

What You Need to Know About ISAAC & JACOB:

“The Lord who leads armies makes this solemn vow: ‘Be sure of this: Just as I have intended so it will be; just as I have planned, it will happen.’” Isaiah 14:24 NET

Study Number Three – Genesis 25:19-34

Well, as we open, Abraham has 15 years left of his 175-year journey. And we have the concern that Abraham has had that Isaac ends up with a bride, and that happened in our last study.

But naturally like every elderly gentleman, he wants to finish well. And he knows that for the covenant to pass properly from him on to his son, he must also be married to the right woman so that it can go on into the next generation.

And so that’s what we’ve been studying in chapter 24 in those two episodes and why Abraham made such an issue out of sending Eliezer back to the family for that purpose.

We’re going to see the very same thing happen with Jacob when he is looking for a wife. But we have some tough journeying to go through to get to that place in these next studies. And we’re going to bring Jacob and Esau on the scene in our study.

We need to recognize how important it is to finish strong in life. And not to wait until we're on our deathbed to have to regret so many things that we wish that we would have done or preparations that we should have made during those years of sunset, when we are still strong and in the right mind to do the right thing.

Brennan Manning said this:

(The Importance of Being Foolish: How to Think Like Jesus by Brennan Manning)

There are certain burning questions that every Christian must answer in total candor. Do you hunger for Jesus Christ? Do you yearn to spend time alone with him in prayer? Is he the most important person in your life? Does he fill your soul like a song of joy? Is he on your lips as a shout of praise? Or has he been smothered by distractions, nullified by pride? Do you eagerly turn to his memoirs, his Testament, to learn more of him? Do you thirst for the living water of his Holy Spirit? Are you making the effort to die daily to anything and everything that inhibits, diminishes, or threatens your friendship with him?

pp. 57-58

We are moving ahead 19 years and 3 months as the study opens. Isaac and Rebekah have been married and struggling with infertility for this period of time.

It's going to be interesting to see the difference between how the son handles infertility and how the father did, when he and Sarah couldn't wait and went to an Egyptian handmaid to try to help God out and Ishmael was born.

This has been tough, and it's a hard situation to face something like this knowing that your wife is the key to all that's going to be done to fulfil the divine will. And so the picture that we have is a wonderful one. But we also see that there is restraint by the Spirit of God because they pray.

It's always HURRY and HELP that seems to be the way the flesh wants to act. It's human strength and human ingenuity. We're going to see all that again. Then we're going to see it in a couple of more studies, so the Lord wants to teach us a few things about learning how to wait upon Him and how to be patient with the process.

We're going to see the motive of the heart and the fruit of our conduct in much of what Jacob goes through.

Now, we have a warning about this. When we read commentaries on the life of Jacob, or books about Jacob, people are really vicious with him.

There is not one really negative thing that the Lord ever says about Jacob. Now granted, there's going to be a whole lot of stuff that we're going to think that he really took advantage of and he did all these things. That's true.

But God knows what He's going to do with that guy and so He doesn't spend time on certain offenses or certain sins because He knows what His end is going to be.

And so be careful when looking at someone and we see their weaknesses, and we really see the sin in their lives, that we don't get judgmental. We just leave that in God's hands. And it's interesting that He isn't going to participate along with those who try to run Jacob down.

Part of it is simply because we feel so guilty about our own sin, that when we look at him we see too much of ourselves and then we can say, "Well if God could do it for him, He can certainly do it for me." And that's our hope—what comes out of this.

But almost all the suffering that Jacob's going to have to go through in the remainder of this series of studies, in the next three lessons, all have come because of what he did.

One writer said this:

God's love did not begin because of what we were, and it will continue in spite of what we are.
(source unknown)

If we understand that, then we won't be quite so critical of him.

Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in me will continue to perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Now let's get into the text and see what we can learn from these wonderful verses. Every time we open the Bible it's going to be wonderful and there are some exciting things.

