

Isaac & Jacob – *the promise continues*

Purpose: to show by the trials of their lives that God ultimately causes all things to work together for the good of those who love him and are called for His purposes (Romans 8:28)

What happens when a great person dies? We often hear talk of a person's "legacy", and many speak about investing in the next generation. The legacy of Abraham is one of the greatest of all time – today he is still regarded as the father of the Jewish nation and as the father of all believers in Christ. What was his secret? He knew God (Genesis 18:17-19)! Yet it is important to understand that his children had to know God for themselves. For the next few weeks we are going to look at what happened to Isaac and to Jacob, the sons of Abraham.

What can we learn from Isaac & Jacob?

Lesson #1 – The trying of your faith will bring praise, honor and glory to God.

Genesis 25:19

- 19 - This is the genealogy of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham begot Isaac.*
- 20 - Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah as wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian.*
- 21 - Now Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived.*

Sarah was barren for around 30 years, while Rebecca was barren for 19 years. Rebecca also had to learn to seek God as Sarah. Both Isaac and Rebecca had to learn how to seek God! We learn how to pray when our faith is tried (tested).

1 Peter 1:3-9

- 3 - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*
- 4 - to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,*
- 5 - who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*
- 6 - In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,*
- 7 - that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,*
- 8 - whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,*
- 9 - receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.*

Lesson #2 - God has complete control over our destiny, even when we make mistakes!

Genesis 25:22-28

22 - But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If all is well, why am I like this?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.

23 - And the LORD said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger."

24 - So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb.

25 - And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau.

26 - Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

27 - So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents.

28 - And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

The children are struggling with each other in the womb (v. 22). God speaks specifically about the two in verse 23:

Genesis 25:23

23 - And the LORD said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger."

- Esau came out red and hairy (v.25), which suggest the type of person that he would become. Esau means "made up", which seemed to imply that he was well developed at birth
- Jacob took hold of Esau's heel, as if he was after him from birth (v.26). His name means supplanter, heel holder, (one who displaces, ousts, succeeds, replaces).

The two were different, and the parent's affections were different:

Genesis 25:27,28

27 - So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents.

28 - And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Paul wrote explains this in his letter to the Romans:

Romans 9:10-13

10 - And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac

11 - (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls),

12 - it was said to her, "THE OLDER SHALL SERVE THE YOUNGER."

13 - As it is written, "JACOB I HAVE LOVED, BUT ESAU I HAVE HATED."

Did God hate Esau from birth?

Albert Barnes: - It was common among the Hebrews to use the terms "love" and "hatred" in this comparative sense, where the former implied strong positive attachment, and the latter, not positive hatred, but merely a less love, or the withholding of the expressions of affection"

Examples:

Proverbs 13:24 - He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly.

Matthew 6:24 - No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Luke 14:26 - If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.

God knew exactly what choices each would make and controlled their destiny

Lesson #3 - God knows our strengths and weaknesses, even before we were born.

Genesis 25:29-34

29 - Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary.

30 - And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." Therefore his name was called Edom.

31 - But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day."

32 - And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?"

33 - Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.

34 - And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

Neither of Isaac's two boys were of great character:

- Jacob was a supplanter – he took advantage of his brother at a time of weakness.
- Esau is called a "profane person" -

Hebrews 12:16

...lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.

What was the difference? Esau did not regard that which was important – the promise of God. Jacob did, even though he used his own means to achieve it. We will see later how God works through both of them.

Lesson #4: God makes all things work together for good to those who love Him.

Romans 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

We are going to see how God takes his people, whom He has called, and shapes them into vessels that He can use.

Conclusion

- Lesson #1 - Is your faith being tried? Let the difficulties that you are facing teach you to seek God.
- Lesson #2 – Are you worried about your future? Let God have control; he will even cause your mistakes to work for your good.
- Lesson #3 – Do you feel weak? God made you! He will strengthen your weaknesses and develop your strengths
- Lesson #4 – God will work all things together for good to those that He loves.