

The Book of Genesis III | The Death of Abraham and Birth of Jacob and Esau

III. THE SONS OF ISAAC (Genesis 25:19-28)

- A. The Generations of Isaac (Genesis 25:19, 25-26)
 - 1. The generation preceding Isaac (Genesis 25:19)
 - a. He was the son of Abraham.
 - (1) And the grandson of Terah
 - (2) And the nephew of Nahor
 - (3) And the nephew of Haran
 - b. He was the son of Sarah.
 - 2. The generation preceding Rebekah (Genesis 25:20)
 - a. She was the daughter of Bethuel.
 - b. She was the granddaughter of Nahor and Milcah.
 - c. She was the sister of Laban.
 - 3. The generations proceeding from Isaac.
 - a. Jacob
 - b. Esau
- B. The Marriage of Isaac (Genesis 25:20)
 - 1. When Isaac was forty years old
 - 2. Married to Rebekah
 - a. The daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-aram,
 - b. The sister of Laban the Syrian.
- C. The Prayer Made to the Lord (Genesis 25:21)
 - 1. An intercessory prayer—he “*intreated the LORD.*”
 - a. The word *intreat* means to make an earnest appeal.
 - b. A subject intreats when he approaches a king (Proverbs 18:23; Proverbs 19:6).
 - c. The New Testament Church is reminded that we can pray for one another (James 5:16; Colossians 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 23, 25; Hebrews 13:18).
 - 2. The reason for this prayer— “*for his wife, because she was barren.*”
 - a. This bareness was a real concern, after all, if Isaac was the promised seed (Genesis 21:12), how was his line to continue without children?
 - b. Note: Isaac wisely took the concerns that he and Rebekah had to the Lord. It always pays to pray about your concerns.
 - 3. Isaac’s answer to prayer— “*his wife conceived.*”

The Book of Genesis III | The Death of Abraham and Birth of Jacob and Esau

- D. Rebekah Prayed for Understanding (Genesis 25:22-23; James 1:5)
1. The reason for her prayer (Genesis 25:22)
 - a. The struggle in her womb
 - b. The doubts in her soul
 - (1) “*If it be so*” – If God had answered their prayers in having a child
 - (2) “*Why am I thus?*” – Then why is God’s blessing causing such a struggle within?
 - c. Note: That Rebekah’s prayer was not one of hopes of intervention from God, instead it was one seeking information from the Lord (Psalm 73:17).
 2. The answer to her prayer (Genesis 25:23)
 - a. In answer to Rebekah’s prayer the Lord declared a great prophecy about her children that she was carrying in her.
 - b. She had twins within her.
 - c. The twins would be the heads of two opposing nations.
 - (1) Esau is Edom (Genesis 25:25; Genesis 36:8, 43)
 - (2) Jacob is Israel (Genesis 25:23, 26; Genesis 32:28; Genesis 35:10)
 - d. The twins would represent two different manner of peoples.
 - e. The “*elder shall serve the younger,*” until the elder would throw off his brother’s rule (Genesis 27:40; 2 Chronicles 21:8).
- E. The Birth of the Boys (Genesis 25:24-26)
1. The day of delivery (Genesis 25:24)
 - a. After her days were fulfilled
 - b. Confirming the promised twins
 2. The naming of the boys (Genesis 25:25, 26)
 - a. Esau, possibly meaning *hairy* (Genesis 25:25), later he acquired another name, Edom meaning *red* (Genesis 25:30).
 - b. Jacob, his name means *heel-catcher* or *supplanter* (Genesis 25:26; Genesis 27:36).
 3. The birth of Esau (Genesis 25:25)
 - a. Born first
 - b. Red in appearance
 - c. Hairy all over
 4. The birth of Jacob (Genesis 25:26)
 - a. Born second
 - b. His hand was on the heel of his brother Esau

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- F. The Age of Isaac (Genesis 25:26b)
 - 1. Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah (Genesis 25:20)
 - 2. Twenty years later, at the age of sixty Rebekah bore him twins.

- G. The Growth of the Boys (Genesis 25:27-28)
 - 1. Esau (Genesis 25:27-28)
 - a. Became a cunning (skilled) hunter (Genesis 25:27)
 - (1) Cunning means skilled.
 - (2) Likely Esau could outfox a fox, bag a rabbit and was physically fit.
 - (3) The problem was that his spiritual aptitude was wanting (1 Thessalonians 4:8).
 - (4) He was favoured by his father Isaac (because of the venison he brought him) (Genesis 25:28).
 - b. A man of the field (Genesis 25:27)
 - (1) Esau was strong and silent who loved the outdoors and the activities that went along with it.
 - (2) Esau likely became accustomed to taking by force what he wanted (Genesis 27:40).
 - 2. Jacob (Genesis 25:27a-28b)
 - a. A plain man (Genesis 25:27)
 - b. A dweller in tents (Genesis 25:27)
 - c. This does not mean that Jacob was somehow effeminate. What it does mean is that he did not stand out among men or like his brother Esau. He was “*plain*” in his stature or bearing did not impress others.
 - d. Certainly, we know that Jacob was strong, he would move the stone to the well for Rachel (Genesis 29:10).
 - e. Favoured by Rebekah (probably because of the prophecy) (Genesis 25:23, 28).

