children with the envelopes labeled "**Something Great?**" that they may now open their envelopes and bring the **NUMBERED WORDS** they find inside to the front of the class. Quickly tape these words on the wall. Point out that these words have something in common: they all describe something about the story of Jacob and his twelve sons—Israel.

Are these words things that would first come to mind in thinking about a great nation? A nation that would some day bless the whole world?

Tell the children you are going to be reading about Jacob and his twelve sons. Although the story is probably very familiar to them, you are going to be reading the story with a few changes in it. They should carefully follow along in their Bibles and when they hear a wrong word, they should speak up and say, "Wrong," and then you will call on a child to say the correct word—a word found taped to the wall. Instruct the children to open their Bibles to **Genesis 37:1-11** and begin reading from this script. Read the texts as quickly as possible. [Note: The wrong word that you are to read is underlined. The correct word is found within the parentheses.]

Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan. These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old,

was pasturing the flock with his brothers...Joseph brought a GOOD (BAD) report of them to their father. 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. 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. Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. He said to them, "Hear this dream that I have dreamed: Behold, we were binding in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf." His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?" So they PRAISED (HATED) him even more for his dreams and for his words. 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." But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father APPLAUDED (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?" And his brothers were PROUD (JEALOUS) of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

Joseph's brothers hated him so much that, in verses 12-36, we are told that Joseph was sold as a slave by his brothers and was taken to which country? [Egypt.] Joseph's brother's then told their father Jacob that Joseph had been killed by a fierce animal. Is this what a great nation of God should look like? Now turn to chapter 39.

Genesis 39:1-2:

Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master.

It looked as if things were now going well for Joseph, but that soon changed. Joseph's master's wife falsely accused him of doing something wrong, and this is what happened next:

Genesis 39:20-22:

And Joseph's master took him and put him into the PALACE (PRISON), the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison. But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of

the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it.

Is this something great? Can you become a great nation while in prison? How great is that? But there was something great about Joseph being in prison—he was able to do something very special.

In chapters 40-41, we find out that Joseph was able to interpret and explain dreams that his fellow prisoners had. Later on the ruler of Egypt, Pharaoh, had two dreams about fat and lean cows, and grass and stalks of grain. None of Pharaoh's men could understand what these meant—but Joseph could. Here is what Joseph told Pharaoh:

Genesis 41:28-32:

God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do. There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, but after them there will arise seven years of FEASTING (FAMINE), and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt. The famine will consume the land, and the plenty will be unknown in the land by reason of the famine that will follow, for it will be very severe. And the doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about.

Because Joseph was able to explain these dreams, Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of preparing for the famine by storing up food during the seven years of plenty. Now Joseph—one son—would be a very great man in Egypt. But what about the rest of Israel? Jacob and his other eleven sons were living in Canaan. And when the famine came, they were without food to eat. Does this sound like the making of a great nation of God? Here is what Jacob said to his sons:

Genesis 42:1-8:

When Jacob learned that there was grain for sale in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?" And he said, "Behold, I have heard that there is grain for sale in Egypt. Go down and buy grain for us there, that we may live and not GET SICK (DIE)." ...Thus the sons of Israel came to buy among the others who came, for the famine was in the land of Canaan. Now Joseph was governor over the land. He was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground. Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he treated them like FRIENDS (STRANGERS) and spoke roughly to them. "Where do you come from?" he said. They said, "From the land of Canaan, to buy food." And Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.

*What do you think that Joseph might have been feeling? What about all the bad things that had happened because of what his brothers had done to him? Where is "something great" in this? [Begin to tape the **NUMBERED WORD 1-8** in their correct order onto the **NUMBERED TEMPLATE** and continue the dialogue as you tape.] Could Joseph have ordered his brothers to prison? Could he have refused to sell them grain so that they would starve to death? Where is "something great" in this?*

Ask the children if they notice something about the "bad" things (words) that are now taped on the wall. Is there a message that is formed? What is it? [**GOD MEANT IT FOR GOOD.**]

What does that mean? How could God have meant all these things for good? What "good" happened? [Allow the children to give some responses.]

