



#1 - Gen. 37:1-12
09/13/2009 - Jim Johnson

God began to execute His plan to redeem man back in the book of Genesis. It began to crystallize with a man named Abram. If Abram would leave his home in obedience to God, to travel to Canaan land, God promised to do 3 things for him 1) To make of his descendents a great nation; 2) to make Him famous; 3) to bless all the families of the earth through him. (Gen. 12:1-3) This last promise pointed to the Messiah, who would eventually be born into Abram's family and who would die on a cross to redeem man.

Abram obeyed God and God immediately began to fulfill His part of the bargain. He began to build a great nation. Abram (which God changed to Abraham) sired 2 sons, Ishmael (by his wife's handmaiden) and Isaac (by his wife Sarah.) There was lots of conflict between the mothers and the sons. Ishmael went on to become the father of the Ishmaelites, a nomadic tribe that lived in northern Arabia. (Modern day Saudis)

God chose Isaac as the son by which His promise of a great nation would be fulfilled. He sired twins - Esau and Jacob. Isaac's home was somewhat sickly and the mediocrity trickled down to his boys. Esau's passion was hunting; Jacob's passion was to get ahead. His name means "schemer." Jacob cheated his Esau out of his inheritance and then had to flee for his life. Instead of one great nation, the family line was forced to split again. Esau became the patriarch of the Edomites and Jacob the patriarch of the Hebrews.

God tried to build a nation from Abraham but his descendents just weren't able to get a long. Nevertheless, He decided to extend Abraham's promise to Jacob who was a schemer and manipulator – anything but a man of God. Jacob's 2 wives were not much better. They despised each other. This was an unbelievably complicated and sickly family. Once Jacob began having sons, the problem grew exponentially.

FAMILY ANALYSIS (Gen. 37:1-12)

A. Jacob was _____.

Verse 3 says, "*Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons.*" This was an evil family legacy. His own father had loved Esau more than Jacob. Jacob learned from his home that this is what a parent does. Joseph was the first born son of his dearly beloved wife Rachel, and Rachel had died one year earlier. Jacob missed her, but he could see her in the features of her son Joseph.

He gave Joseph the multicolored coat of preferential treatment. (3) The coat signaled that dad was moving Joseph out of the sheepfolds and into management of his business – authority over his brothers. The brothers were aware of dad's bias. (4)

B. Joseph was a _____.

Joseph was favored by His dad and he knew it. He had been the youngest child for the last 16 years. Joseph was born to a very elderly Jacob. Age slows a person down. The kids get away with a lot more. He was also 17 years old -- the age when you finally have learned everything you'll ever need to know, and

you often feel to compelled to brag about it. - He acted like a brat. He brought a bad report about his brothers to dad. (v.2) We assume that the brothers did something wrong but in actuality the Hebrew word spoke to the nature of the report rather than the deed. In other words, Joseph brought a report that was exaggerated and untrue. He misrepresented his brothers. - Joseph was given a dream from God which portrayed him as one day being in authority over his brothers. He was quick to tell them about it. (vs. 5-8) he had a second dream of the same nature and again was quick to inform his family about it. (vs. 9-10) Not a lot of tact or wisdom there. He seemed to be acting out of typical 17 year old self centered heart. - He really was a brat, but on the other hand, he couldn't help it. He came from a long line of sick families, and grew up in his own very sick household, with a foolish father who played favorites.

C. The others boys were _____.

The other boys hated Joseph. (v.4) They resented the fact that their various mothers were not loved by Jacob, while Joseph's mom was. They resented the fact that Joseph was loved and favored and given gifts from dad when they received nothing. Even though the evil perpetrator was really Jacob, they could not hate their dad, so they hated the object of his affections instead. They hated him so much that they could not have a civil conversation with him. (v. 4) They mocked him for his dream (v. 8) and were jealous of him. (v. 11) Jacob really had quite a sick family.

PROBLEM

God's beautiful plan to create a great nation was a gargantuan mess. Abraham had 2 sons – Isaac and Ishmael. Rather than becoming one growing family they ended up creating two tribes which were hostile to each other. Isaac had 2 sons: Jacob and Esau. Rather than becoming one growing family, they also ended up creating two tribes which were hostile to each other. Jacob had 12 sons – and they were ugly and self centered in their outlook. They, too, were headed in a direction that would forever divide them into isolated tribes that would live in hostility to each other. How could they ever become a great nation when they were such a wretched family?

In Gen. 37-50 we will watch as God steps in and takes a terribly dysfunctional family and remakes it. In the story to follow, you will find no miracles. You won't see God suspending the laws of nature in order to make things happen. But you will see God sovereignly working through the relationships and circumstances of every day life to bring healing to this family. As God heals this family, we will watch as a nation is built.

Heal a Family / Build a _____.

APPLICATION

The one thing our nation needs more than healthy political leaders is healthy families. We need healthy families, where value and character is taught, where Christ is the center, where people learn to treat each other in civil ways, and forgive each other when we err. Healthy families produce healthy people. Healthy people grow up and vote for healthy policies and politicians, and healthy politicians will lead us in righteous ways.

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Use this section in your personal or family devotions to better apply the truth.

1. Jacob's family teaches us much about family life. What speaks the loudest to you?
2. Why is a healthy family so important?
3. Is your family dividing, dead in the water, or is it decidedly healing?