- H. The Division of the Parents Love (Genesis 25:28)
 - 1. Isaac loved Esau
 - a. Because of his venison (Genesis 27:4).
 - b. Loving someone because of your physical appetite or for what you can get out of them is not a noble performance. Basing one’s affection on the physical appetite is the description of our day.
 - (1) The physical appetite wars against the spiritual man
 - (a) Two masters cannot be served (Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13)
 - (b) The lusts of the flesh (1 John 2:16)
 - i. A lust of the flesh (for food) (Numbers 11:4-6; Psalm 78:18)

- ii. A lust of the eyes (Joshua 7:21; Matthew 5:28)
- iii. The pride of life (Psalm 73:6; Daniel 4:30-31, cp. v. 37)
- (2) Yet, the Lord tells the Christian to set our affections elsewhere (Colossians 3:1-2; 1 John 2:15)
- 2. Rebekah loved Jacob
 - a. Likely for the prophecy.
 - b. While on the surface this seems noble one must note her performance with Jacob. Rebekah's love causes her to do evil in beguiling her own husband to gain the upper hand for Jacob. True love does not cause others to do evil.
- 3. The partiality of the parents – This partiality reflects the iniquity in them.
 - a. Because of this partiality the family was divided.
 - b. Because of this partiality it would cause conflict between the boys.
 - c. Parents should always be careful to not have favourites among their children for it will cause trouble between the siblings.
 - (1) Note: "This is an early proof of unwarrantable parental attachment to one child in preference to another. Isaac loved Esau, and Rebekah loved Jacob; and in consequence of this the interests of the family were divided, and the house set in opposition to itself. The fruits of this unreasonable and foolish attachment were afterwards seen in a long catalogue of both natural and moral evils among the descendants of both families." – Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible.
 - (2) Note: One remembers that Jacob loved Joseph and gave him a coat of many colours (Genesis 37:3, 23, 32). Jacob would love Benjamin so much that he did not want his other sons to take him to Egypt (Genesis 42:4, 36). Surely this partiality caused conflict among the sons.

IV. THE SELLING BY ESAU (Genesis 25:29-34)

- A. Jacob Sod Pottage (Genesis 25:29)
 - 1. To sod simply means *to cook by boiling*; it is an older form of the word *seethe*.
 - 2. Pottage was a soup or stew made of vegetables (sometimes including meat).
 - 3. This particular pottage was made with lentils (Genesis 25:34), a vegetable of the pea family.
 - 4. It is also noted that the lentils were red (Genesis 25:30).

- B. The Bargaining for the Pottage (Genesis 25:29-33)
1. Esau came from the field and was faint and hungry (Genesis 25:29).
 2. Esau simply asked his brother for some pottage (Genesis 25:30).
 3. Jacob offered the pottage to Esau in exchange for his birthright (Genesis 25:31-33).
 - a. Esau considered the birthright of no immediate value (Genesis 25:31-32).
 - b. Esau swore his birthright over to Jacob for one bowl of pottage (Genesis 25:33).
 - c. Note: Jacob took advantage of Esau's situation. While most students of the Bible are quick to show Esau's carnal condition, one must consider that this situation showed Jacob's heart condition just as much as it showed Esau's.
 - (1) Jacob capitalized on his brother's "desperate condition."
 - (2) Jacob obviously held Esau to the agreement afterward.
 - (3) Esau was willing to bargain away future blessings for immediate satisfaction. Which he obviously regretted later (See Genesis 27:36).
 - (4) Esau didn't think ahead to what it would mean to lose said birthright.
- C. Esau Is Also Edom (Genesis 25:30)
1. Edom means *red*.
 2. He was born with a **red** appearance.
 3. He sold his birthright for **red** lentils.
 4. He and his descendants settled in the country of Edom (also called Mount Seir in the Bible) (Genesis 36:1, 8, 43). This land was located south of the Dead Sea and was known for its **red** sandstone cliffs.
- D. The Importance of the Lost Birthright
1. Esau came to despise his birthright.
 2. The birthright was the right of the firstborn (Genesis 43:33).
 - a. To lead his family
 - b. To receive double inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:17; 1 Chronicles 5:1-2)
 3. Esau's lack of foresight concerning his inheritance revealed his true evil nature (Hebrews 12:16-17).