

Fort Hill Christian Youth Camp 2024

Class Curriculum - The Book of Genesis

Age - Senior Campers

Thursday - Jacob/Israel

Summary

1. Subject: The life of Jacob/Israel
2. Scripture: Genesis 25:19-34, 27, 33:1-11, & Romans 9:4-14
3. Grade/Level: Senior Campers
4. Objective: Study the story of Jacob and Esau, with an emphasis on God's will, integrity, and forgiveness
5. Time Allotment: 1 Hour

Prayer: Don't forget to begin and end your class with a prayer! If possible, have a camper lead one or both of these prayers.

Lesson

Overview: This week's classes will study the book of Genesis. Each lesson will focus on one person and their life. Each lesson will also examine a different aspect of God's character, and provide valuable application to New Testament teachings and the Church.

Today's lesson will focus on Jacob/Israel. God will be examined in His faithfulness and His commitment to His people. The applications will be developing our integrity, and realizing the biblical concept of unearned forgiveness.

The full account of Jacob's life is long. Please read it entirely yourself as you prepare for this class, as only certain portions will be read together.



Read: 25 Minutes

The following section provides a brief commentary of the passage, as well as some reading comprehension questions.

Genesis 25, 27, & 33

Genesis 25:19-34

This passage is the beginning of the life and account of Jacob, who will later be renamed, “Israel”. He is the son of Abraham’s son Isaac, and the second-born twin to his brother Esau. Jacob and Esau had stark differences despite being twins. In these verses, Jacob convinces Esau to give over his birthright in exchange for stew. This passage, as well as some New Testament passages indicate that this moment is better understood as Esau’s failure, rather than Jacob’s trickery.

Genesis 27:30-41

These verses outline the aftermath of, and Esau’s reaction to, Jacob stealing Isaac’s blessing. Esau and Isaac both are upset, and in his fury Esau vows to kill Jacob after the death of their father. This leads Jacob to flee from their people. He goes far away for many years before he meets his brother again.

Genesis 27:1-24

In this passage, we read of Jacob more deliberately “stealing” the blessing meant for his brother Esau. While the previous passage only describes the interaction with the words, “Thus Esau despised his birthright”, this chapter depicts Jacob deceiving his father Isaac, and lying to him in order to receive the blessing meant for Esau. While this blessing is obtained under false pretense, it is honored and irreversible.

Genesis 33:1-11

In this final reading of Jacob’s life, we see the reunion between him and Esau. In the previous chapters we see at least fourteen years have passed, and both brothers have families and followings. Jacob fears that Esau will keep his pledge and kill Jacob, however, Esau responds differently. He forgives Jacob, and even tries to reject the gifts he is offered.

Reading Comprehension:

- How would you describe the relationship between Jacob and Esau?
- What were some of the mistakes made by Jacob, Esau, and their parents?
- Why does God honor the stolen blessing/birthright? (Many times in the lineage of Christ, we see God work through younger siblings. Whether it is this case, or Judah—the fourth born of Israel—God seems to honor the blessings of their fathers, or simply choose to work through His chosen people despite the position of their birth. See Romans 9 below for further insight)
- What would you have done/felt if you were Esau?

Romans 9:4-14

Romans 9:4-5

This passage is one of the few in the New Testament that provide further insight to the life of Jacob. In this letter, Paul talks at length about the nation of Israel. He makes it clear that under the New Covenant of Jesus Christ, all people are invited to have a relationship with God, and that the time of a worldly nation of God's people is passed. However, he honors Israel as the vessel that God used to give His law, preserve the record of His old covenants, and to provide the bloodline to Christ.

Romans 9:6-14

These verses describe how God utilized the patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. As discussed yesterday, Abraham's life displays God's commitment to keeping His promises. These verses tell us that the life of Jacob teaches the same. While some may read the account of Jacob and see a stolen birthright and blessing, Paul reveals to us in Romans that this is a case of God's "election", and that He intended to work through Jacob even before his birth. Verse 14 makes it clear that this is not injustice from God, but rather an example of His divine plan. He did not work through Jacob because of Jacob's deceit; He worked through Jacob because it was always His plan to.

DISCUSSION

Remaining Time

Ask the question, “**What is integrity?**”. Some definitions may be “doing the right thing when no one is looking” or “being the same person inside and out”. The life and account of Jacob can teach us about integrity. Understand that it was always God’s plan to work through Jacob, but that Jacob’s trickery led to strife between him and his father and brother.

Ask “**What are some examples of integrity?**”. Some examples may be:

- Noah living righteously even when no one else in the world chose to
- God keeping His promises to His people all the time, even when we’re unfaithful to Him
- The story of Daniel and the Lion’s den highlights the spiritual integrity of Daniel; he would not compromise his faith even knowing the consequences
- We show integrity when we do the things our parents ask us to do without needing them to remind us
- If we have made a mistake, we show integrity by being honest and speaking up to those around us about it

The life of Jacob also teaches the power of forgiveness. Esau demonstrates a remarkable example of forgiveness, that in many ways is reminiscent of God’s forgiveness. Ask, “**What is a time where you forgave someone?**” and, “**Was it easy or difficult to forgive them?**”. Sometimes forgiveness can be simple, especially when we are not very bothered. The depth of the issue, the relationship we have with whoever hurt us, and other factors can make forgiveness easier or more difficult.

Ask, “**What can help us to forgive when it’s difficult?**”. Sometimes we want to hold a grudge, or still have hurt feelings that make it harder to forgive. Things that can help are:

- Prayer to God
- Talking to the person who hurt you and explaining how they made you feel
- Talking to someone else who loves and cares about you, to express your feelings
- Giving yourself some time to work through your feelings. This is not withholding forgiveness, but asking the person who hurt you to be patient as you forgive them

Remember that Esau forgave his brother, but afterward they both went their separate ways. Forgiveness does not always mean that a relationship is completely restored to its original state. However, God’s forgiveness is exactly that; when become Christians and are forgiven of our sins, our relationship with God is restored.



Genesis and the Church

Every part of the Old Testament foreshadows the coming of the Church and God's redemptive plan, including the Book of Genesis. Use this lesson and story to help your class understand the nature of God's Church and His plan for it. The life of Jacob/Israel can relate to the church in many ways, especially in his meeting with Esau in Genesis 33. Jacob has wronged Esau and comes to this meeting fearing rightful retribution. Likewise, in the Church today, Christians know that we have wronged God when we sin, and should live with a healthy fear of God. However, Esau chooses to forgive Jacob. There are no conditions to this forgiveness, and Esau even attempts to refuse the gifts given to him by Jacob. This is not a forgiveness that Jacob has earned on his own.

In the same way, God decided to offer forgiveness through the redeeming blood of Jesus to anyone who wants to join the Church. This is not a forgiveness that we could earn or deserve. While each of us must believe in Jesus Christ, repent of our sins, and be baptized in order to receive God's forgiveness, it is described in scripture as the perfect gift of God, given freely to us.

Lastly, Jacob's life was transformed after he wrestled with God and was renamed Israel. Similarly, as we become part of the Church, we are transformed and given a new name: Christian. **2 Corinthians 5:17** states as much in saying, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come".