

October 3, 2012

Jacob and Esau

Genesis 25 & 27

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."

WELCOME ACTIVITY

The Skyscraper Game

Get out building blocks and tell the children they're going to build a skyscraper. Have each child take turns adding two blocks. Rotate until everyone has taken three or four turns.

If someone accidentally topples the castle, have the others say, "That's all right! You're still on my team!"

That child gets another turn, even if it's to start over again.

Once a skyscraper has been erected, talk about teamwork:

Look at the beautiful building we can make if we all work together! We may argue a lot with our sisters and brothers, but we can't forget that they're on our team. Today we're going to hear about a story between two brothers named Jacob and Esau. They both ended up with a lot of tall stuff in their lives. But they were so busy being mad at each other that they never got to do was work as a team.

How much more might they have had if they decided to work together?

Let's always remember to forgive our sisters and brothers and friends. Let's remember that they're always on our team. We have a much better chance if we all build something together.

OPENING

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.

BIBLE STORY

Jacob and Esau Genesis 25 & 27

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.

Jacob and Esau

Make little twin puppets so that the kids can see the difference between the two boys.

Abraham's son, Isaac, grew up and married a woman named Rebekah. When it came time, Rebekah had twins. Do you know what twins are? They are two babies that are born at the same time. Sometimes they look alike, but not always. These babies looked different. The first baby was reddish in color. He was very hairy too. They named him Esau (E-saw). The second baby was born holding onto Esau's foot. So they named him Jacob (which means grabber). Esau loved to hunt and work outside in the fields. Jacob stayed inside the tents and cooked.

One day Esau came into the tent. He was very hungry. His tummy was rumbling. Jacob was cooking a delicious vegetable soup. It smelled so good. Jacob decided to do something sneaky.

He told Esau that he could have some soup if he would give Jacob a special gift that their father was going to give Esau. Esau was so hungry that he gave Jacob his special gift!

Esau was very mad at how Jacob tricked him. Jacob knew that he was in trouble. He went to live with his uncle for a long time.

Years passed without Jacob seeing Esau. During that time Jacob changed his ways. He stopped being tricky and started following God.

One day it came time for the brothers to meet. Jacob was very nervous about it. He wasn't sure what his brother would do. When Esau saw Jacob, he rushed to him and hugged him. He totally forgave Jacob for everything wrong that had happened.

God wants us to forgive others like Esau forgave Jacob. Let's ask God to help us forgive others this week.



The Blessing

Isaac grew to be an old man.

His eyes could not see anymore.

He called Esau.

"I want to give you a special blessing,
so you will be a leader," he said.

"Make me some of my favorite food.
Then come back and I will bless you."

The Blessing. Genesis 27





Rebekah heard what Isaac told Esau.
Now God had told Rebekah
that Jacob would be the leader.
So Rebekah wanted Jacob to have the blessing.
She made Isaac's favorite food.
She covered Jacob's arms with goat skins
so he would feel hairy like Esau.



Jacob pretended to be Esau.
He took the food to Isaac.
Isaac felt Jacob's hairy arms.
He thought Jacob was Esau,
and he blessed Jacob.

GOD'S WORD IN MY HEART

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

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

Activity: Duck, Duck, Verse

This game is similar to Duck, Duck, Goose. This game has the player walking around the circle of children saying today's verse, tapping heads on each word, with your help. At the end of the verse, the tapper runs while the tap-ee chases him to get to that place.

When game is finished say: God made Jacob and Esau different. He made each of us different too. He made both of them special, He made all of us special too!

ACTIVITY

Esau and Jacob Puppets

You'll Need:

Copies of puppets on Card Stock

Large popsicle sticks

Crayons

Give children time to color their puppets. Help cut them out and tape to popsicle sticks.

Review story with children so they can tell it to their family at home.

Put puppets into an envelope, taping or gluing Homelink square from sheet to outside of envelope.

CLOSING ACTIVITY

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

Sing: Jesus Loves Me

Pray: Dear God, thank you for loving me and taking care of me. Thank you for all the people who are a blessing to me. Thank you for sending Jesus to take away my sins. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.