

October 3, 2012

Jacob and Esau

Genesis 25 &amp; 28

## LESSON FOCUS

Heb. 11:20 - *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.*

James 1:14 - *...each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires....*

Since our last lesson, Isaac's mother has died, Abraham has remarried (Keturah), has sired a large number of children and grandchildren but has "sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son," and has died. Abraham showed that he was passing on the special blessings to Isaac, and to Isaac alone (even his good son Ishmael was bypassed).

**Ch. 25:** 19-20

*This is the genealogy of Isaac* Isaac becomes the focus of the narrative, and we are going to see the hand of God in this chosen person's life as the bridge that will lead to Jesus.

vs. 21-22

Rebekah had been barren for nineteen years of her marriage. What did God have in mind with this tribulation? To bring their concerns to the LORD. A reminder: children are a gift from God; even in our day of "genetic engineering," conception and human life are in God's hands.

v.22

Rebekah could feel the jostling in her womb and she was concerned that something was awry in the way the blessing was arriving.

v.23

There was a cause, of course: she was mothering two separate and distinct forces/futures/destinies of nations: the *older to serve the younger* was a reversing of the cultural norm; this is important, for in God's kingdom the carnal mind should yield to the spiritual, and in His kingdom the stronger should serve the weaker so as to bring blessings (as Jesus did for us).

vs.24-26

The first twin to emerge was a red, hairy baby (we would call him "Red" or "Harry").

The second baby got a grip on the heel of his twin, and because of this he was called a usurper, a replacer, a "tripper-upper" = the name Jacob. (Isaac was by now sixty years old.)

v.27-28

*So the boys grew!* Esau, the first born, became a skilled outdoorsman, a toughened survivalist.

The younger twin, Jacob, developed social skills and a sense of the continuity between himself and Abraham and the Promise.

Each parent had a favorite: Dad bonded with tough and hearty Esau; Mom bonded with mild and sensitive Jacob. This was OK, but because Rebekah was concerned for the promised Seed, she was drawn to support God's choice of the younger of her two boys.

vs. 29-34

Esau came with the modest request that Jacob share his supper stew; Jacob took advantage of his brother's vulnerability, and instead of being generous, he was selfish. Jacob bargained for the special place of "firstborn," which at the time was a big deal (the oldest boy got the farm when Dad died, or the resources to carry on the family tradition and become head of the tribal family). It was a miserable conversation once Jacob got greedy. (Reminder: manipulating people for self is never God-pleasing.)

Esau was cheated because he did not seem to care about carrying on the family tradition. Heb.12:16 calls him a "profane person" who had no interest in a father's special place in God's plans for the tribe and the world. There was selfishness on both sides, since Isaac should have been willing to help his brother in his bodily need as well as encourage him to appreciate his legacy and inheritance.

**Ch. 27:**1-40 Which of the twins would be selected as the bridge to the Messiah? Isaac wanted to bless Esau, but Rebekah and Jacob carried out a sting operation in an attempt to "improve on" God's plan and God's methods.

vs. 1-4

Isaac was not heeding God's will when he intended to select the first-born(Esau) for his parting (ultimate) paternal blessing.

vs. 5-10

Rebekah caught the drift that Isaac intended to transfer God's choice away from Jacob. Instead of reminding her husband of God's will, she resorted to deceit/trickery in a misguided attempt to "aid God's hand."

v. 8

She even laid it on Jacob's conscience (as a matter of the 4th commandment) to do as she said; thus she used a selfish "religious" tactic that could produce great spiritual harm.

vs. 11-18

Jacob objected to some of the mechanics and the potential harm when he should have objected to the entire deceitful project. Mother and son collaborated in this conspiracy of deceit.

vs. 19-24

Next came outright bald-faced lying (a subject on which our Lord focuses in James 1:14).

Even when cross-examined, Jacob stuck to his lies including the blasphemous lie that the LORD was behind his claim.

vs. 25-29

When Isaac's justified suspicions had been dispelled, he gave the coveted blessing to Jacob.