**v. 19 This is the account of Abraham's son Isaac.
Abraham became the father of Isaac,**

“This is the account of Abraham's son Isaac. Abraham became the father of Isaac,”

We left them married in our last session. Now the actual account that brings into focus the coming of the next generation.

“Abraham became the father of Isaac.”

Now we have watched Abraham and Sarah struggle for 25 years, waiting for that promised child. Now Isaac is here and verse 20 tells us 40 years have passed.

v. 20 and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean.

“so Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah

daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean.”

We met all those people and heard Rebekah make that courageous statement, “Yes, I will go.”

But now married at forty, he’s nearly sixty. They’re getting ready for their twentieth anniversary and they don’t have any kids. And it’s almost an instant replay of Abraham and Sarah, in a way, only not quite as long. Maybe what? Five years shorter.

What we want to see are some beautiful things at the first part of this study in their marriage. Because some of the things we’re going to see right here are things that people don’t do in their marriage and that’s why they get into trouble.

So what does that tell us? If we’re married, thank God for it and be sure to guard it, and be sure to build on it, and be sure to give attention to it on a regular basis. There’s nothing any more important than our marriage except for our relationship to the Lord.

Because it’s that marriage that God has designed. Also to make us into the kind of person we ought to become. And if we’re struggling with spiritual disciplines, the two together, get over it. And learn what it is to pray together. And learn what it is to talk about spiritual things.

Laura Schlessinger made these three statements about

marriage:

(Stop Whining, Start Living by Dr. Laura Schlessinger)

The Proper Care and Feeding of Marriage [there are] three essential [things]:

1. Treat your spouse as if you loved him or her with your last breath—no matter how contrary to that you might feel at any one moment.
2. Think hard every day about how you can make your spouse's life worth living.
3. Be the kind of person you would want to love, hug, come home to, and sacrifice for.

pp. 113-114

She said it all.

Here's a cute story from John Ortberg:

(When the Game Is Over, It All Goes Back in the Box by John Ortberg)

My wife is fond of telling a story about a time a husband came home from work. The house was a disaster. The baby was crying, dirty dishes were all over the counters, dirty laundry was hanging from doorknobs, the TV was blaring, beds were unmade, carpets were unvacuumed, dust was undisturbed,

and dinner was uncooked. When he wanted to know what happened, his wife told him, “You know how you always ask me what I’ve been doing all day? Well, today I didn’t do it.”
p. 160

v. 21 Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant.

“Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife,”

The Hebrew word could be translated “before her.” In other words, he prayed with her. Not just “on behalf of her,” as it’s translated here. So we have the freedom to say that they prayed together.

“Isaac prayed to the Lord before his wife, because she was barren. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant.”

Now, don’t think this is just one little devotional deal, okay? How long have they been barren? Nineteen years and three months.

Here’s the answer down the line at 19 years and 3 months, so understand they spent an awful lot of days together praying about the struggle for Rebekah to have a child. And this is the picture that’s described here. And it’s so beautiful.

It’s a real test of Isaac’s faith, isn’t it? But he continues to

pray before his wife in anticipation of this.

Now are there any lessons we can learn from infertility? There are because there are so many great illustrations of infertility in the scripture and how God used them.

Sarah was infertile for 25 years, God miraculously provided Isaac.

Hannah begged and prayed every year that God would give her a child. And finally Samuel was came into the family.

Rachel prayed while Leah was having kids right and left, and finally God gave her Joseph. And then on her deathbed gave her Benjamin as the second gift.

Elizabeth was never able to have children, but God had a plan for bringing John the Baptist into the world, right? So God in His marvelous plan provided that as well.

Now we add Rebekah to our list.

When things are on hold in our life, and we're not getting an answer to prayer, God is really intensifying our faith and growing us up in being willing to trust Him fully and completely. And that's what's happened in each one of these situations.

“The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant.”