Choose children to read **Genesis 47:11-12, 27**:

Then Joseph settled his father and his brothers and gave them possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. And Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their dependents.

Thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen. And they gained possessions in it, and were fruitful and multiplied greatly.

Emphasize that God's plan could not be ruined by evil men. God's plan could not be ruined because of a famine. In the end, Joseph forgave his brothers because he understood that God had used these "bad" things to save His chosen nation—all twelve sons of Jacob.

*Ask: Why not just make Israel into a great nation right away, without the brothers hating Joseph, without being sent to Egypt, without being thrown in prison, without a famine? Why did God do things in such a difficult way? [Allow the children to give a few responses and then turn over the visual to reveal: **TO SHOW THAT GOD IS GREAT!**]*

Point out that God did not choose to make Jacob and his 12 sons into a great nation because of anything great they had done. He chose them and saved them in Egypt in order to show them that He is a great God.

Emphasize that nothing in this story happened by accident. All the events we read about today are part of the whole story of the Bible and all are meant to help us understand the mystery of Jesus' death on the cross. But the story isn't over yet. There

are more and more clues yet to be found.

Application

- ❑ **WORKBOOK**—Have the children turn to Lesson 13 in their workbooks and fill in the missing words to complete today's clue in the notebook section. Did today's story seem like the making of a great nation for God? Why not? Why would God have chosen this group of brothers to be His one chosen nation in all the earth? Read and discuss **Deuteronomy 7:6-7**. Why is this good news for sinful people?
- ❑ **WORKBOOK**—Ask the children if they have ever had a fight with their siblings. Were their feelings hurt? Did they feel wronged? How do they think Joseph felt when his brothers wanted to kill him and then, instead, sold him as a slave? Did God know what was happening? Did God act to stop it? Why not? Have the children write some of the evil things that happened to Joseph in the appropriate box on their workbook page. Read and discuss **Psalms 105:16-24**. To begin with, did Joseph or his father and brothers understand that this was God's plan for the nation of Israel? After it happened, what did Joseph understand? Read and discuss **Genesis 50:19-20**. Have the children write about how God meant these things for good. *Are there circumstances in your life in which you feel that you have been treated badly or unfairly? How did you respond? Did you trust God to work those "bad" things for your good? What makes this hard to do?*
- ❑ When Joseph was younger, how was his "gift" for dreams received by his brothers? Why? How did this gift work in his favor after his was in prison? Who gave Joseph this ability? How did God use this gift to preserve His people? What other people were blessed because of Israel's presence in Egypt? Does this give evidence to any part of God's promise to Abraham in **Genesis 12:1-3**? *Do you see evidence of God's people blessing the world right now? Who do you think Abraham's offspring are today?* Read and discuss **Galatians 3:7-9**. *In what ways do Abraham's offspring (believers in Jesus) bless the world? Do the things that you say and do bless the world? How?*
- ❑ Have you had "evil" things happen to you? What were they? At the time, did it seem that anything good could come from them? Was it hard to trust God, to believe that He understood what you were going through and was able to turn it to good? Read and discuss the following verses: **Psalms 84:11-12; Romans 8:32**.
- ❑ Did Joseph just happen to end up in Egypt? Did he just happen to earn favor with the jailer? Did he just happen to be able to interpret Pharaoh's

dreams? Did he just happen to earn the trust of Pharaoh? Did there just happen to be a famine in the land? Did he just happen to be the one that his brothers would need to buy grain from? When you read a story like this from the Bible, whose "fingerprints" should you be looking for? Read the following verses from the story: **Genesis 39:2-3, 21, 23; 41:16, 25, 28**. Is Joseph the hero in this story or is God? How did Joseph point to God's greatness?

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- Parent Resource Page