In substance, the blessing covered earthly prosperity, ethnic ascendancy, and superiority of his blood line over Esau's. The LORD's support was invoked on the entire blessing but what is apparently missing is any obvious Messianic prophecy.

vs. 30-32

The deception needed to last only a few minutes; Esau's arrival burst the bubble.

vs. 33-35

Here is a scene overcharged with emotion! With trembling Isaac seemed to be catching on that a) his attempt to bypass the LORD's choice of Jacob had backfired on him, and b) that all the double-dealing (with God and with one another) had not only not detoured God's plans for Jacob, but had in fact had accomplished the opposite. These actions had brought calamity to their own household.

vs. 36-40

Although Esau's pleading for a fair portion of blessing from his father (and from the LORD who stood behind Isaac) did not induce Isaac to repudiate Jacob's status (cf. Hebrews 12:17), Isaac did assure Esau of earthly well-being, albeit at the price of subservience to Jacob (until a future day of successful rebellion from Jacob's control).

## **APPLICATIONS**

1. This is God's record of how He manages our affairs even in spite of the mistakes that humans make due to their selfishness. So Isaac and Jacob were hand picked by God, were raised by His hand, and were kept in His hand so that God would be recognized as the Author and Finisher of our salvation.

2. God takes Fatherly care of His erring children, lest we fall victims of our own sinful attitudes, schemes, and manipulations. Yet we receive painful consequences to bear in our interpersonal relationships when we give in to our sinful inclinations.. We become our own worst enemies when we hurt someone else, for we may lose a friend for life. That creates a double loss, for he has lost me, and I have lost him.

3. Recognize greed, selfishness, and ego in your own heart when Satan urges you to think: "But what about ME?" Answer: "Well, what about me? God cares for me, and He is not going to be so cruel as to deprive me of all I need if I just go ahead to be loving, generous, and sharing."

## **BIBLE STORY**

### **Jacob and Esau      Genesis 25 & 28**

Read from your Bible. Ask students to find it in a Bible too. Those that can read can follow along. Choose the passages you would like to read aloud. Use visuals to help tell the story.

Has your brother or sister ever taken something from you? How did you feel? Let's see what happens to two brothers, Jacob and Esau.

Abraham had a son named Isaac. Isaac married Rebekah. Isaac and Rebekah were sad because they did not have children. Isaac prayed to God asking for children and God heard his prayer. Rebekah was going to have twins!

God told Rebekah that even though it was the older son who was important, her younger son would be more important than the older son. Rebekah's first baby had red hair all over. They named him Esau. The younger son was born hanging on to the older brother's foot. He was called Jacob.

So the boys grew. Esau was a good hunter, a man who liked to be outdoors. Jacob was a shepherd and liked to stay near the tents.

Isaac loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob. This was not good. God wants parents to love all their children the same.

One day Jacob cooked a stew and Esau came in from the field very hungry. Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am hungry."

Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright." Since Esau was the older son, he had a special inheritance from his father. Esau said, "Look, I am about to die, so what is this birthright to me?" So Esau sold his birthright to Jacob and Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils. Esau then ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Esau did not treat his birthright as he should have. Now it belonged to Jacob.

When Isaac was old and he was blind, he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son." Esau said, "Here I am." Isaac said, "I am old. I do not know when I will die. Go out with your bow and arrow and hunt meat, cook it, and bring it to me. I will bless you before I die."

*Was this the son God wanted to have the blessing?*

Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau. She told Jacob to bring two goats and she would make food for Isaac that would taste like Esau's cooking. Then Jacob should take the food to his father and pretend he is Esau so that he would get the blessing.

*Does this sound like a honest plan?*

Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth skinned man. Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing."

Rebekah took clothes of Esau's and put them on Jacob. She put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. Then she took the wild tasting food and the bread, which she had made, and gave it to Jacob.

Jacob went to his father and said, "My father." Isaac said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat my food and bless me." Isaac said, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" Jacob said, "Because the LORD your God brought it to me."