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God answered and we know they are excited. But then we look at the next verse and that's the way God does it, isn't it? He's going to do exceeding abundantly. It's not going to be just one baby in there.

v. 22 The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, “Why is this happening to me?” So she went to inquire of the Lord.

“The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, ‘Why is this happening to me?’ So she went to inquire of the Lord.”

She's been taught for 19 years, if we're going to overcome barrenness, we're going to lay hold of God. And her husband has led her all those years. And now when she has a question and doesn't understand what's happening, where does she go? She goes to the Lord to find the answer.

The question is:

“Why is this happening to me?”

We need to learn one thing in your Christian life, and that is God is never obligated to give us the reason why. Because if He did, we wouldn't trust Him. And so He withholds that so that we will trust Him. Even in circumstances that are unexplainable and difficult and hard, God just doesn't answer the question why.

Now we can get those answered when we get to glory and that'll be soon enough. But what He wants from us is, "What are You trying to teach us in what You have allowed?"

Then we're at the point where we begin to really discover what God wants.

"Lord, not just what but give us wisdom to relate to what You have allotted so that we can use it in the right way for Your glory, for Your honor."

Rebekah feels God gave her a double blessing in the fact that there are two kids. But she's also having a really hard time with the pregnancy.

Okay, let's be fair with her, okay? This is new territory for her. She's never had a kid before so she doesn't know what to expect in pregnancy. That's the first.

And then we notice that it's just not a real easy thing she's going through, because these two guys are already fighting before they even get out of the womb.

John 13:7 answers an awful lot of unexplainable circumstances in our lives when God answers prayer and it involves pain or unexplainable circumstances:

John 13:7

Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize

now, but you will understand hereafter.

That's Peter saying, "Why are you washing my feet? I should be washing Yours."

"Okay, just back off. What I'm doing now, you don't understand. But there will come a time later when you are the servant and you're the one washing the feet. You will understand why I'm doing what I'm doing for you men on this final night that I'm here on the earth."

God does that with us. And we just have to be open and realize that He has something He wants to accomplish. And it's going to start to unfold for us.

First, she has never been pregnant; second, she's giving birth to twins—those are the two things that bring this whole thing into focus.

The NET Bible is the most technical Bible with the original languages.

The NET bible translated this so beautifully:

"If it is going to be like this, I'm not sure I want to be pregnant."

Are there some spiritual lessons that we learn from the conflict within the womb?

Every believer has the conflict between the old nature and the new nature. We have the conflict constantly of the flesh and the Spirit.

There are days when everything goes great and we're filled with the Spirit and we have a smile on our face and it's like, just everything turns out beautifully.

Then we have other days when nothing turns out right. And we lose it and we know the old nature has taken over and we're saying some things we're going to regret but we go ahead and say them anyway, or we do some things we know are not right. But we do them anyway.

This part of "O wretched man that I am. Who'll deliver me from the body of this death?" (ref. Romans 7:24)

This conflict foreshadows that. Because in Esau we're going to see the FLESH and in Jacob we'll eventually see THE SPIRIT.

Trying to understand Galatians 5:17 would be a good verse here:

Galatians 5:17

The spirit lusts against the flesh and the flesh against the spirit so that you cannot do the things that you desire to do.

Just like Abraham, what happened to him? He and Sarah had the constant conflict of the flesh and the spirit. Because they

sent Hagar, in an act of the flesh, and Ishmael was born.

When the promised son comes on the scene—Isaac—and what do we have? Instant conflict between the two of them. It's the FLESH and the SPIRIT again—the old nature and the new.

Abraham and Sarah learned it. Learned it late and they had to learn it bitterly in giving up all their plans for Ishmael, realizing that Isaac was the one who was going to be the heir apparent to the unconditional covenant, not Ishmael—the work of the flesh. And now we've got the picture.

Again in Isaac and Rebekah, the very same situation that we've had before.

“So she went to inquire of the Lord.”

We can almost hear Rebekah praying in deep pain, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. I really don't want to go and I don't want to do this. This is not fun.”

v. 23 The Lord said to her, “Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger.”

“The Lord said to her, “Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger.””

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Peterson in *The Message* paraphrases that beautifully:

“God told her. Two nations are in your womb, two peoples butting heads while still in your body. One people will overpower the other, and the older will serve the younger.”

Now, is that plain and is it understandable? Just think for a minute.

He said FOUR THINGS there for her in answer:

1. “[There are] Two nations in your womb,”—are there? We have Edom and Israel.
2. “[You’ve got] two peoples from within you will be separated;”—they will be separated. We’re going to see the beginnings of that in these remaining studies.
3. “one people will be stronger than the other.” Jacob is heir apparent to the tribes of Israel and the nation, and the Abrahamic covenant.
4. “and the older will serve the younger.”

Realize so many times the word is so clear on what God intends to do and we don’t get it.

The hardest part in this series of studies is sitting down with old Isaac who loves to eat wild meat and he is going to bless Esau instead of Jacob. How much clearer could it be?

Now, go back to the marriage. Did Rebekah go to him and say, “The Lord told me this when I was communing with Him about why I’m in this situation”? Was the communication flow in the marriage enough so that she was telling him the explanation for the pain?

And so maybe Isaac is dumb to it. What we see in this situation is he’s just going to deliberately go the other way. And there are serious consequences when we don’t pay attention.

“the older will serve the younger.”

Now has God done that before? And has He done it since?

Well remember, Jacob is 147, right? He’s getting ready to die, probably within the next few days. And Joseph brings two boys that have been born in Egypt. Remember that? Ephraim and Manasseh.

Now Joseph has it all figured out. This is the only place where we really see a little bit of a smirch on Joseph’s life. He brings those boys in and he is determined that Manasseh the oldest is going to get the blessing, just like Isaac’s going to do with Esau here as we go along in this story.

And so he puts Manasseh on his right hand and he puts Ephraim, the younger boy, on his left hand, helping his blind father to understand how he can bless the boys. And what

does old Jacob do while he's there? He crosses his hands, blesses the boys, and Joseph goes up in smoke. He's very upset.

“Dad, dad, dad! You've got your hand on the wrong...”

“I know what I'm doing son.”

And God does too. So many times He'll cross our plans and we'll be amazed at what happens as a result. The longer we live with the Lord, the more aware we are of that.

The longer we walk with God, the more we understand the things that He does that seem unexplainable at the moment. And we just turn around and say, “God, boy You really know how to bless Your people. You really know how to do it.”

Jacob has to learn that. But here again it's not the older that's going to be the heir apparent, it is the younger. And Rebekah hears that very plainly. We don't know whether she passed that information on to Isaac.

God is always in the business of working things out differently than we think so we can recognize it's from Him. Does that make sense?

God always works things out differently than what we think so we can recognize it's from Him. The problem is, we've got to be bendable. We've got to be broken, we've got to be surrendered, so we're open to what He wants to do. So there

went our comfort zone.

Isaiah 55:8, 9

My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord...

That's the conflict that we have here in the study.

Listen to this because Peter Kreeft is really hitting upon the fact that some of the suffering we're going through is because we've been stubborn and bull-headed or we've missed His will or we're still resisting it. And therefore we're suffering just like we're going to watch Jacob suffer in this situation:

(Making Sense Out Of Suffering by Peter Kreeft)

Here is how *fiat*, [that is] “thy will be done,” [Peter says] transforms [our] suffering. To die to self and what self wants is the essence of suffering. [Isn't that good?] If I want *x* and I get *y* instead, I suffer, both because I do not get *x*, which I want, and also because I get *y*, which I do not want. But if I want only God's will, I do not suffer, because I always get God's will. We suffer to the extent that we are out of line with reality, ultimate reality, God's will.

p. 260

See the conflict? And that's the picture that we're going to have here as the marriage begins to fall apart between Rebekah and Isaac over this whole issue.

v. 24 When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb.