*Is Jacob telling the truth?*

Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not." So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and Isaac felt Jacob and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau."

Isaac did not recognize Jacob, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him.

After eating and drinking Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near now and kiss me, my son." Jacob came near and kissed his father; and Isaac smelled the smell of Esau on Jacob's clothing, and blessed him and said, "May God give you plenty of grain and wine.

Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brother. One day the Savior will come from your family."

Jacob had just left his father when Esau came in from hunting. He cooked food and brought it to his father. "Come and eat, Father, and bless me," Esau said.

Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" Esau said, "I am your older son, Esau." Isaac shook and said, "Who? I already gave my blessing and whoever is blessed keeps the blessing." When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried very much and said to his father, "Bless me also, O my father!"

But Isaac said, "Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing." Esau said, "He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing! Isn't there a blessing left for me?"

Then Isaac said to Esau, "Indeed I have made him your master. I have given him the blessing of the Savior from his family." Then Esau hated his brother Jacob and wanted to kill him.

## **BIBLE CHALLENGE**

Heb. 11:20 - *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.*

James 1:14 - *...each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires....*

Read this passage from your Bible. Ask students to locate it in a Bible too. Help them learn this verse.

### **Activity 1: Paper Activities**

#### **Activity 2: Blessing Time**

Back in Bible times, a blessing was very important. It was something that people remembered all their lives. It was a special word that told each child how special they were and helped them see that their parents loved them.

Take time to “bless” each child and tell them how much God loves them.

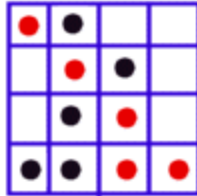
## GAMES

# Battle of Knowledge

*Game of wits, skill and good aim. (Team play)*

### Materials:

Masking tape  
Small bean bag or rolled-up sock  
1 piece of red construction paper  
1 piece of black construction paper  
16 review questions



### Preparation:

Before class, create 16 review questions. Cut out eight red circles and eight black circles. Take the masking tape and create a sixteen-sectioned grid on the floor. The grid should be four sections wide by four sections deep. Each section should be equal in size. Divide the children up into two teams.

### What you will do:

To win the game, you must get four circles in a row for your team. Taking turns, each team throws the beanbag or sock into an unoccupied square and then gets a chance to answer a question.

If the throwing team answers the question correctly, they get to put one of their circles in that square. If the throwing team answers incorrectly, the other team gets a chance to answer the same question. If the other team answers correctly, they get to put one of their circles in the square. Once a circle is in a square, it cannot be removed. Members of each team can work together to answer the question, but each team member must take a turn throwing the beanbag or sock. If neither team gets four in a row, the game is a draw.

## Review Questions for Battle of Knowledge

1. What was Abraham's son's name? Isaac
2. What were Isaac's son's names? Esau and Jacob
3. What was Isaac's wife's name? Rebekah
4. Which son liked to hunt? Esau
5. Which son liked to stay near the tents? Jacob
6. Who did Isaac love more? Esau
7. Who did Rebekah love more? Jacob
8. Which son was older? Esau
9. Who liked to cook? Jacob
10. Who was old and blind? Isaac
11. What did Isaac tell Esau to do? Go out to hunt meat and bring it back and cook it.
12. What did Rebekah tell Jacob to do? Bring 2 goats and she would do the cooking
13. What did Rebekah do for Jacob to get Isaac to believe it was Esau? She put animal skin on him so he would be hairy.
14. Did Jacob tell the truth? NO
15. Which son got the blessing? Jacob
16. Who should have gotten the blessing? Esau
17. Was Esau angry? YES



## CRAFT

### Pinch Pot

Roll the clay into a ball

Stick thumbs into the center of the ball, pinching the sides to make the bowl (you're making a bowl shape, not a donut)

Flatten out the bottom of the ball to make a nice flat surface for the bowl (so it will sit sturdily on a table without risk of it falling)

Let air dry