“When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb.”

We’re now going to see the BIRTH.

v. 25 The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau.

“The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau.”

We can call him Hairy or Red. Esau means either one. Edom also means “red and so he’s either Hairy or Red for short. And he comes out first. So what is he? Firstborn—the older.

Now, F. B. Meyer does the best job of summarizing him and we need to do this right at the first so we can watch it play out in the verses:

But for all this, he was decidedly sensual—Scripture calls him *profane*—i.e. he was a slave to his senses; he hailed anything that would thrill him with pleasant thought transient excitement; he was willing to purchase pleasure at any price, though he had to pawn the most priceless jewels of his spirit; he was, indeed, too enamoured with the claims of the passing hour to care for unseen realities; or to seek the eternal harvest

which lies beyond the bitter sowing times of patience, and waiting, and pain. Alas, that he should have had such a host of imitators!

(source unknown)

Here is Esau—he comes first. And this is the way we’re going to see him act his life out before us in the study.

v. 26 After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau’s heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.

“After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau’s heel;”

“Yaakov” means “heel grabber.”

“so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.”

So in celebration of their 20th wedding anniversary, they have twin boys. That’s the story. And after 19 years and 3 months of faithfully praying together, God answers that prayer and provides the miracle of these two boys.

Now there are other words that we can use to describe Yaakov, or Jacob. He is “the one who God will protect” or “to watch from behind.” He is a tripper, one who wants to get his way by devious means—and we will certainly see that in the

picture that still comes before us.

So after the twenty year delay, the boys are now born.

Let's change the scene for a second. How is Grandpa Abraham feeling? He's 160 years old and, because he was 100 when Isaac was born, he's got 15 years left. He didn't realize that when he was so quick about getting a wife for Isaac. Here he's been able now to live with them for these 40 years and he still has 15 more.

Has he spent any time with these grandbabies? Everyone is saying, "Of course he did." Because that's the way we act.

Abraham probably had a bumper sticker for his chariot that said, "Ask me about my grandbabies."

Sarah's in the grave. She's been dead for three years, so he's a pretty lonely old man. And God has just wonderfully blessed him with these two boys, with a peace that now he can die. Because peace comes when we've made provision for Isaac to have a wife that fits in accord with God's will in the covenant and then to see the product of their union in the next generation of the boys. He's having the privilege of witnessing and watching them grow up.

v. 27 The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents.

“The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents.”

Thomas Carlyle says this about Esau:

He is the kind of man of whom we are [all] in the habit of charitably saying that he is nobody’s enemy but his own. But, in truth, he is God’s enemy, because he wastes the splendid manhood which God has given him. Passionate, impatient, impulsive, incapable of looking before him, refusing to estimate the worth of anything which does not immediately appeal to his sense, preferring the animal over the spiritual, he is rightly called a “profane person.”

(source unknown)

He’s shallow spiritually. He’s governed by his feelings. And the picture that we see will actually unfold before us.

Now, if we took the two boys and took some contemporary words to describe them, we would say Esau was athletic, he was an outdoorsman, he’s filled with the desire for adventure. He became a skillful hunter. He was a man of the field.

On the other hand, it’s hard to believe they’re twins. Jacob in contrast is more like a bookworm. He loved to stay around momma in the tent and do work around the house. And so he is characterized as living in tents. He did not enjoy the outdoors and all of that.

Now when we get to verse 28 it looks like we're just going on in the story, but there's a clue there that we want to get ahold of.

v. 28 Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

“Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.”

Now, the “taste for wild game”—Isaac is living by the desires of his palette. He loves the wild game. He puts that together with the one who's going to be unblessed, and he's going to make a wrong decision when time comes.

There's nothing wrong about enjoying elk and deer and wild game. But when it determines some of the other things in our life, then it's really out of what God would have intended.

But look what happened to the marriage. What happened to the marriage turns right around and goes into the next generation. We have to be careful about this. Because what we sow we're going to reap.

The picture here is:

“Isaac...loved Esau,”

“Rebekah loved Jacob.”

Now when we look at Jacob's family, do we see any of this? Oh man! It comes up in spades when we look at that. We have the whole picture of him loving Rachel's boys.

First of all, Joseph and then Benjamin. And the rest of the ten guys really got their nose out of joint about this preferential treatment.

Family favoritism can do so much to damage a person's ego, to damage a person's development.

Probably the reason Jacob has such a hard time in life was because he never had the love of a Father. And he just went through life, just wishing that he could have the same relationship he saw other fathers have with their sons.

A lot of things that we're going to see in the life of Jacob in these next studies is going to be the direct result of what's happened here.

It's like Esau's the jock, Jacob is the bookworm and the gourmet cook. So they make a choice.

The other possibility is this favoritism could be that Rebekah knew what the Lord had said about the older serving the younger, so she's going with the younger. And it could be that she's spiritual enough that she understands that she wants to be in accord with what God wants, as far as the preferential treatment is concerned since Isaac's already made his choice for Esau.

It's like Mary. Remember that verse in the gospel of Luke?
"She kept all these things and treasured them in her heart."

Rebekah probably did a lot of that and so she's seeing this unfold, even as the Lord had said it.

v. 29 Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished.

"Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished."

Famished means "starving to death." Peel your stomach off your backbone.

He has been so excited about the hunt that he hasn't had time to stop for lunch, or didn't take any lunch with him. And he comes in at a critical point.

When he comes in, Jacob wants to be the best cook in the whole world. But he heard that those Texans were having a chili cook-off and he's going to make some red stuff. And he's experimenting with it and boy does it ever smell good to a famished nostril. And so he looks at this immediately and he wants to have it.

v. 30 He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.)

“He said to Jacob, ‘Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I’m famished!’ (That is why he was also called Edom.)”

He was not only red but he loved red food. That’s the picture that’s described here.

It almost becomes humorous in a way, but in another way we realize Jacob is going to take advantage of his brother in order to accomplish part of what he feels is God’s will for his life.

It is simple and understandable. Esau needs to eat.

v. 31 Jacob replied, “First sell me your birthright.”

“Jacob replied, ‘First sell me your birthright.’”

Now he brings in to play the very first issue and that’s the birthright.

When we assume, when we anticipate, when we run ahead of God, then we’re going to face consequences and the pain is going to be unbearable. And that’s the picture that we have here.

He’s taking unfair advantage of the hunger of his brother in order to purchase the birthright. Both guys are wrong. Esau selling something that he can’t sell and Jacob’s buying something that he doesn’t need to buy, because God would eventually make it all happen.

Now, the picture that we have then is a picture of a hungry guy and his birthright. Let's talk about it for a second.

That was a very cherished possession in the family. It was power, it was dignity, it was getting double the inheritance. Between two boys it would be divided into three parts and two parts would go to the oldest son. So there are fiscal benefits from this. Plus, he also gets the priestly rights for the family. And that's where the Messianic line comes in.

And so all of this is up for grabs as Jacob tries to strike a bargain with his starving brother.

Many of us are tempted in our lives to try to take a shortcut to make up for lost time. Or try to do something to hurry and get ahead. And biblically every time we see that played out in life, it's always very painful.

There's one guy in scripture that could have done it at least two or three times and he refused because he wanted to do exactly what God wanted him to do. He wanted God to do it in His time. And that's David.

Remember in the cave? When Saul was in the same cave with all of his army and the guy's saying, basically, "Gig him right now, you've got him." And as he cuts off part of his garment he's stricken with guilt. He would not put his hand on the head of the anointed to try to accomplish what he knew was already going to happen because he was 16 years old when

Samuel anointed him. All these painful years of wandering in the wilderness and everything else was all part of God's plan to prepare him for the perfect time.

Remember the other time? Saul is sleeping in the middle of his whole armed forces and Abishai and David go down into the camp and Abishai begs him, "I can get him. I'll just have to strike him once and it'll be over." And David just says, "No way, we're not doing that."

Listen to this:

(Experiencing God Day-By-Day: The Devotional and Journal by Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby)

At times you may face similar temptations. Well-meaning friends advise you to hasten God's will for you rather than waiting upon Him. You may be sorely tempted to take control of your situation, assuming the end will justify the means. These are the times when you must trust God's perfect timing. God may plan for you to attain a certain position or take a new direction, but the timing may not be right. Watch over your heart. Don't allow others to persuade you to compromise your integrity as you follow God's will.

p. 312

Recognize that the key is contentment. As long as we're in the exact place where the Lord would have us be, and doing what He wants us to do, He is going to make it clear what He wants.

Now notice Esau demonstrates the fact that he is all sensual.

v. 32 “Look, I am about to die,” Esau said. “What good is the birthright to me?”

“‘Look, I am about to die,’ Esau said. ‘What good is the birthright to me?’”

Luis Palau has written a great little book on the life of Jacob. And at this point he’s kind of strong:

Esau had his dreams, but threw them [all] away in one burst of passion. He was hungry, he smelled good food, he despised everything that God would have given him. And as for Jacob, God would have found a way to fulfill His divine purposes for Jacob otherwise. But Esau despised what God offered him in a moment of desperate hunger!

How many young persons—and not-so-young—have ruined what God had for them in one moment of passionate desperation? [Maybe food, maybe sex, maybe money.] How many people, brought up in good environments, have in one blast of self-indulgence, wreaked havoc in their lives and homes? Esau did just that.

(source unknown)

Esau made a wrong decision under the stress of a moment. He felt faint from lack of food and so he yielded to that and said, “Whatever it’s going to take, I’ve got to have food.”

Now what's different between that and Moses? In the book of Hebrews it says beautifully:

Hebrews 11:24-26

By faith Moses, when he grew up, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt...

He made the right decision. He restrained himself. He didn't go the inside track to politics in the land of Egypt.

Now the interesting thing about this is Esau is an awful lot like Ishmael. They both are operating in the flesh.

Abraham and Sarah probably could tell us that, if they were still alive, as they see all this playing out.

It's more important what's going on in the **PRESENT** than the **FUTURE**.

It's the **PHYSICAL** rather than the **SPIRITUAL**.

It's **TIME** rather than **ETERNITY**.

And this loving of pleasure has brought about the tragic circumstances in these last couple of verses.

v. 33 But Jacob said, “Swear to me first.” So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.

“But Jacob said, ‘Swear to me first.’ So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.”

When we get to that next scene, this divine business, this transaction has taken place. Esau sold something he had no right to sell and Jacob bought something that God had promised.

Doing these carnal things rather than believing and waiting.

It’s the RIGHT PURPOSE but the WRONG PRINCIPLE.

It’s BREAKING PRINCIPLES and then we have to be PLEADING PROMISES in response to it.

And the tragic picture gets described here in verse 34.

v. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.

“Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.”

See him? Sitting there with a great big tall glass of iced tea, a huge bowl of chili. He’s got all the cornbread that he can stuff

in his face, and he's a happy camper. And yet he has surrendered something that is vital and important.

And it says he "despised his birthright." He disregarded it. He didn't look at it as something so important.

As he is mastered by the fragrance of a pot of chili, he joins Samson who is mastered by the charms of a Philistine girl and Peter who was mastered by the question of a servant girl at the time of the cross.

There's no strength apart from the strong Son of God so Esau just ate and drank. He got up and left. It's all body and no soul. He now has made the choices. And what a tragic, tragic consequence will come down the pike for him in the future.

Take careful reading of the lessons that come from the study.

Lesson #1: Isaac and Rebekah form a contrast to their offspring Jacob, by being willing to wait for God to fulfill His promise.

Lesson #2: God always gives exceeding abundantly. There are two children given in answer to their prayer.

Lesson #3: God is always faithful to fulfill His promises.

Lesson #4: Parental favoritism creates problems with the children.

Lesson #5: Never try to help God to fulfill His promise by human methods.

Lesson #6: The tragedy of developing the physical without the spiritual is seen in Esau and his life.

Lesson #7: Faith and patience go together in the child of God.

Lesson #8: Esau lived for the physical and temporary. He lived with no thought for the spiritual.

Lesson #9: God's love did not begin because of what we were and it will continue in spite of what we are. It is unconditional and eternal.

Lesson #10: Don't make major decisions under the stress of the moment.

We wish that Esau would have understood what he was doing and the consequences of that. And that Satan is exactly like that. The Lord never intended for us to turn our back upon the devil, but to confront the thing face on and to be faithful as we follow what the Lord would have for us.

We conclude with a statement by Andrew Murray:

(The Master's Indwelling by Andrew Murray)

Let us pray that fervently, and then let us wait upon God until we get away from all our pious exercises and experiences

and from all our blessings. Let us get close to God with this one prayer: “Lord God, self changed an arch-angel into a devil and self ruined my first parents and brought them out of Paradise into darkness and misery. Self has been the ruin of my life and the cause of every failure. Oh, disclose it to me.” And, then comes the blessed exchange that a man is made willing and able to say: “Another will live the life for me; another will live with me; another will do all for me.” Nothing else will do. Deny self; take up the cross, to die with Jesus. Follow Him only. May He give us the grace to understand, to receive, and to live the Christ-life.

p. 38

Father, we thank You for the privilege of studying and sharing Your word together. We pray that this lesson will be helpful and meaningful. And that as we continue our journey in studying these Old Testament characters that You’ll use their experiences to teach us the things we need to know in our lives. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

What You Need to Know About ISAAC & JACOB:

“The Lord who leads armies makes this solemn vow: ‘Be sure of this: Just as I have intended so it will be; just as I have planned, it will happen.’” Isaiah 14:24 NET

Study Number Three – Genesis 25:19-34

NOTES

v. 19 This is the account of Abraham’s son Isaac. Abraham became the father of Isaac,

v. 20 and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean.

v. 21 Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant.

v. 22 The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, “Why is this happening to me?” So she went to inquire of the Lord.

v. 23 The Lord said to her, “Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger.”

v. 24 When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb.

v. 25 The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau.

v. 26 After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau’s heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.

v. 27 The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents.

v. 28 Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

v. 29 Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished.

NOTES

v. 30 He said to Jacob, “Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I’m famished!” (That is why he was also called Edom.)

v. 31 Jacob replied, “First sell me your birthright.”

v. 32 “Look, I am about to die,” Esau said. “What good is the birthright to me?”

v. 33 But Jacob said, “Swear to me first.” So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.

v. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Genesis 25:19-34 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What did Isaac ask of the Lord in verse 21?

3. What did the Lord tell Rebekah in verse 23?

4. What were the twins' names that were born to Rebekah?

5. Describe the differences between the two boys, according to verse 27.

6. Describe the parental relationship to the two boys, according to verse 28.

7. Describe what took place in Jacob's acquisition of the birthright from Esau.

8. What was the significance of the birthright?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Isaac and Rebekah form a contrast to their offspring Jacob, by being willing to wait for God to fulfill His promise.

LESSON #2: God always gives exceeding abundantly. There are two children given in answer to their prayer.

LESSON #3: God is always faithful to fulfill His promises.

LESSON #4: Parental favoritism creates problems with the children.

LESSON #5: Never try to help God to fulfill His promise by human methods.

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LESSON #6: The tragedy of developing the physical without the spiritual is seen in Esau and his life.

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LESSON #9: God's love did not begin because of what we were and it will continue in spite of what we are. It is unconditional and eternal.

LESSON #10: Don't make major decisions under the stress of the moment.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:
