

Genesis 25:12-28:9

# *Patriarchy*

THE STORY OF ISAAC



Jacob Bundy

8/27/2023-12/3/2023

# OUTLINE OF THE STORY OF ISAAC

- 1.) A Synopsis of Ishmael (25:12-18)
  - A.) The Genealogy of Ishmael (25:12-16)
  - B.) The Death of Ishmael (25:17-18)
- 2.) The Life of Isaac
  - A.) The Birth of Jacob & Esau (25:19-26)
    - (1) The Keeping of God's Promise (25:19-21)
    - (2) The Revealing of God's Plan (25:22-23)
    - (3) The Recognition of God's Plan (25:24-26)
  - B.) The Birthright of Jacob & Esau (25:27-34)
    - (1) The Description of the Brothers (25:27-28)
    - (2) The Demand of Esau (25:29-30)
    - (3) The Deviousness of Jacob (25:31)
    - (4) The Decision of Esau (25:32-34)
  - C.) Isaac's Sojourning in Gerar (26:1-22)
    - (1) The Famine in the Land (26:1)
    - (2) The Forewarning from God (26:2-5)
    - (3) The Faith of Isaac (26:6)
    - (4) The Fear of Isaac (26:7-11)
    - (5) The Blessing of Isaac (26:12-14)
    - (6) The Expulsion of Isaac (26:15-16)
    - (7) The Persecution of Isaac (26:17-21)
    - (8) The Provision of God (26:22)
  - D.) Isaac's Peace Treaty with Abimelech (26:23-33)
    - (1) The Promise from God (26:23-25)
    - (2) The Peace with Abimelech (26:26-31)
    - (3) The Provision of God (26:32-33)
  - E.) Isaac's End of Life Blessing (26:34-28:9)
    - (1) Introduction: Esau's Wives (26:34-35)
    - (2) Scene 1: Isaac & Esau (27:1-5)
    - (3) Scene 2: Rebekah & Jacob (27:6-17)
    - (4) Scene 3: Isaac & Jacob (27:18-29)
    - (5) Scene 4: Isaac & Esau (27:30-40)
    - (6) Scene 5: Rebekah & Jacob (27:41-45)
    - (7) Scene 6: Isaac & Jacob (27:46-28:5)
    - (8) Conclusion: Esau's Wives (28:6-9)

# TABLE OF SERMONS

Genesis 25:12-18 – A Synopsis of Ishmael

Genesis 25:19-26 – The Birth of Jacob & Esau

Genesis 25:27-34 – The Hunter Becomes the Hunted

Genesis 26:1-11 – Faith & Fear in Gerar

Genesis 26:12-22 – Wells in the Desert

Genesis 26:23-33 – Isaac's Peace Treat with Abimelech

Genesis 26:34-27:17 – The End of Life Blessing Pt 1

Genesis 27:18-29 – The End of Life Blessing Pt 2

Genesis 27:30-40 – The End of Life Blessing Pt 3

Genesis 27:41-28:9 – The End of Life Blessing Pt 4

# Genesis 25:12-18

## Review

Earlier this year we finished a verse-by-verse series on the life of Abraham from Genesis 12-25. It was practical. It was good, and we ended that study with death of Abraham in Genesis 25:8-10.

Genesis 25:8-10 - 8 Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people. 9 And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre; 10 The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.

But the end of Abraham's story is really just the beginning of the story of the nation of Israel. Just as we as Americans look back on our founding fathers, so too the Jewish people look back to their founding fathers, their patriarchs, that we know as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Beginning tonight, we're going to pick up where we last left off in our study of the Jewish patriarchs in Genesis 25:12.

And yet, what we're going to discover is that before the Bible transitions from the story of Abraham to the story of Isaac, it first provides us with a summary of the life of another important character in the Genesis narrative: Abraham's firstborn son Ishmael.

As we look at the record of Ishmael tonight in Genesis 25:12-18, the first thing we see is the genealogy of Ishmael.

## 1.) Genealogy of Ishmael

"Genealogy" is really just a fancy word for "family tree".

"This genealogical record also fits harmoniously in the chapter, for in the preceding section there is the account of the descendants of Abraham through Keturah, and here there is the record of the sons of Ishmael through Hagar. All of these sections are important, for they record the Bedouin tribes that trace their ancestry to Abraham." (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5327-5329)

12 Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham:

Now before we dive into Ishmael's family tree and the significance of it, it's important for us to remember the events that led to Ishmael's birth.

God had promised Abraham and his wife Sarah that he would make a great nation of them with descendants as numerous as the grains of sand on Ventura Harbor. But there was a

problem, wasn't there? Abraham and Sarah got old, and Sarah had never gotten pregnant. So, Abraham and Sarah got impatient. Rather than waiting on God to miraculously fulfill His word, they took matters into their own hands. Sarah talked Abraham into having relations with one of her servants so that they might have a son that way. He did and that servant named Hagar got pregnant and the child that resulted was Ishmael. But Ishmael was not the child through which God was going to keep His promises.

God made this very clear to Abraham. A miracle child to come (aka Isaac) was going to be the one through which God would keep His promises. However, even though Ishmael was the byproduct of man's convoluted plans rather than God's perfect design, God still did make promises to both Abraham and Hagar regarding Ishmael.

- Promises to Hagar
  - o Genesis 16:10-15 - And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me? Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered. And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael.
- Promises to Abraham
  - o Genesis 17:20 - And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; **twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.**
  - o Genesis 21:13 - And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.

So God had made these promises regarding Ishmael in the Biblical narrative, and the big question that remained was: "Would God keep His word?" That is the question that is answered in verses 12-18. That's why this passage is included in between Abraham and Isaac. For in this passage we are going to see that God does keep His Word regardless of who the promise is made to and regardless of who the promise is made about. God always keeps His Word.

- We see this in God's treatment of Ishmael some 4000 years ago.
- We see this in God's treatment of the Gentiles in the present.
- We see this in God's treatment of the Jews in the future.

Let's take a moment and look at how God kept His word in Ishmael's family tree.

13 And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam,

14 And Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa,

15 Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah:

16 These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations.

How many princes did God promise would come from Ishmael? 12. How many princes are mentioned in verses 13-16? 12. There it is. God kept His Word.

- “These twelve princes provide further evidence of how the promises were fulfilled—God had promised to make of Ishmael a great nation, to give him many descendants (16:10; 21:18), and so this report attests to God’s faithfulness. But it also must be connected to the promises to Abraham, for many nations and kings were to come from him (17:6).” (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5325-5327)

But what do we know about these sons and their offspring?

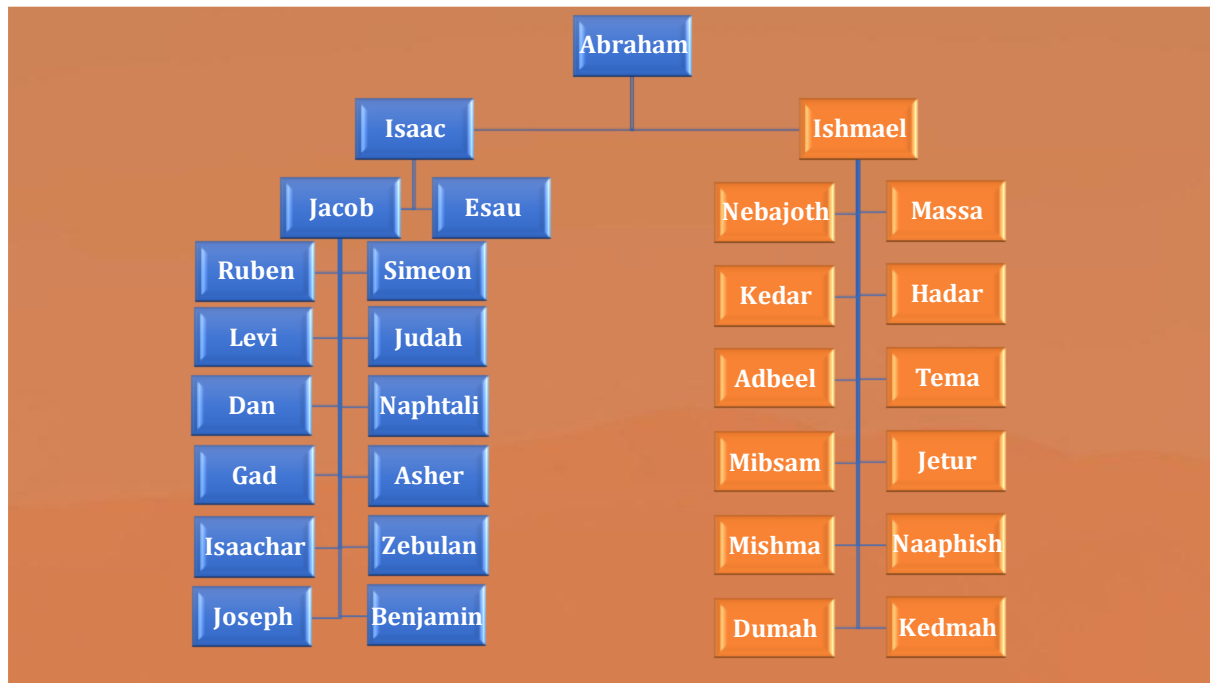
Now according to Josephus, the first century Jewish historian, Ishmael’s twelve sons inhabited the region between the Euphrates River and the Red Sea, an area he referred to as the Nabatene country. (Gill, 1811)

- Take note of how large that area is in comparison with Israel.



1 Chronicles 1:29-31 – These are their generations: The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; then Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam, Mishma, and Dumah, Massa, Hadad, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedmah. These are the sons of Ishmael.

So you have these twelve sons and their offspring inhabiting this area. Although we don't know much about these sons and their offspring there are still a few of them that the Bible does give us insights into in other passages. For instance, there's...



The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth (*ne-va-Yot*) – Take note of the family tree pictured on the screen. Isaac and Ishmael are contemporaries of one another. What that also means is that their kids are contemporary with one another. For Ishmael, that's the twelve listed in this passage. For Isaac, it's Jacob and Esau.

- How is that pertinent? Remember how mad Esau got after his brother Jacob stole his blessing and skipped town. Esau got bitter at his parents, and what was one of the things that he did to get back at them? He married foreign wives.
- Genesis 28:8-9 - 8 And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father; 9 Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.
- Gen. 36:1-3 – 1 Now these are the generations of Esau, who is Edom. 2 Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan; Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; 3 And Bashemath Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth.
- Esau would marry Nebajoth's sisters (i.e. Ishmael's daughters) Mahalath and Bashemath

And Kedar – Isaiah prophesied that the people of Nebajoth and Kedar would one day flock to Jerusalem and worship the true God when Messiah came.

- “Nebajoth and Kedar are mentioned in Isaiah 60:7 as rich possessors of flocks...The Kedarenes are mentioned in Isaiah 21:17 as good bowmen. They dwelt in the desert between Arabia Petraea and Babylon (Isaiah 42:11; Psalm 120:5).” (Keil & Delitzsch, 1857-1878)
- Isaiah 60:1-7 – 1 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. 2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. 3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. 4 Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. 5 Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. 6 The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord. 7 All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebajoth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.
- “The language here also means that that which constituted their principal wealth would come and enrich Jerusalem ...The general idea is, that their most valuable possessions would be devoted to God...by coming up as an acceptable sacrifice on the altar...The sense is, that the conversion of the wandering tribes of Arabia would be as certain and as signal as if the numerous flocks of Kedar and Nebajoth should be devoted to Yahweh in sacrifice. All that was valuable there would be employed in his service; the people would come with their most precious offerings and consecrate them to God... The idea is, that he would adorn the temple by bringing the distant nations, with their most valuable possessions, to worship there.” (Barnes, 1834)
- God’s not done with Ishmael’s descendants yet.

Song of Solomon 1:5 - I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.

Isaiah 21:16-17 - For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail: And the residue of the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished: for the LORD God of Israel hath spoken it.

You have Nebajoth and Kedar and Adbeel, and Mibsam, ...

14 And Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa,



15 Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah:

Tema - a trading people (Job 6:19; Is. 21:14; Jer. 25:23).

Job 6:19-20 - 19 The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them. 20 They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed.

- They're mentioned alongside of the descendants of Dumah and Kedar in Isaiah 21:11-17 in a passage in which God's judgment on these people groups is prophesied. There's a similar prophecy of judgment in Jeremiah 25 as well.

Isaiah 21:11-17 - 11 The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? 12 The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come. 13 The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim. 14 The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they prevented with their bread him that fled. 15 For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war. 16 For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail: 17 And the residue of the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished: for the Lord God of Israel hath spoken it.

Jeremiah 25:17-24 - 17 Then took I the cup at the Lord's hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the Lord had sent me: 18 To wit, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse; as it is this day; 19 Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people; 20 And all the mingled people, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Azzah, and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod, 21 Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon, 22 And all the kings of Tyrus, and all the kings of Zidon, and the kings of the isles which are beyond the sea, 23 Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all that are in the utmost corners, 24 And all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the desert,

Then you have Kedmah...

Jetur, Naphish - neighbours of the tribes of Israel to the east of the Jordan (1 Chronicles 5:19), who made war upon them along with the Hagrites in 1 Chr. 5:18-22 (Keil & Delitzsch, 1857-1878)

1 Chr. 5:18-22 - 18 The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, of valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skilful in war, were four and forty thousand seven hundred and threescore, that went out to the war. 19 And they made war with the Hagarites, with

Jetur, and Nephish, and Nodab. 20 And they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that were with them: for they cried to God in the battle, and he was intreated of them; because they put their trust in him. 21 And they took away their cattle; of their camels fifty thousand, and of sheep two hundred and fifty thousand, and of asses two thousand, and of men an hundred thousand. 22 For there fell down many slain, because the war was of God. And they dwelt in their steads until the captivity.

So you've got these sons and their people groups who would be a thorn in the side of Israel and who would be judged by God, and yet God kept His Word. Did He not? And we are told that their story is not over yet. There is coming a day in which the treasures of Ishmael's descendants will make their way to Jerusalem where they will be offered in worship to the one true God.

16 These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations.

Illustration – Scripture records fulfilled prophecy. We see this in the New Testament in Jesus, but we also see this in the Old Testament in fulfillment of itself. However, church, have all of the Scripture's prophecies been fulfilled at this point in time? No. The prophecies regarding the Second Coming of Christ and eternity have not been fulfilled yet...but we can be confident that they will be.

- If God kept His Word regarding Ishmael, we can be confident that He will keep His Word regarding His Second Coming.
- 2 Peter 3:9-14 - 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, 12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

Genesis 17:20 - And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

Genesis 17:23 - And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of

Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him.

## 2.) The Death of Ishmael

17 And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years: and he gave up the ghost and died; and was gathered unto his people.

The same language used to describe Abraham's death in verses 7-8 is used here to describe Ishmael's death in verses 17-18.

And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years – Ishmael lived a good long life.

Genesis 17:18 – O that Ishmael might live before thee!

And was gathered unto his people – in the grave...which is basically a metaphorical way of saying that he passed on.

- “His people’ evidently has no local significance; but means those of his own family already dead, and now in Sheôl, ‘the under-world’ of departed spirits.” (Plummer, 1902)

Genesis 25:7-8 - And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years. Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people.

18 And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria: and he died in the presence of all his brethren.



And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria –  
Once again, this is referring to the area between the Euphrates and the Red Sea.

- “Havilah and Shur therefore formed the south-eastern and south-western boundaries of the territories of the Ishmaelites, from which they extended their nomadic excursions towards the N.E. as far as the districts under Assyrian rule, i.e., to the lands of the Euphrates, traversing the whole of the desert of Arabia, or (as Josephus says, Ant. i. 12, 4) dwelling from the Euphrates to the Red Sea.” (Keil & Delitzsch, 1857-1878)

Genesis 2:11 - The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;

Genesis 10:7 - And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtechah: and the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan.

Genesis 10:29 - And Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these were the sons of Joktan.

Genesis 20:1 - And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar.

Genesis 21:14, 21 - And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

And he died in the presence of all his brethren –

Genesis 16:12 - And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

### **Application**

Thus concludes the Scripture's record regarding the life of Ishmael. What was the most significant thing about the life of Ishmael? God kept His Word. Just as God kept His Word then, we can be confident that He will keep His Word now.

# Genesis 25:19-26

## Review

As we continue our study of the Jewish patriarchy (i.e. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), tonight in our text we are going to see a transition from Abraham to Isaac as the leading character in the story of Scripture. From Genesis 12-25:11, Abraham is the main character. From Genesis 25:12-18 (the passage we looked at last week), the focus shifts to Ishmael. Then beginning in Genesis 25:19 the spotlight of Scripture comes to rest on Isaac (the miracle child of Abraham and Sarah through whose line God would keep His promises to Abraham).

Isaac is a fascinating character in Biblical history because when you look at the sum total of his life, he was remarkably unremarkable. There's really not much to him. The most spectacular aspect of his life was probably his miraculous birth. In terms of the wow factor, it was just sort of downhill for him from there. Whereas 14 chapters of Genesis are dedicated to Abraham's life, 10 chapters are dedicated to Jacob's life, and 14 chapters are dedicated to Joseph's life, only about a chapter and a half are dedicated to the life of Isaac.

Even then, the story of Isaac sort of centers around his son Jacob. Twenty years transpired between the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah and the birth of their sons Jacob and Esau. But the Scripture sort of skips right over that time period and goes straight to the birth of their boys. Why? Because the story of Isaac is really an interlude that connects us to the story of Jacob. And yet even though the story of Isaac is remarkably unremarkable, we are going to glean some awesome truths from his life over the course of the next couple weeks beginning in Genesis 25:19.

As we look at this passage of Scripture tonight, the first thing that we see is...

### 1.) The Keeping of God's Promise

19 And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac:

And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac – the story of Isaac really begins with a reminder of who his dad was and an explanation for how his son came to be. Isaac was the son of one of the most significant figures in the history of the world: Abraham. And not just that, he was also the dad of one of the most significant figures in the history of the world: Jacob (aka Israel).

- Illustration – when all of the major shoe companies (Nike, Adidas, Converse) were trying to get a young Michael Jordan to sign on with them out of college, do you know who was an important part of that process? His parents. All of the companies were not only trying to get on his good side, but also on his parents' good side. Why? Why did they care about the parents? Because of whom their son was. They were significant because their son was Michael Jordan. On the flip side of that I think of the Biden kids and Trump kids. Why does anyone care about those kids? Because of whom their dad is. They are significant because their dad is a US President.

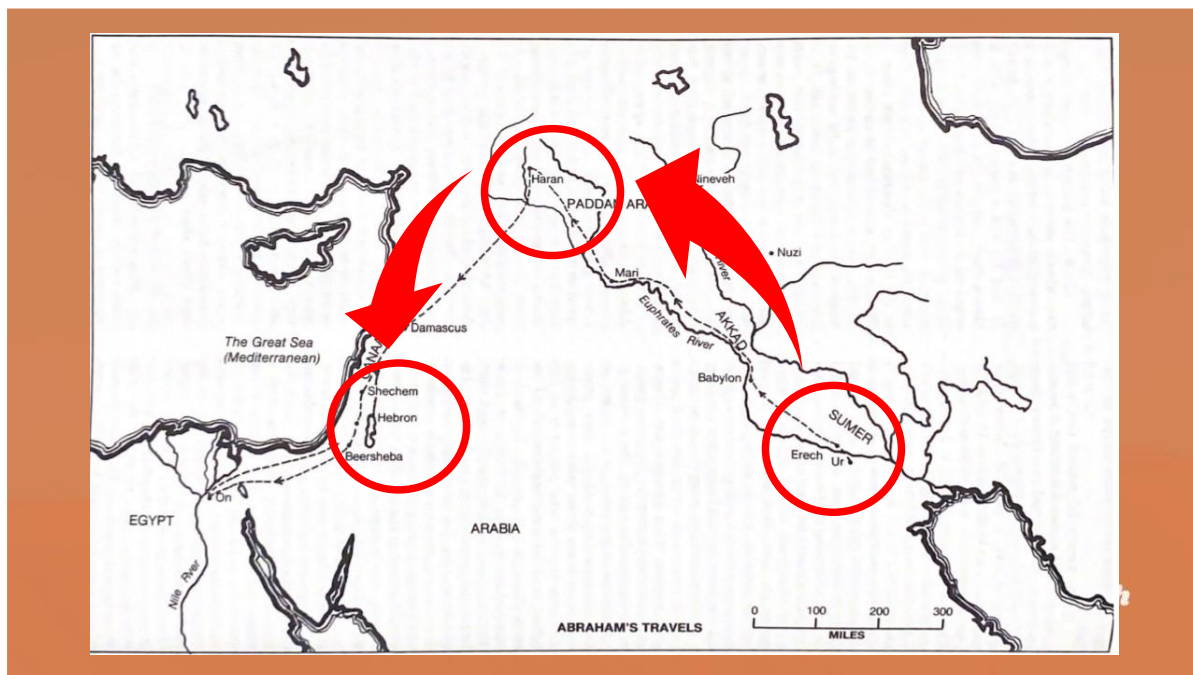
- Imagine being the son of someone more significant than the President of the United States and being the dad of someone more significant than Michael Jordan, and then you're just some regular guy. That was Isaac, and that's exactly how his story begins: with a reminder of who his dad was (vs. 19) and an explanation for how his son came to be (vs. 20 and onward).
- Genesis 25:1-4 – discusses the sons that Abraham had from his second wife Keturah
- Genesis 25:12-18 – discusses Abraham's firstborn son Ishmael.
- Genesis 25:19 and onward – discusses Abraham's son of promise Isaac.

20 And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister to Laban the Syrian.

And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife – he was 37 when his mom Sarah died, and then he was 40 three years later when he married Rebekah. Genesis 24 describes in detail the remarkable story of how God brought about that marriage between Isaac and Rebekah.

And yet, it's interesting how Rebekah is described here in this verse.

She is described as...



The daughter of Bethuel, the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister to Laban the Syrian – She's the daughter of Bethuel and the sister of Laban. Her family is described as Syrians from the city of Padanaram. What does that mean? Padanaram and Syria were both locations. Padanaram was a specific area in the north that would have been part of the broader region of Syria.

- Illustration – I am from Camarillo, but I am also a Californian. In the same way, Rebekah’s family was from Padanaram, but they were also Syrians.
- This reminder of where Rebekah came from is significant because it foreshadows where who is going to end up? Jacob.
  - o Later on in the story, Jacob deceives Esau. Esau wants to kill Jacob, and so what does Jacob do? He flees to his mother’s family (in particular her brother Laban) in Syria.
  - o Hosea 12:12 - And Jacob fled into the country of **Syria**, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep.
  - o In Deut. 26:5, Jacob is actually referred to as a Syrian. Why? Because he would live in Syria for a significant period of his life.

So, Isaac married Rebekah at the age of 40. God is going to keep his promises to Abraham through Isaac and his descendants, but there’s a problem. What is it? Look at verse 21.

Genesis 24:67 - And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

Genesis 24:29 - And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well.

Genesis 28:5-6 - And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padanaram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother. When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan;

Genesis 31:18 - And he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padanaram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan.

Genesis 31:20 - And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled.

Genesis 31:24 - And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.

Genesis 35:9 - And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him.

21 And Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren: and the Lord was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

And Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren – God had **promised** (capital P) that through the children of Isaac and Rebekah a great nation would arise, the Messiah would come, and the Promised Land would be occupied. God had promised that,



but there was a problem. Rebekah was barren, just as Sarah was barren. How long was Rebekah barren for? 20 years. 20 years would transpire between the beginning of verse 21 and the end of verse 21. Isaac was 40 when he got married and 60 when his sons were born (Gen. 25:26).

So you have the promise of God on one hand, and you have the problem of barrenness on the other hand. What is Isaac to do? He does not do what his dad did. He doesn't find himself a Hagar. He doesn't take things into his own hands. Instead, he does what? He prays.

- "Abraham earlier had prayed for the barren wombs of Gerar (20:17)-but not for Sarah's. Isaac knew that the only recourse for such a problem was to entreat the Lord. That this is the predominant point may be seen from the repetition of the verb: 'Isaac entreated [wayye`tar] the LORD ... and the LORD was entreated [wayye'dter].'" (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5402-5404)

When the problems of life contrasted with the promises of God, Isaac prayed.

He...

Intreated the Lord for his wife – Don't miss this. Isaac prayed for God to do something that God had already promised to do.

- In this petition we get a glimpse into the mystery of prayer. God had promised that Rebekah would have children. Can God violate His word? No. Therefore, Rebekah was going to give birth, and yet Isaac still prayed for the promises of God, and God responded when Isaac prayed.
- How do you explain the logic of that? I don't know. There's all kinds of people that have come up with all kinds of convoluted explanations to try to rationalize prayer. But to be honest with you, I've come to the place in my own life where I don't need to know how it works. I just know that it does work, and I know that God tells us to do it, and so I do it.
  - o How silly would it be if we only used things when we knew not only (1) that they worked but (2) how they worked. Folks, we wouldn't be able to use most of the things in our homes.
  - o Illustration – For instance, I know that my iPhone works, but I don't know how my iPhone works. How silly would it be if I stopped using this because I didn't know how it worked. Thank God you don't need to know how an iPhone works in order to use an iPhone. All you need to know is how to operate it.
  - o The same is true with prayer. You don't need to know how it works in order to do it. You just need to know how to pray. The more you pray, the more you will come to realize what I have come to realize: that even though I don't know how it works, I know that it works.

- Hold on, that illustration doesn't work because with the iPhone, even though I don't know how it works, someone knows how it works. Folks, there is someone who knows how prayer works (point up). Knowing that He knows how it works is enough for me.
- Application – that's exactly what you see with Isaac's prayer for his wife. How did it work? I don't know. Did it work? Yes.

Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife...

And the Lord was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived – How long did Isaac pray for his wife's barrenness? We don't know. It could have been for as long as 20 years. That fact is a reminder to us that when it comes to prayer we must remember that God's delays are not God's denials.

- "Although Isaac was the son of Abraham, the heir of the promise, and although Rebekah was of good stock, carefully chosen to be the bride, these facts are not sufficient to produce the next heir of the promised blessing; it would still take divine intervention." (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5399-5401)
- Just as Isaac's birth was a miracle, so too would be the births of his sons Jacob and Esau.

1 Samuel 1:11 - And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

Luke 1:13 - But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

Genesis 11:30 - But Sarai was barren; she had no child.

Genesis 15:2-3 - And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

Romans 9:10-12 - And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

In verses 19-21 we see the keeping of God's promise, but then in verses 22-23, we see the revealing of God's plan.

Just as the keeping of God's promise took place in response to prayer so too would the revealing of God's plan.

## 2.) The Revealing of God's Plan

22 And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the Lord.

And the children (*plural*) struggled together within her – God answered the prayer of Isaac, and Rebekah got pregnant, but it wasn't a normal pregnancy. She didn't have one child within her. She had two. Not only was her pregnancy abnormal. It was incredibly difficult.

- The language that's used here as well as the response of Rebekah indicates to us that the jostling of the boys within her was not a matter of mild discomfort. She was in a LOT of pain.
- "The verb *rasas*, used to describe the children's struggling in her womb, warrants further study. Since it normally signifies crushing or oppressing, this was apparently not a mild discomfort. The verb appropriately lays the foundation for the greater conflicts the brothers later engaged in." (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5411-5412)
- "The account of the births of Jacob and Esau in the present passage (Gen. 25:19-26) provides a fitting introduction to the Jacob-Esau cycle, for the struggle for supremacy is foreshadowed by the struggle of the infants. Moreover, the oracle that accompanied the pregnancy sets the tone for the narratives that follow, for it is clear from the outset that Jacob was the heir by divine election." (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5343-5345)

And she said, If it be so, why am I thus? – If this pregnancy is God's answer to our prayers, then why am I in so much pain?

And she went to enquire of the Lord – she didn't just say this to herself or her husband. She went to ask God. She didn't just ask Him where she was. She went to the place where they worshipped God (probably an altar), and she asked Him there.

- Her prayer in verse 22 is a different kind of prayer than the one her husband offered in verse 21.
  - o In verse 21 Isaac prayed, "God, will you do this?" In verse 22 Rebekah prayed, "God, why is this happening?" In verse 21, Isaac was praying for God to act. In verse 22, Rebekah was praying for God to answer. She was praying for God to help her understand her pain which came as a byproduct of the prayer that He had just answered.
  - o "God, this was supposed to be an answer to prayer, and yet this is not going how I thought it would. Why God? Why? Help me to understand."
    - Have you ever been there before? I'm sure we all have. What do you do in those moments? Those moments of pain and suffering and perplexity. You do what Rebekah did. You pray.
    - Pain and disillusionment ought not lead us to turn our backs on God. It ought to lead us to turn our face towards Him. It ought not lead us to shake our fist at Him, but rather bow our knees before Him.

- How did God respond? He answered her prayer. By the way, every “why” prayer you and I have ever prayed to God will be answered. Sometimes it’s answered here, but if not answered here, it will be answered there. It’s not a question of if God answers those prayers, but when. In the case of Rebekah, God chose to answer that prayer here. In response to her prayer of pain, God revealed His plan for the future.

23 And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

God answered Rebekah’s “why” prayer, but I don’t know that His answer would have made her feel any better. That’s a great reminder to us too that in moments of pain in our lives sometimes ignorance is a gift. Knowing “why” God has permitted pain to transpire in your life will not necessarily make you feel better. In fact, God’s answer to Rebekah’s “why” prayer may have made her feel worse.

God, why is this answer to our prayers so painful? Why is this pregnancy so painful?

- Well, Rebekah you have twins in your womb, and the intense pain you are feeling is the result of them struggling with one another. That present struggling and the pain it has brought about within you is but a small taste of the much greater struggles and pain that will result from the conflicts of those boys later. That conflict will not stop until it culminates in the younger of the two subjugating the older.
- I don’t know about you, but that answer wouldn’t have made me feel any better. But, nevertheless, let’s take a slightly more detailed look at God’s response.

God said,

Two nations are in thy womb and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels – you are going to give birth to two boys from which will come two nations, and those boys and those nations will be at each other’s throats from the very start.

and the one people shall be stronger than the other people – there’s going to be conflict between these two people groups. The struggle that you are enduring within you won’t stop when the boys exit the womb. It will intensify. That conflict will result in a clear victor. One of the peoples will be stronger than the other. Which is it?

and the elder shall serve the younger – Whichever twin comes out second will become the stronger people group, and the firstborn and his descendants will serve the second born and his descendants.

- What’s implied from this is that it would be through the line of Jacob (the younger) that God’s promises to Abraham and Isaac would be fulfilled.
- Sidenote on Calvinism’s Misusage of this Passage
  - o In Malachi 1 and Romans 9 the Bible teaches that God chose Jacob (and his descendants: the children of Israel) over Esau (and his descendants: the

Edomites). Calvinists take these passages and use them to support the notion that God arbitrarily chooses to save some people from Hell and not others.

- But their theology is confused, and it misunderstands the relationship between God's sovereignty and man's free will. For instance, when God chose Jacob over Esau, as stated in Malachi 1, that had nothing to do with salvation. He was choosing Jacob and his descendants as the line through which His promises would be kept, through which the Messiah would come. God choosing to use Israel in this way did not preclude Esau or his descendants from having a relationship with God.
- Beyond that, in Romans 9, when Paul refers to God's choosing of Jacob over Esau, his point that just as God had the right to choose Jacob and his descendants as the line through which his promises to Abraham would be kept so too God has the right to choose who He will save. Who has God chosen to save? He has chosen to save whosoever puts their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. God has chosen the means of salvation: Jesus. It's up to you whether or not you will accept that means.
- Illustration – there's a flood coming. The world is destined for destruction because of sin. God has chosen to provide one means of salvation, one ark. That ark is Jesus. God has chosen to save all those that step foot in that ark, but it's up to you whether or not you climb on board the ark.
- "Esau, the first born in the course of history, would indeed be subjugated by Israel. However, in the short run the opposite was true. Initially, the Edomites were stronger than Jacob and his fledgling nation. But in time, God indeed saw to it the elder would serve the younger. That absolutely will be the case when Christ returns in the Millennium." (Sorenson, 2007)
- "The subjugation of the Edomites by the Israelites took place in the days of David, 2 Samuel 8:14. The same event is predicted by Jacob in Genesis 27:40, where the additional prediction is made, that the subjugation will be only temporary. Israel, whose settlement in Palestine was later than that of the Edomites in the country of Seir, was regarded as the younger of the brother peoples. Edom was already a monarchy before Israel had settled down. But, occupying a richer country, Israel attained a higher civilization, and became a more powerful nation." (Plummer, 1902)
- "Esau's posterity were great princes for a long time, when Jacob's seed were strangers in Canaan, slaves in Egypt, and poor afflicted wanderers in the wilderness. But, saith he, Esau and his shall not always be stronger and mightier than Jacob and his posterity, the tables shall be turned, and the children of Israel shall be uppermost and subdue the Edomites, which was literally accomplished in David's time, 2 Samuel 8:14; and afterwards, 2 Chronicles 25:11,12; and after that by the Maccabees." (Poole, 1990)

Romans 9:10-13 - And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil,

that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

- Paul's focus is upon God's election of the **nation** Israel in its historic role, not upon specific individuals for eternal salvation. Even the choice of individuals like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was not for their personal salvation, but for their tasks in God's historic program with His people. (Klein, 2015, p. 149)
  - o "Two nations are in thy womb"
- Romans 9:11 - (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)
  - o Paul insists that God's purpose in election resulted in the selection of Jacob rather than Esau. As God had named or counted Abraham's seed through Isaac (9:7), so now the line would run through Jacob, not Esau. This was God's sovereign choice, though we hasten to add that the issue here is not Jacob's or Esau's personal salvation.
  - o In effect, God chose a corporate entity. He chose Jacob and his offspring to be His people, rather than Esau and his descendants. (Klein, 2015, p. 146)
- Romans 9:13 - As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.
  - o Paul quotes Malachi 1:2-3 to confirm the point he has been making in this section - God chose Jacob over against Esau. Malachi's message is not about salvation, but rather God's choice of the nation Israel over Edom.
  - o In the context of Romans 9-11, Paul discusses the fate of corporate bodies, the Jews and Gentiles. Malachi mentions the nations Israel and Edom, which Paul employs in this context to represent those who have responded positively or negatively to the gospel.
  - o We conclude that Paul affirms the divine election of Jacob and the physical nation Israel through him. Jacob's family becomes elect Israel in the national sense. Individual Israelites may be termed "elect" only by virtue of their existence "in him," that is, Jacob. While God has elected Israel and not Edom, the salvation of individuals depends on personal faith, as the subsequent argument of Romans 9-11 goes on to demonstrate. (Klein, 2015, pp. 147-148)

Malachi 1:2-5 - I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever. And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel.

- “For example, ‘I have loved Jacob, but I have hated Esau’ (Malachi 1.2-3; cf. Romans 9.13) is a way of saying that God has chosen Jacob and not Esau. When Jesus says, ‘Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple’ (Luke 14.26), he means that if one prioritizes even one’s most cherished loved ones above Jesus, one’s discipleship is incomplete—a claim which is radical enough without taking it literally!” (Craig, 2013)

Judgment against Edom is pronounced in the writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Obadiah, and Malachi.

Genesis 25:27 - And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.

Genesis 32:6 - And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.

Numbers 20:14-21 - 14 And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us: 15 How our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us, and our fathers: 16 And when we cried unto the Lord, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt: and, behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border: 17 Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's high way, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders. 18 And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword. 19 And the children of Israel said unto him, We will go by the high way: and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it: I will only, without doing anything else, go through on my feet. 20 And he said, Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand. 21 Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border: wherefore Israel turned away from him.

1 Chronicles 18:13 - And he put garrisons in Edom; and all the Edomites became David's servants. Thus the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

Genesis 27:26-30 - 26 And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. 27 And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed: 28 Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: 29 Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee. 30 And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and

Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

Genesis 27:37-41 - 37 And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son? 38 And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept. 39 And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; 40 And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck. 41 And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.

Ezekiel 25:12-14 - Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because that Edom hath dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and hath greatly offended, and revenged himself upon them; Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also stretch out mine hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword. And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord GOD.

We've seen the keeping of God's promise. We've seen the revealing of God's plan. Finally tonight, we see the recognition of God's plan.

### 3.) The Recognition of God's Plan

24 And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.

God had told her that she would give birth to twins. Guess what? When delivery day arrived, she gave birth to, not one, but two baby boys. The first part of God's revelation came to pass.

But just as the pregnancy had been unusual, so too the delivery of the boys was unusual (especially in light of what God had revealed to Rebekah).

"The central thrust of the third section concerns the naming of the twins. The parents observed the unusual circumstances of the births-especially especially in view of God's oracle-and commemorated them in the naming. In these acts of naming we may perceive that the parents acknowledged the oracle of God." (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5424-5426)

25 And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.

And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment – when the first child is delivered, his body is covered with hair. The way this is worded could indicate that either the hair



was red, or his body was red (perhaps in reference to skin tone). Regardless, he was an unusually hairy baby.

So Isaac and Rebekah commemorated his unusual birth in his name. Do you know what they named him? They named him “hairy”. That is literally what “Esau” means.

And they called his name Esau – Esau = hairy

- By the way, this isn't the last we'll hear of Esau's unusual hairiness. We'll hear about it again in Genesis 27.
- Genesis 27:11 - And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man:
- Genesis 27:16 - And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck:
- Genesis 27:23 - And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him.

26 And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.

And after that came his brother out – this is the younger of the two, the one that God had revealed to them would supplant his older brother. And as the younger child is being delivered...

his hand took hold on Esau's heel – Esau is delivered head first, and as his legs are coming out, Isaac and Rebekah take note of the younger boy's hand holding onto to Esau's heel. Hmm. How unusual is that?

So do you know what they named the younger boy? They named him heel holder. That's what the name Jacob literally means. Heel holder was a phrase that alluded to one who tripped up another for the purpose of overtaking or supplanting them. In naming Jacob “heel holder/supplanter”, I believe that Isaac and Rebekah saw Jacob's unusual delivery in light of what God had revealed to them. They believed what God had told them, and they believed that Jacob's grasping of Esau's heel was symbolic of the coming day in which he would supplant and overtake his brother.

- Esau alludes to the significance of Jacob's name after Jacob's stole his blessing in Genesis 27:36.
- Genesis 27:36 - And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?
- Hosea 12:3 - He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God:

“The names were thus chosen to reflect the appearance and activity at birth, but in both cases the names were ominous, anticipating the natures and activities of the two and their descendants. The narrator wished to reflect that significance by his choice of words. For

this reason the narrative is not interested in relating an amusing and unusual event about the births of two boys; rather, the narrator wished to portray that the destiny of two nations, Israel and Edom, was evident from the births of their ancestors, in harmony with the divine oracle.” (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5444-5447)

and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them. – twenty years had passed between their marriage and the births of Jacob and Esau.

### **Application**

The plans of God and the petitions of man. How does it work? I don't know. Does it work? Absolutely. Do you find yourself in a situation in which the problems of life are in conflict with the promises and provision of God? If so, then pray. God is desirous of your requests, and He promises that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

Do you find yourself in a situation of pain and suffering in which you can't grasp why God is permitting such things. If so, then pray. God will answer your prayer. He may answer it here, or He may answer it there, but regardless, we can trust Him.

As the song goes:

*God is too wise to be mistaken.*

*God is too good to be unkind.*

*So when you don't understand*

*When don't see his plan*

*When you can't trace his hand*

*Trust His Heart (Mason)*

# Genesis 25:27-34

## Review

Take your Bible and turn to Genesis 25:27.

Last week in our text we finally transitioned from studying the life of Abraham to focusing in on the life of his son Isaac. However, what we discovered was that the story of Isaac really centers around his son Jacob. For, the Scripture wastes no time in fast forwarding thorough Isaac's adult life up until Rebekah's pregnancy with Esau and Jacob. It was during that pregnancy that God revealed to Rebekah that there was coming a day in which Jacob (the younger) would supplant Esau (the elder). Moreover, following that word from God, our previous text ended with the birth of Esau (aka hairy) and Jacob (aka the heel holder/supplanter). Both the prediction from God (that the younger would supplant the older) as well as the meaning of Jacob's name (i.e. supplanter) are going to begin to come to fruition in the story we'll be looking at tonight.

Genesis 25:24-26 - 24 And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. 25 And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. 26 And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.

Having described the delivery of the boys in verses 24-26, the Scripture picks up in verse 27 with a description of the brothers when they were all grown up.

### 1.) The Description of the Brothers



## THE DESCRIPTION OF THE BROTHERS

27 And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.

And the boys grew – which means that a significant amount of time passed between their births and this description in verse 27. They're both referred to in this verse as men which means that by this point in time, they're at least young adults.

So the boys grew up.

And Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field – Cunning means skillful implying that he didn't just know how to hunt. He had a real knack for it, and that's what he spent his time doing. He hunted. He was a man of the field who spent his days in the wilderness. That's what he was known for.

- If you went to his tent looking for him in the middle of the day and you said, "Where's Esau? I need to talk to him", it's not likely that he would have been home. He would have been out hunting.
- What kind of hunting did he do? What did he hunt for? We don't know all that he hunted for, but there is one animal we know he particularly liked hunting for. What was it? Deer.
- Does anyone know how he hunted the deer?
  - o Genesis 27:3-5 - Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison; And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die. And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it.
  - o He was a hunter that spent the majority of his time out in the field. His prey of choice was deer. His weapon of choice was a bow and arrow. That was Esau, and then there was the baby of the family: Jacob.

And Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents – whereas Esau would have been typically found out in the wilderness, Jacob would have been found where? In tents. Or to put it another way, Esau commuted to work. Jacob worked from home.

- What this likely means is that whereas Esau hunted for wild animals, Jacob tended to the domestic livestock. In later passages, he is described as a shepherd, and I believe that was one of his primary responsibilities at this time in his life. He shepherded the flock (Gen. 27:7-10; 30:28-30; 46:34).
- That's what he did, but he's also described as a plain man. What that means is that he was quiet, peaceful, and mild mannered. He wouldn't have been as impulsive as his brother. He was more methodical, calculated, and contemplative.
- On one hand you have the wild hunter who roams freely in the wilderness chasing the thrill of the hunt. Then on the other hand you have the mild-mannered shepherd who faithfully cared for the flocks. (Plummer, 1902)

Genesis 46:34 - That ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.

Hebrews 11:9 - By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

Verse 27 describes who they were and what they did, but then verse 28 describes what their relationship with their parents was like.

28 And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.

And Isaac loved Esau, - He definitely had a favorite kid, and it wasn't Jacob. Why did he love Esau so much?

because he did eat of his venison – that man, Esau, killed, cleaned, and cooked a mean venison. I can just imagine Isaac being so proud of Esau. Isaac came from a family of shepherds. That's what his dad did. But here's Esau out there hunting, bringing home wild game. You know how sometimes we as parents can sort of live vicariously through our kids? I kind of get the sense that that's what Isaac was doing with Esau. He was so proud of his son, the hunter.

But Rebekah loved Jacob – her favorite was the younger. Man, talk about dysfunctional family dynamics. By the way, The story of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph is full of that, and we see it here: parents playing favorites.

- We're not told why Rebekah loved Jacob. Perhaps it was because she clung to what God had told her when she was pregnant about the younger supplanting the older. Perhaps it was because Jacob was at home more. She saw him more. She spent more time with him. She related to him more.
  - o "No such explanation is provided for Rebekah's love for Jacob, but in view of her concern in chapter 27 that the wrong son not receive the blessing, we may suspect that the oracle of the Lord raised her interest in the younger son. The text does stress the contrast between the parents ('but Rebekah') as part of the conflict between the brothers. And the change to the participle ('ohebet) from the preterite (wayye'ehab) may signify the more durative and persevering nature of Rebekah's love for Jacob." (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5540-5542)
- Regardless, you have these two very different brothers with different occupations and temperaments, and each of them has a much closer relationship with one of their two parents.

Genesis 27:6 - And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying,

All of this background information sets the stage for the story of a pivotal encounter between the brothers, a story that begins with the demand of Esau.

2.) The Demand of Esau

29 And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint:

And Jacob sod pottage – He cooked a stew, and according to verse 34, it was a lentil stew.

- In terms of delicacy, it would have been nothing to write home about, but it was a nice and common dish in this part of the world at that point in time.
- “The lentile is common in the country, and forms a cheap and palatable dish of a reddish-brown color, with which bread seems to have been eaten.” (Barnes, 1834)

And Esau came from the field, and he was faint – Esau had been out in the wilderness all day, as normal, hunting. Finally, he arrives back to camp, presumably emptyhanded but definitely tired and hungry.

- Illustration – I don’t if you’ve ever been really famished, but when you are, even the most mundane of foods becomes incredibly tasty and enticing.
  - o For instance, the best meal I’ve ever eaten was at the bottom of the Grand Canyon on a five-day hiking trip with my dad through the canyon. There’s actually a family style restaurant at the bottom that serves steak and salad and cornbread and potatoes and vegetables and coffee (for a small fee/fortune). But to be honest with you, I have no idea how good the food actually was. I was just so exhausted and tired of eating those dehydrated meals out of a plastic bag that I think any steak would have been the best meal I had in my life.
- But I imagine Esau being in that kind of a state at this moment in time. He was tired, and he was hungry, and I bet you in his eyes that red lentil stew looked like the juiciest T-bone steak you’ve ever seen in your life.

30 And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom.

And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me – Esau uses an imperative in this statement.

- “Feed me” is the equivalent of “let me gulp down”. (Ross, 1997)

I pray thee – please.

With that same red pottage – “red” and “pottage” are actually the same Hebrew word: *hadom* (which means “red”). Esau repeats himself here by in essence saying, “Feed me with that red, red” in reference to the lentil stew.

- You can imagine an extremely tired and hungry Esau approaching his brother and exclaiming “Red stuff. Red stuff. Feed me.”

for I am faint – I am weary and hungry.

Therefore his name was called Edom – which means red. He was “red” when he was born, and here this “red stew” is going to result in a pivotal downfall in his life.

- Esau was named “hairy” at his birth. That’s what Esau means. However, he also over time was known by his nickname “Red” or “Edom”. Beyond that, his descendants would come to be known as the “Edomites” or “the people of red”.

- "It is pretty certain that Esau would receive the secondary name of Edom, which ultimately became primary in point of use, from the red complexion of skin, even from his birth. But the exclamation 'that red red,' uttered on the occasion of a very important crisis in his history, renewed the name, and perhaps tended to make it take the place of Esau in the history of his race."
- "The narrator's choice of the word for red ('adorn was deliberate, for it is etymologically related to the word for Edom ('edom ). By the choice of this word in the telling of the story, the narrator sought to describe the Edomites as impulsive and profane as their ancestor. Esau did not take the name Edom; rather, the descendants of Esau were known as Edomites...it affirms that the Edomites share the nature of their ancestor and have no interest in the birthright." (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5554-5556)

Genesis 36:1 - Now these are the generations of Esau, who is Edom.

Genesis 36:9 - And these are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in mount Seir:

Numbers 20:14-21 - And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us: How our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us, and our fathers: And when we cried unto the LORD, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt: and, behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border: Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's high way, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders. And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword. And the children of Israel said unto him, We will go by the high way: and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it: I will only, without doing any thing else, go through on my feet. And he said, Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand. Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border: wherefore Israel turned away from him.

Deuteronomy 23:7 - Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he is thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a stranger in his land.

2 Kings 8:20 - In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves.

So we see the demand of Esau (the older brother) which is then met with the deviousness of the young child Jacob.

### 3.) The Deviousness of Jacob

It's interesting because remember, Jacob, is calm and calculated. He sees his big brother, the hunter, approach. He recognizes how desperate his brother is for food, and Jacob is determined to take advantage of the situation.

- In this passage of Scripture, the hunter becomes the hunted.
- Jacob wants something, and he's going to use that stew as bait to get it. (Ross, 1997)

Illustration – how many of you have or had siblings? Was there ever a point in time where you had something that your sibling desperately wanted, and you knew how much they wanted it? You thought to yourself, “Hmmm. What can I get out of this?” That is where Jacob finds himself in this situation, and he doesn't beat around the bush. He asks for the moon.

31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.

What was the birthright? It was the position as primary heir of the family in terms of finances, position, and authority. This wasn't just a normal family with a normal inheritance. This was the family that God had promised the land of Caanan to, and that God had promised the Messiah would come through. There weren't just financial ramifications to the birthright. There were spiritual ramifications as well. It was a big deal. It was a big ask.

- Illustration – Big League Advantage deals with athletes
  - o “The concept behind Big League Advantage is simple: pay minor league baseball players an upfront payment in exchange for a percentage of their future MLB earnings. Take Fernando Tatis Jr, for example. He was one of 77 players that accepted a deal from Big League Advantage in 2017, agreeing to pay back ~8% of all future MLB earnings in exchange for a “seven-figure” upfront cash payment. Tatis Jr had a \$700,000 signing bonus with the White Sox, but he was just 17 at the time and only making a small amount of money annually in Single-A salary. So he accepted the deal and spent the money on a personal trainer, better food, and a better apartment. But fast forward to 2021, and Big League Advantage came calling. That's because Tatis Jr agreed to a massive 14-year, \$340 million deal with the San Diego Padres — and BLA's ~8% cut of the deal meant that Tatis Jr owed them \$27.2 million in earnings.” (Pompliano, 2023)
- “Jacob was no doubt aware of the prediction communicated to his mother, that the older should serve the younger. A quiet man like him would not otherwise have thought of reversing the order of nature and custom. In after times the right of primogeniture consisted in a double portion of the father's goods Deuteronomy 21:17, and a certain rank as the patriarch and priest of the house on the death of the father. But in the case of Isaac there was the far higher dignity of chief of the chosen family and heir of the promised blessing, with all the immediate and ultimate temporal and eternal benefits therein included.” (Barnes, 1834)



- “This birthright (b"kora), so central to the Jacob stories, probably represents the priority in the inheritance (but see the literature on it). Jacob apparently interpreted the oracle to mean that, if he obtained the birthright, he would occupy the place of the elder son as heir. Being farsighted sighted and calculating, he pressed the matter on his famished brother.” (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5559-5561)
- “The birthright is emphasized in the Bible because it honored the rights or privileges of the family’s firstborn son. After the father died, or in the father’s absence, the firstborn son assumed the father’s authority and responsibilities. However, the Bible also shows that the father could rescind the birthright and pass it on to a younger son. A good example of this is the case of Jacob and his twelve sons. Reuben was the eldest, but the birthright was given to Joseph’s sons. Even then, Jacob blessed the younger son, Ephraim, above the elder, Manasseh (Genesis 37:19-22; Genesis 49:1-4; Genesis 49:22-26). In addition to assuming the leadership role in the family, the recipient of the birthright inherited twice that received by the other sons.” (GotQuestions)

Esau was vulnerable, and he was asked to make a really big decision in a moment of weakness.

- Application - Don’t ever make major decisions when you’re tired or discouraged. Refrain. Sleep on it. Pray. Get yourself in a good head space. Get counsel.
- Illustration – mom and dad not ever making major financial or familial decisions without praying on it and sleeping on it.

Esau’s demand was met by Jacob’s deviousness, but what would Esau decide?

We see lastly tonight the decision of Esau.

#### 4.) The Decision of Esau

One of the things that’s interesting about this story is how similar it is to the story of the fall in Genesis 3. In both stories, there’s an encounter between the subtle and the naïve. In both stories, spiritual blessings are the price tag of short-term physical satisfaction. In both stories, the wrong choice is made, and it has devastating effects on that person and their descendants. (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5502-5505)

But look at Esau’s response.

32 And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?

And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die – I am about to die. I am dying of hunger.

- He overinflated how desperate his situation was.

And what profit shall this birthright do to me? – He undervalued the price tag he was being asked to pay. What use is my right as the primary heir? That’s not going to do me any good

for a long time, if I even live that long. What good is something so distant to someone who is so famished in this moment? (Spence & Exell, 1883)

- What good is the future for a man who lives only for the present?
- What good is the eternal for a man who lives only for this world?
- What good is the spiritual for a man who lives only for the physical?
- In Esau's reasoning in this verse, the profanity of his heart is revealed.
- Hebrews 12:16 - Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, **as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.**
- Application – by the way, those who do sacrifice the future/the spiritual on the altar of the immediate/the physical always regret it. They always look back and wish they had done things differently.
- “Just as Ishmael was excluded from the promised blessing because he was begotten ‘according to the flesh,’ so Esau lost it because his disposition was according to the flesh. The frivolity with which he sold his birthright to his brother for a dish of lentils, rendered him unfit to be the heir and possessor of the promised grace.” (Keil & Delitzsch, 1857-1878)

33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

And Jacob said, Swear to me this day – whereas Esau is frivolous about the birthright, Jacob isn't playing games. He says, “swear to me before God.” There's no take backs. There's no, “I was just kidding.” I'm invoking God as witness to this deal. Despite the fact that Jacob invoked God as witness, Esau didn't even flinch. That's remarkable. (Barnes, 1834)

- “Jacob is acute enough to secure the solemn ratification of his brother's act, done in the thoughtless moment of exhaustion. When Esau recovers his self-control, he will not be able to repudiate his action.” (Plummer, 1902)

Genesis 14:22 - And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

Genesis 24:3 - And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:

Genesis 27:36 - And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.

Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils – Jacob gave Esau the food that he wanted. He gave him bread and red lentil stew.

And he did eat and drink and rose up and went his way – Esau ate and drank and left as if nothing significant had happened...as if his life hadn't just changed. Folks, you can't sin and win.

Application – People who call themselves Christians and toy around with sin are fools...fools who think they can eat and drink the stew and then get up and move on like nothing's happened. Friend, if you're God's child, God disciplines His kids when they're out of line...and it's going to cost you a lot more than that stew is worth. Even worse, if you can eat the stew and toy around with sin, and get off scotch free with seemingly no discipline in your life, my friend, you are not off the hook, you are in danger of eternal punishment. You might not be his child. By the choice he made, Esau revealed himself to be profane.

Thus Esau despised his birthright – as such, Esau regarded his birthright as worthless.

- Application – Esau is a remarkable picture of those of this world who live for the moment and ignore their Creator and ignore eternity. By living for the carnal, for the temporary, through their actions they despise their Creator and despise the eternal inheritance that is freely available to them.
- Neither of the brothers acted honorably in this passage, but this story really does revolve around the tragedy of Esau. The story doesn't end with the author writing, "so Jacob supplanted Esau." It ends with him writing, "Thus Esau despised his birthright." (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5569-5570)
- "The primary lesson would concern the profane person: Profane people are willing to relinquish things of lasting spiritual value because they live to satisfy their basic appetites. Esau was portrayed as very emotional. He was fainting, gasping, gulping, and then despising. He was not here a skillful hunter; he was more like the animals that he must have trapped with a morsel of bait. To live on this level is tragic, for living to satisfy the appetites inevitably leads to despising things of value, especially when they become the possession of others." (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5579-5582)

### **Application**

"It is the greatest folly to part with our interest in God, and Christ, and heaven, for the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world; it is as bad a bargain as his who sold a birth-right for a dish of pottage. Esau ate and drank, pleased his palate, satisfied his appetite, and then carelessly rose up and went his way, without any serious thought, or any regret, about the bad bargain he had made. Thus Esau despised his birthright." (Henry)

May we not do the same.

# Genesis 26:1-11

## Review

Over the course of the last several weeks in our study of Isaac and His family we've progressed from the pregnancy of Rebekah to the birth of the twin boys (Jacob & Esau) to the forfeiture of the birthright from the older to the younger. That's where we left off last week with the story of Jacob & Esau's barter for the red lentil stew.

Tonight, in chapter 26, the focus shifts from the boys back to Isaac and Rebekah, and it seems like this chapter is a flashback to the twenty-year time period before the boys were born. The Scripture doesn't say that explicitly, but there are a number of elements to this story that would make a lot more sense if such were the case. It would also explain why Jacob and Esau are not mentioned at all in the chapter.

I believe that chapter 26 is a flashback to the period of Isaac and Rebekah's life before they had children. In this passage, we are going to get a glimpse into the character of Isaac, both good and bad.

As we dive into the beginning of this chapter, the first thing that we see is the famine in the land.

### 1.) The Famine in the Land

1 And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar.

And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham – if you remember, all the way back in Genesis 12, shortly after Abraham had migrated to the Promised Land from Ur, there was a “what” in the land? A famine. That's right.

- Just as dad (i.e. Abraham) had to navigate the trial of a famine, so too Isaac was going to have to navigate a famine as well.
- I believe that the reason the Scripture reminds us of Abraham's famine is to get us thinking, from the very outset, in terms of how father and son handled the trial similarly and differently.
- Illustration – in order to understand what these men did in response to famine, we need to wrap our heads around how serious a famine was to shepherds in the Middle East. If there's no rain, then what doesn't grow? Crops. If crops don't grow, then what doesn't eat? Your animals. If your animals don't eat, what happens to them? They die. And if your animals die, what do you eat? Nothing. Famines were a big deal in terms of food and water.
  - o It would be kind of like if you lost your job and no one in town was hiring and there was no such thing as welfare. What do you do? You move looking for work. Why? Because you've got to survive.

Isaac was confronted with this famine, just like his dad had been, and what did he do?

And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar – Now does anyone remember what Abraham did in response to his famine?

- Genesis 12:10 - And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.
- Let me show you a map of the Middle East.



- o Here's Canaan. Here's Gerar. Here's Egypt.
- o Now we're not exactly sure of where Isaac was at when the famine hit. However, he may have gone to Gerar because it was close by, or he may have gone to Gerar because it was on the way to where? Egypt...where his dad had gone.
- o Application – if such were the case, men, this ought to be a tremendous reminder to each of us that our kids and grandkids are watching us. Often, they're following right behind us in our footsteps just a couple decades behind. That can be a great thing if those footsteps are headed to good places, if those footsteps are following the footsteps of Jesus. That can also be a bad thing if those footsteps are headed in the wrong direction.

Genesis 12:10 - And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.

Genesis 20:2 - And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.

Genesis 21:22-32 - And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest: Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely

with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned. And Abraham said, I will swear. And Abraham reprov'd Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away. And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to day. And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant. And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves? And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well. Wherefore he called that place Beersheba; because there they swore both of them. Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phicol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.

So there was this famine in the land, but that famine was then followed by the forewarning from God.

## 2.) The Forewarning from God

2 And the Lord appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of:

And the Lord appeared unto him – this is unique because this is one of two appearances the Scripture records of the Lord to Isaac (both of which are in this chapter) (cf. Gen. 26:24)

- This appearance may have occurred in Gerar as Isaac was on his way to Egypt, or it may have occurred while he was in Canaan and been the reason why he went to Gerar as opposed to Egypt.
- “Though commonly understood as having occurred in Gerar (Keil, Lange, Murphy), this appearance, is perhaps better regarded as having taken place at Lahai-roi, and as having been the cause of Isaac's turning aside into the land of the Philistines” (Spence & Exell, 1883)

And said, Go not down into Egypt – the fact that God had to say this tells us that Isaac was very seriously considering going where? Egypt. That's right.

- Egypt was a very bountiful country. His dad had gone there before. It's a great idea. Right? No. God says, “Don't go.”
- By the way when God says to us, “Don't go”, we need to listen too.
  - o When God says, “Don't go to places of temptation” (2 Tim. 2:22), church we need to listen.
  - o When God says, “Don't walk in the counsel of the ungodly... Don't stand in the way of sinners... Don't sit in the seat of the scornful” (i.e. be careful of the people you surround yourself with), we need to listen.

- When God says, “Flee idols, things that compete with God for your life’s devotion”, we need to listen.
- God said, “Don’t go to Egypt.”

Instead...

Dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of – Go where I tell you.

- Proverbs 3:5-6 – 5 Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.
- Illustration – walking around blindfolded on your own versus following my voice.

3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father;

Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee – Go where I tell you. Stay where I tell you, and guess what? I’ll be with you.

And I will be with thee – Church, this is one of the sweetest and yet often forgotten truths in Scripture. When we listen to God’s direction and leading in our lives, we can find comfort in the fact that He is with us.

- Illustration – the blindfolded person can’t see me, but he can hear me, and he can know that I am with him.
- Hebrews 13:5 - Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.
- “The promises now included the presence of the Lord. As mentioned above, this promise remained with the family through the time of Isaac and Jacob. And it became particularly significant in the revelation of the Lord to Moses (Exod. 3:12).” (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5663-5665)

And I will bless thee – Isaac, not only will I be with you. I’ll bless you.

- God is going to reiterate the promise He had made to Abraham to Isaac.
- God said to Abraham, “I’ll bless you.” Now He says to Isaac, “I’ll bless you.”

What was he going to bless Isaac with?

- Genesis 12:1-3 - Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

For unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries – I’ve got some prime real estate that I’m going to lead you to. I’ve got a ten-bedroom house with a pool and a jacuzzi

up in Sterling Hills with your name on it. For Isaac and His descendants, that promise was and is the Middle East: prime real estate.

- God had promised the Land to Abraham. Now he's promising it to Isaac. I'm going to lead you to a place to call home.
- Genesis 12:1 - Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:
- Genesis 12:7 - And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.
- Genesis 13:15 - For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.
- Genesis 15:18 - In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:
- Genesis 17:8 - And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

And I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father – I made this promise to your dad, and I'm going to keep it to you.

- By the way, does God need to promise? Nope. His Word is infallible, and yet to let Abraham know how serious He was about bringing it to pass, He promised Him.
- Genesis 22:16-17 - 16 And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: 17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;
- Hebrews 6:13-18 - 13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, 14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. 17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: 18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:
- "in fact, the promises show the purpose of the commands ('Sojourn in this land in order that I may be with you'). Here the promises first made to Abraham were reiterated to Isaac, promises of the land and of numerous descendants. Several advances, however, can be seen here. First, these promises would be fulfilled because of the covenant made with Abraham. In other words, the fulfillment was guaranteed because the Lord swore to do it. Any contingency-based obedience would refer to participation in the promises, not the fulfillment itself. Second, the



promise of the land was broadened to the plural-'all these lands' (hd'drds6t) would be given to Isaac and his descendants...This phrase probably referred to territory possessed by other tribes living in the Promised Land, since in this chapter Isaac was dealing with the Philistines in Gerar. Third, the promises now included the presence of the Lord. As mentioned above, this promise remained with the family through the time of Isaac and Jacob. And it became particularly significant in the revelation of the Lord to Moses (Exod. 3:12)." (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5659-5665)

Hebrews 11:9 - By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

Hebrews 11:13-16 - These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

Genesis 28:15 - And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

Genesis 39:2 - And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

4 And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;

But Isaac I'm not just going to be with you. I'm not just going to lead you to some prime real estate.

And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven – I've got a family for you. You're going to have kids and grandkids and great grandkids, and it's going to be awesome. (Seed Promise)

And I will give unto thy seed all these countries – That prime real estate is going to go the family and stay in the family. (Land Promise)

He's promised Isaac His presence, prime real estate, a huge family, but then there's one last thing God promises Isaac.

And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed – Isaac, I'm going to use you. Through you and your offspring (in reference to the Messiah), I'm going to change the world. (Blessing Promise)

That's a pretty great set of promises isn't it? Why was God going to do all that?

5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

You are being blessed because your dad obeyed me.

Application – sir, ma'am, will your children reap the blessings of your obedience to God?

It's like God is saying to Isaac, "You are being blessed because of your dad's obedience. Now, it's your turn to obey. What are you going to do?"

As one who has reaped many blessing of my parent's faithfulness to the Lord, my hope is that I will pass that blessing forward to my kids as well.

"First, these promises would be fulfilled because of the covenant made with Abraham. In other words, the fulfillment was guaranteed because the Lord swore to do it. Any contingency-based obedience would refer to participation in the promises, not the fulfillment itself." (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5660-5662)

"The allusion must be to Genesis 22, specifically verse 18 ('because you have obeyed my voice'), but probably encompasses more generally the life of obedience Abraham led. The terminology used to describe his obedience is striking-the words are legal designations from the law and presuppose a knowledge of Deuteronomy. The use of these words to describe Abraham's obedience has led some to explain that Abraham obeyed the entire law before it was given (see Kiddushin 4:14 in the Mishnah ['We find that Abraham our father had fulfilled the whole Law before it was given'])" (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5667-5670)

"Abraham clearly had obeyed God whether in the matter of departing Ur and then Haran or in offering Isaac. Less clear are God's charge, commandments, statutes, and laws. These are terms routinely related to the Law of Moses which was still centuries future. Evidently Abraham was aware of God's ways either through oral tradition or from direct revelation from God." (Sorenson, 2007)

Genesis 12:4 - So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

Genesis 17:23 - And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him.

Genesis 18:19 - For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

Genesis 22:16 - And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

Genesis 22:18 - And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

We've seen the famine in the land that led to the forewarning of God, but what would Isaac do? How would he respond?

### 3.) The Faith of Isaac

6 And Isaac dwelt in Gerar:

And Isaac dwelt in Gerar – summarized: Isaac obeyed God. He obeyed God's word to him, just like his dad. He followed in his dad's footsteps. How cool is that? What a legacy of faithfulness and obedience.

- However, this act of obedience in verse 6 was not going to be the only way that Isaac followed in his father's footsteps.
- In verse 6 we see the faith of Isaac. In verse 7 we see the fear of Isaac.

### 4.) The Fear of Isaac

7 And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon.

So Isaac lived during this time of famine in Gerar, which was still in the land God had promised to him and his seed. Look at what happened while he was there.

And the men of the place asked him of his wife – so what's the deal with Rebekah? She's quite the looker.

- Apparently just as was the case with Sarah, Rebekah was very beautiful.
- This is another one of the reasons why I do believe that this was a flashback. These comments make more sense if she's younger, and they make more sense if there's no kids around.

What did Isaac do? He did just what his dad had done...twice. Abraham lied about his wife being his sister when they went to Egypt in Genesis 12. But then, later on in life when they were in this very same city of Gerar in Genesis 20, Abraham lied again about Sarah's identity.

Just as daddy defaulted to lying as a defense mechanism, so too would Isaac.

And he said, She is my sister – when Abraham made this claim, it was at least a half truth. Here, when Isaac makes it, it's a complete lie.

- Why did he lie?

For he feared to say, She is my wife –

- Application – Fear is a powerful emotion and motivator. It will lead you to do things you shouldn't (as Isaac did here), and fear will keep you from doing the things that you should.
  - o Illustration – parable of the talents (I was afraid)
    - That excuse was not sufficient for the master, and it is not sufficient for us with our master.
    - 2 Tim. 1:7 – God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness.
    - God calls us to live by faith in Him, not fear of man.
    - How do we remedy our fear? What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

Isaac was afraid. His fear led him to do something he shouldn't have. What was he afraid of?

Lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah because she was fair to look upon – He was afraid to die for his wife, and so he put his wife in danger to safeguard himself.

- What a contrast with Christ's sacrificial love which was demonstrated upon the cross as He died for the ones He loved.
  - o Ephesians 5:25 - Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;
  - o The Scripture calls upon as husbands us to love our wives as Christ did, not as Isaac did.
- Application – real men protect women.
  - o "The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved." – Matthew Henry
  - o Counter Illustration – Andrew Tate
    - Kickboxing world champion that has become famous for his misogyny.
      - 6.9 million followers on Twitter
      - TikTok videos have billions of views.
    - His materials center on helping men take charge of their lives and become truly masculine (in back lash against the feminization of culture)
      - However, Tate's version of masculinity takes advantage of women instead of protecting them.
      - "I'm a realist and when you're a realist, you're sexist. There's no way you can be rooted in reality and not be sexist."
      - He described women as "intrinsically lazy" and said there was "no such thing as an independent female".

- Tate was banned from Twitter for saying women should "bear responsibility" for being sexually assaulted.
- He made significant amounts of money getting women into the adult entertainment industry. (Radford)
- His masculinity centers on taking advantage of women. Biblical masculinity centers on protecting them...on treating them as Christ treated us not as Isaac treated Rebekah.

Genesis 12:4 - So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

Genesis 17:23 - And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him.

Genesis 18:19 - For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

Genesis 22:16 - And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

Genesis 22:18 - And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

8 And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife.

And it came to pass when he had been there a long time – this lie went on for a long time.

- Gal. 6:9 – be sure your sin will find you out.

That Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out a window, and saw – he saw Isaac and Rebekah (brother and sister)

And behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife – what does that mean? They were playing in a way that made it abundantly clear that they were not siblings.

9 And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife; and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her.

And Abimelech called Isaac – Isaac gets called into the principal's office (by himself)

And said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife – Rebekah is your wife, Isaac.

And how saidst thou, She is my sister? – How could you say that she is your sister?

- Application – What is wrong with you? Abraham’s bad habit of deception had now come to fruition in the life of his son. It was generational.
  - o By the way, would Isaac be the last one in the family tree to have an issue with lying? No.
  - o For, after Abraham and Isaac there was Jacob. Jacob, with the help of his mother, would later lie to Isaac pretending to be Esau to get his blessing. The liar would get lied to.
    - Then Jacob would be lied to by Laban when he gave him Leah instead of Rachel.
    - Then the cherry on top would be when ten of Jacob’s sons together lied to him, claiming that Joseph had been killed by a wild beast, when they had actually sold him into slavery.
- Your sin affects more than just you.

Abimelech (which was a title for the ruler of Gerar similar to Pharaoh in Egypt) said, “How could you lie like this?”

And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her. – I didn’t want to die for her sake.

- Romans 5:8 – But God commendeth His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

10 And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us.

And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? – what have you done!?

One of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife – someone might have in ignorance taken your wife as their own.

- “The heathens esteemed fornication either no sin, or a very little one; but adultery was heinous and formidable even among the heathens, and especially here, because it was fresh in memory how sorely God had punished Abimelech, and all his family, only for an intention of adultery, Genesis 20:1-18. Note here, they take it for granted that their ignorance had not been a sufficient excuse for their sin.” (Poole, 1990)

And thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us – Isaac, your fear filled lie could have caused someone to commit adultery without even realizing it.

- Application – lies have consequences. They affect everything and everyone they come in contact with.
  - o Application – this is one of the reasons why I believe it is a really big deal to teach your kids not to lie at an early age. Lying is not funny.
  - o Illustration – Jacqueline lying about her cookie and having to throw it away.
- Isaac’s lie didn’t just put his wife at risk. It put the Philistines at risk as well.

11 And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.

“Recognizing the seriousness of the matter, Abimelech instituted a protective law for Isaac and his wife. Through this law God protected the marriage of Isaac from the people of Gerar, and from Isaac himself.” (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5694-5697)

“The lesson of the entire passage may be worded as follows: A mature faith in God's promises engenders a fearless walk with him, but cowering in fear endangers the blessing and makes a mockery of faith. Faith boldly faces danger, but fear is a mockery of faith. The one who truly believes God's promises of his presence and of his blessing will obey his statutes, precepts, and laws. But when the servant of God falters in faith and jeopardizes the promise, God must intervene to preserve his plan... Believers today also have a sure covenant that is based on the obedience of one man, but their enjoyment of the blessings of that covenant requires obedience to the Word of the Lord. Sin, such as deception, can tarnish the reputation of the household of faith and endanger the promised blessings.” (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5703-5705)

### **Application**

The famine in the land...the forewarning of God...the faith of Isaac...and then the fear of Isaac.

May we be a people of faith and not of fear. May we take our eyes off of the obstacles and problems and people and onto our Lord.

May we be a people who, regardless of who our earthly father is, are determined to follow in the footsteps of our Heavenly Father, knowing that obedience brings blessing.

# Genesis 26:12-22

## Review

Last week in Genesis 26 we studied how a famine in the land of Caanan led Isaac to a moment of crisis. There was no water. There was no food, and he needed to do something, but before he made any rash decisions, God appeared to Him and told him not to go to Egypt, but rather to stay in the land of Caanan. What did he do? Well, just as his father had done many years prior, he obeyed God in faith and sojourned in a region of the Promised Land known as Gerar.

However, while dwelling in Gerar, Isaac followed in his father's footsteps in another not so healthy way: deception. In fear for his safety, he lied to the residents of Gerar about the identity of his wife, and this lie persisted until one day the ruler of Gerar, Abimelech, discovered his secret and wrang him out for it. That's where we left off last week: with Isaac and Rebekah in Gerar having just been chastised by Abimelech.

Nevertheless, as we pick up the story in Genesis 26:12, it progresses in a more positive direction. For, the first thing that we see in our passage is...

### 1.) The Blessing of Isaac

Isaac had done wrong in lying and was justly scolded for that. However, he also had done right in obeying God in staying in the land, and God was going to bless him for that.

12 Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him.

Then Isaac sowed in that land – in Gerar, Isaac planted seed.

- This doesn't mean that had acquired property and was planning on being a permanent resident of Gerar. But what it does entail is that he did intend to stick around at least for the agricultural season. (Spence & Exell, 1883)

Here's this newcomer, this sojourner in Gerar, who comes in and throws down seed and guess what happens? He...

And received in the same year an hundredfold – he received 100 times as much fruit as seed that he sowed. How is that possible?

- For those of us who have experience with gardening and fruits and vegetables, this should make a lot of sense.
  - o Illustration – for instance, in my backyard I have a Mandarin orange tree...a baby Mandarin orange tree. That orange tree started from a single seed that was planted I don't even know how long ago. But let me ask you a question. When that Mandarin tree grows to full maturity, how many oranges will it



produce in a season? One? One seed = one fruit. Is that how it works? No, in agriculture you expect to reap more than you sow.

- That's what happened with Isaac, but Isaac didn't just reap more than he sowed. He reaped a lot more than he sowed: one hundred-fold.
- "The rates of increase vary from thirty to a hundred. Sixty-fold is very good, and was not unusual in Palestine. A hundred-fold was rare, and only in spots of extraordinary fertility." (Barnes, 1834)
- "Plant a wheat seed, and it will turn into a wheat stalk that can produce hundreds of wheat seeds. Plant an acorn, and it will grow into an oak tree that will produce thousands of acorns." (Greear, 2018)
- Furthermore, this agricultural principal of reaping and sowing is also applied to other areas of life in different parts of Bible. I'll give you two illustrations of this.
  - Galatians 6:7-9 - 7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. 9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.
    - Here's what that passage is saying. In farming it is true that you reap what you sow (i.e. if you plant a cucumber seed, you're not going to get an avocado tree). You reap what you sow in farming. In the same way, Paul writes in Galatians 6 that you reap what you sow in your actions. You plant bad choices. You reap bad outcomes. You plant good choices. You reap good outcomes.
  - However, Paul didn't just apply this principle to righteous living. He also applied it to righteous giving.
  - 2 Cor. 9:6-7 - 6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. 7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.
    - When it comes to giving, Paul says, you don't just reap what you sow. You reap in proportion to what you sow. I could give a bunch of other examples from the Scripture, but you get the idea. This agricultural principle of reaping and sowing is pertinent to the spiritual areas of our lives.
      - In farming, you reap what you sow. You reap after you sow. You reap more than you sow, and you reap in proportion to what you saw. All of this is true in agriculture, but according to the Scripture it's also true in other areas of life.
- Isaac sowed seed in this foreign land that he was camped out in, and he had a really awesome harvest: 100 times more than he sowed.

- Now that doesn't mean contrary to what some tv preachers will tell you that if you sow \$1,000 that God will give you back \$100,000, but what it does mean in this passage is that...

And the Lord blessed him – during a time of famine in a foreign land, God blessed Isaac. You know what that means? It wasn't Isaac. It wasn't the ground. It was God.

- Isaac hadn't just sowed seed. He had sowed obedience, and now he was reaping blessing.

Genesis 26:3 - Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father;

Matthew 13:23 - 23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Matthew 19:29 - 29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

13 And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great:

And the man waxed great – Isaac grew greater. God didn't just grow the crops. He grew Isaac...and Isaac...

Went forward – what does that mean? Let me put it this way. You want to know what direction Isaac was headed in life? Forward. That's the idea.

And grew until he became very great – Isaac is moving forward, and God is growing him until he reaches the point at which he has grown very great.

Ok, but what does that mean practically? In what ways had Isaac grown great?

Genesis 24:35 - And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses.

14 For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him.

For he had possessions of flocks – God blessed Isaac with sheep and goats, a lot of them.

- Sheep and goats meant wool, cloths, skins, meat, milk, butter, cheese,

And possession of herds – cattle, oxen

- Cattle were used for farming and their meat was served on rare, special occasions (i.e. anniversaries, birthdays, the prodigal son coming home, three messengers from God showing up at your tent – Gen. 18)
- Where did Isaac get the sheep, goats, and oxen? It's possible he acquired them through trade of his bountiful harvest at the local market.

And great store of servants – just like his father.

- Remember, in Genesis 14, Abraham had 318 trained male servants that he took into battle.
  - o Isaac's camp, including his servants, may have been larger than the size of our church.
- Isaac's people and possessions and presence is expanding in Gerar.
- Genesis 12:16 - And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.
- Genesis 13:2 - And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

And the Philistines envied him – The Philistines became jealous of the rapid rise of this foreigner. There was a deep-rooted envy within the Philistines directed at this minority figure in their country.

- It reminds me of a similar sentiment that existed in Uganda in the early 1970s. Back during this time period there was a minority of Indians, about 50,000 or so, that lived in Uganda many of whose families had lived in the country for nearly a century. These Ugandan Indians were entrepreneurial, talented and hard-working people, skilled in business, and they formed the backbone of the economy. However, because most of the businesses in Uganda were owned by Indians, there was a real resentment and jealousy that percolated against them by the majority of Ugandans. Their ruthless dictator at the time, Idi Amin, recognized this envy and tapped into it. On August 4th, 1972, Amin ordered the expulsion of all 50,000 Indians from the country. He confiscated their businesses, and he gave them to ethnic Ugandans. This is a true story. It actually happened and ultimately led to the collapse of the Ugandan economy. However, my point is that the Philistines envy of Isaac is going to lead to a similar development. (Pirie, 2019)

Genesis 37:11 - And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

1 Samuel 18:9 - And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

Job 5:2 - For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.

For, we see not only the blessing of Isaac. We see also the expulsion of Isaac.

2.) The Expulsion of Isaac

Verse 15 describes how this envy led to animosity.

15 For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth.

The Philistines were envious of Isaac's success, and so what did they do? They tried to cut off his water supply. If you don't have water, you can't farm. If you don't have water, you can't raise livestock. If you don't have water, especially in the Middle East, you can't prosper. (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5770-5771)

So they caved in Isaac's wells.

Illustration - to put it in perspective, it would be kind of like if you came home from a day out with your family, and your house had been broken into, your stuff had been trashed, and there were all kinds of profanities spray painted on your drive way basically saying, "Get out". That's what the caving in of Isaac's wells equated to.

It was a not-so-subtle way of saying, "You're not welcome here, and you need to go." (Spence & Exell, 1883)

Genesis 21:22-31 - 22 And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest: 23 Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned. 24 And Abraham said, I will swear. **25 And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away.** 26 And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing; neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to day. 27 And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant. 28 And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. 29 And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves? 30 And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well. 31 Wherefore he called that place Beersheba; because there they sware both of them.

16 And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we.

The Philistines do this, and word gets back to Abimelech about it. He goes to Isaac and says basically, "This isn't tenable any longer. You guys need to go. You've grown too big for our little pond."

- "The Philistines envied him, and endeavoured to do him injury by stopping up and filling with rubbish all the wells that had been dug in his father's time; and even Abimelech requested him to depart, because he was afraid of his power." (Keil & Delitzsch, 1857-1878)
- "Abimelech recognized that, after such conduct on the part of his people, it would be best in the interests of peace that Isaac should withdraw. Isaac's attitude is one of

concession and compliance towards the people among whom he sojourns.”  
(Plummer, 1902)

- “This may receive illustration from the fact that many Syrian shepherds at this day settle for a year or two in a place, rent some ground, in the produce of which they trade with the neighboring market, till the owners, through jealousy of their growing substance, refuse to renew their lease and compel them to remove elsewhere.” (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown, 1884)

We’ve seen the blessing of Isaac followed by the envy of the Philistines which resulted in the expulsion of Isaac.

And you’d think it would end there, right? Nope. For, we see next the persecution of Isaac.

### 3.) The Persecution of Isaac

17 And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.

“The word nahal, rendered ‘valley,’ means a narrow defile through which a summer torrent flows. In the bed of these streams water can generally be found by digging, and Isaac hoped that he was far enough from the city for the enmity to cease.” (Ellicott, 1905)

Isaac moved from where he had been camped out, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, an area not out of the country, but likely on the borders of it. Isaac moved a reasonable distance to accommodate the wishes of the Philistines and Abimelech. Out of sight, out of mind, right? Things should be good, right? Well, let’s see what happens.

18 And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them.

And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father – so there were some other wells that Abraham’s servants had dug years and years prior. What do you expect? Abraham was a nomad. He would have dug quite a few wells. Isaac and his servants found some more of these wells and redug them.

- “from which it appears that Abraham had digged other wells besides that of Beersheba (Genesis 21:31)” (Spence & Exell, 1883)

For the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham – I guess “they apparently thought that, once Abraham had passed off the scene, their treaty with him ended and that his son should not get the wells.” (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5772-5774)

- “This was a violation of the league into which Abimelech had entered with the patriarch (vide Genesis 21:23)” (Spence & Exell, 1883)

Anyways, Isaac redug these wells...

and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them. – he knew what his dad had named these wells and kept the names.

So they've got some water, but they needed more water. So what did they do?

19 And Isaac's servants digged in the valley (*for more wells*), and found there a well of springing water.

And Isaac's servants digged in the valley – in addition to the old wells which they redug, Isaac's servants dug for some new wells.

And found there a well of springing water – What's a well of springing water? It was a well that was fed by a spring which meant that it didn't run dry. Finding a well of springing water in the desert was like hitting the jackpot. But there's another name by which this water was known which is probably more familiar to your vocabulary: living water. (cf. Jeremiah 2:13; 17:13).

- Jeremiah 2:13 - 13 For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.
  - o The same Hebrew word that's translated as springing water in Gen. 26:19 is translated living water in Jeremiah 2:13.
  - o Church, may we not forget that just as a well of springing water was a lifesaver physically in the Middle East, so too there is one source of living water than can sustain us spiritually, and that is our Creator.
  - o John 4:10-11 - Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?
    - Jesus was and is the living water.

Jeremiah 17:13 - 13 O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters.

John 7:38 - He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

Revelation 21:6 - And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

Isaac and his servants hit the jackpot. They find this well of springing water on the borders of the country of Gerar, but look at what happened next.

20 And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him.

And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen saying, The water is ours – “though the well was dug by Isaac's servants, yet they laid claim to the water, pretending it was their ground, being on their borders:” (Gill, 1811)

And he called the name of the well Esek – which means contention. Why?

Because they strove with him -

Illustration – A toddler seeing another kid playing with a toy that he wants and yelling, “That’s mine!”

So there was this contention over the well that Isaac dug. So what did Isaac and his servants do? They took the high road...

21 And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah.

And they digged another well – implying that Isaac yielded Esek to the herdsmen.

- You’d think that because he had been the bigger person with the well of springing water that the Philistines would just leave him alone? Right? Nope. They strove over the next well that he dug too.

And strove for that also –

And he called the name of it Sitnah – which means hostility. The word “*Sitnah*” is related to the word “*Satan*” which means adversary.

We’ve seen the blessing of Isaac which resulted in the expulsion of Isaac followed by the persecution of Isaac, but this passage ends on a positive note. For we see finally the provision of God.

4.) The Provision of God

22 And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.

And he removed from thence – he moved again!

And digged another well – they found water once again.

- Application – Church, it didn’t matter where he was. It didn’t matter that there was a famine going on in the land. Wherever Isaac went, what were they able to find? Water. Why? Because when God is with you, the water follows.

and for that they strove not – perhaps because Isaac was now far enough beyond the borders of Gerar.

and he called the name of it Rehoboth – which means wide streets or wide places. The reason he named it so was because...

For now the Lord hath made room for us – God has made us a broad space in the desert.

And we shall be fruitful in the land – we will be prosperous in the land.

- The Lord was with Isaac, and the Lord blessed Isaac with peace, provision, and prosperity.

### **Application**

Will God do that for me? One day. One day. During your time on earth, God may bless you in the incredible ways that he blessed Isaac, but even if he does, my friend, that blessing pales in comparison to what awaits us beyond the grave. What awaits us there? Him. He does, and knowing Him and glorifying Him is what we were made for. It is the greatest treasure anyone could ever receive, and I look forward to the day in which it will be ours to enjoy forever.



# Genesis 26:23-33

## Review

Tonight in Genesis 26 we're going to jump back into our study of Isaac, the Jewish patriarch, but before we do that, I want to take a minute or two to remind us of where exactly we're at in the story.

At the beginning of Genesis 26, there was a famine in the land of Caanan that led Isaac to temporarily relocate to the nearby region of Gerar where the Philistines lived under the rule of their king Abimelech. Isaac lived there for a period of time with his beautiful wife Rebekah, but because he was afraid of the Philistines killing him so that they could have his wife, he decided to lie and say that Rebekah was his sister. This lie went on for a period of time until Abimelech one day spotted Isaac and Rebekah doing unbrotherly and unsisterly type things. He calls Isaac up to his office. He confronts him. Isaac admits the whole thing. Abimelech is frustrated but he charges all of his people to keep their hands off of Isaac and Rebekah.

More time passes. Isaac and Rebekah continue to live in the land, and God begins to bless Isaac. Verse 14 says that Isaac waxed great and went forward and grew until he became very great. The success of this foreigner Isaac led to the local Philistines coming to resent Isaac and his camp. So one day they've had enough. They filled in all of Isaac's well, destroying his access to water. Abimelech hears of this and basically says, "Yeah. This isn't going to work. I think it's best for everybody if you leave."

Isaac decides to be the bigger person and moves to the valley with his clan. They settle. They find a well of springing water. Guess what happens? The Philistine herdsmen say, "Hey that's ours." They fight over the well. Isaac decides to be the bigger person again, relinquishes the well and digs another. Well guess what? They fought over that one too. He decides to move again, further away to Rehoboth where apparently there is finally enough distance between him and the Philistines to live in peace. That is where we left off, and that is where we pick up in Genesis 26:23.

As we pick up our story tonight, the first thing that we begin to see in verses 23-25 is the promise from God.

## 1.) The Promise from God

The Bible tells us in verse 23 that...

23 And he (*Isaac and his camp*) went up from thence (*from Rehoboth*) to Beersheba.

So Isaac and his people move again (for the fifth time in this chapter), but this time they move home.

Beersheba – was the ancient home of Abraham. It was where Abraham settled after his covenant with the ruler of Gerar (Gen. 21:31-34)



“Beersheba was Isaac’s birthplace and his early home. Beer Lahairoi was Isaac’s home after he married Rebekah. It was here that his sons were born. Because there was a great famine in the land Isaac moved to Gerar in the country of the Philistines. This is where he deceived Abimelech, the king of Gerar (Gen. 26:1-16). After Abimelech had allowed him to leave Gerar, Isaac dug a well at Esek, but the men of Gerar were envious of Isaac’s prosperity and contended with the herdsmen of Isaac and forced him to leave (Gen. 26:19-20). Isaac dug another well at Sitnah, but they again envied him and strove with him and Isaac departed (Gen. 26:21). Isaac was then permitted to dwell in the area of Rehoboth and he lived in peace. Then he moved back to Beersheba.” (Bible History)

Genesis 21:31-34 - 31 Wherefore he called that place Beersheba; because there they swear both of them. 32 Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines. 33 And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God. 34 And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days.

24 And the Lord appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake.

And the Lord appeared unto him the same night – in the same night that Isaac and his family had made the journey to Beersheba, God appears.... perhaps in a dream or a vision

And said, I am the God of Abraham thy father – God identifies himself to Isaac. Take note of how He identifies Himself.

- He doesn't say, "I was the God of Abraham, thy father." Rather, He says, "I am the God of Abraham thy father."
  - o That's important. Why? Because we don't serve a God who was. We serve a God who is.
  - o It's also important because it signifies that God's relationship with Abraham had not ended with Abraham's death. Why? Because death is not the end. Our relationship with God extends beyond death.
  - o Jesus actually referenced passages like this one as evidence for life beyond death.
    - Matthew 22:31-32 - 31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, 32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. (*the implication is that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are alive with God*)

Genesis 15:1 - After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

Exodus 3:6 - Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

God introduces Himself to Isaac, and then He says...

Fear not. - Why would God say that? Probably because Isaac was afraid...not afraid of God...but afraid of life. Sure God had blessed him, but Isaac had faced a lot of adversity and stress. In this chapter alone, Isaac had dealt with famine, vandalism, 3 separate conflicts, and 5 moves. That's a lot of change. That's a lot of stress...and when God comes to Him the first thing that He says is, "Isaac, don't be afraid."

- Sometimes, that's just what we need from God, isn't it?
  - o Psalm 46:1-2 - God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;
  - o Isaiah 41:10 - Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.
- When our focus becomes fixated on the circumstances and problems and negatives that lie all around us, do you know what happens? Fear begins to take over. How do you combat that? You fill your mind with the Word of God and the promises of God. Whereas problems often produce fear, the word of God produces faith.
  - o God says to Isaac what He says to us in so many places in Scripture, "Fear not."

But why God? Why should I not fear?

for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed – as Christians, how can we have confidence from God in the face of fear? Let me give you three reasons: past, present, and future. God has been faithful to you in the past, has He not? Check. God is with you in the present, is He not? Check. God has promised to take care of you in the future. Has He not? Check. The Word of God and the promises of God encompass every part of your existence: past, present, and future. Outside of that, what is there? If God’s faithfulness encompasses our past, present, and future, then what do we have to fear?

- Think specifically with Isaac. Earlier in this chapter God had been faithful to Isaac in Gerar. Here, in Beersheba, God reminds Isaac that he need not fear. Why? Because I am with thee in the present, and I will bless you and multiply you in the future. Interestingly, what God says here to Isaac is almost a verbatim reiteration of what He had already promised him at the beginning of chapter 26. He’s really just repeating Himself here.
- You say, “Why does God have to keep reminding these guys in the Bible of His promises?” It’s probably the same reason that we need to be so constantly reminded. The cares of life have a way of giving us amnesia regarding the promises of God, don’t they?
  - o Application – we are confronted with the cares of life and the calls to fear every day. And, if we’re being bombarded with fear and stressors and worry every day, don’t you think that we need to be combating those things with reminders from the Word of God every day? You and I need to hear from God daily. How do you do that? You open His Word and you read it, and you believe it, and you let it move you and change you from the inside out.
- Genesis 26:3-4 - Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father; And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;

God says, “Fear not. I am with you and will bless you.”

Why was God going to do this?

for my servant Abraham’s sake –

- Once again, what God says is almost an exact repetition of what He had said earlier to Isaac in Genesis 26:3-5 - 3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father; 4 And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; **5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.**
- Isaac was reaping the divine blessings of his father’s obedience.
- Application – your choices have ramifications for your children.

- That doesn't stop being the case when they move out of the house. Your kids are still watching you, and your actions still impact them. Abraham was 75 years old when he obeyed God and left Ur for the Promised Land.
- May that be an encouragement to each of us in this room regardless of age to stay faithful in obeying God.

Genesis 22:19 - So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

God reiterates his promise to Isaac. How does Isaac respond?

25 And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well.

And he builded an altar there – just as his father did. This is the first instance that the Scripture records of Isaac building an altar. Isaac built a place of worship to God.

- Application – This should be a reminder to us that when we encounter the Word of God, our natural instinctive response should be worship and sacrifice...just like it was with Isaac.
- “An altar was often built to commemorate an encounter with God that had a profound impact upon someone. Abram (Genesis 12:7), Isaac (Genesis 26:24–25), Jacob (Genesis 35:3), David (1 Chronicles 21:26), and Gideon (Judges 6:24) all built altars and worshipped after having a unique encounter with God. An altar usually represented a person's desire to consecrate himself fully to the Lord. God had worked in a person's life in such a way that the person desired to create something tangible to memorialize it.” (Got Questions)

And called upon the name of the Lord – What does that mean? It's a phrase used in Scripture that has a broad range of expression.

- It can mean to call out to for assistance, to worship Him publicly, or to proclaim His name.
- In this context, it probably means that he publicly worshipped God there at that altar.

He called upon the name of the Lord there in Beersheba.

And pitched his tent there – intending to settle.

And there Isaac's servants digged a well – in search of the most precious commodity for a shepherd and his camp in the Middle East: water.

- Illustration: moving into a house and getting the utilities turned on

Genesis 8:20 - And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

Genesis 12:7 - And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

Psalms 116:17 - I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.

We see the promise of God. Secondly, this evening we see the peace with Abimelech.

## 2.) The Peace with Abimelech

This is where the story takes a surprising turn.

26 Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phichol the chief captain of his army.

Isaac and his camp get settled back in Isaac's childhood home Beersheba. Then all of the sudden, one day, guess who shows up having traveled all the way from Gerar? Surprise! It's Abimelech and his two right hand men.

I can't even imagine what would have been going through Isaac's head when he saw Abimelech and his men approaching in the distance.

- You know how there are chapters of your life that are over? People that you don't expect to see again...ever.... people that you hope you don't see again ever.... I imagine that's where Isaac was at with regards to Abimelech and the Philistines.
- You might picture him seeing them approach in the distance and thinking to himself.... "No way...You've got to be kidding me." I can hear him groan. The Bible doesn't say that expressly, but I'm sure it's somewhere down deep in the Hebrew.

Genesis 21:22-32 - And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest: Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned. And Abraham said, I will swear. And Abraham reprov'd Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away. And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to day. And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant. And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves? And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well. Wherefore he called that place Beersheba; because there they swore both of them. Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.

The Bible doesn't tell us if he groaned, but it does tell us what he says. Listen to this.

27 And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?

And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me – what are you doing here???

Seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you? – considering the fact that you not only despise me, but you expelled me from your region and the surrounding area! What? Have you not had enough fun mistreating me?

- Genesis 26:14, 16 - For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him...And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we.
- Illustration – being broken up with in the most horrible way and then a month later, your phone rings. You look at the caller id, and it's that person. "Why are you calling me? What's wrong with you?"

28 And they said, We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee;

And they said, We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee – we have come to the realization that God (Jehovah) is with you.

- This isn't that surprising actually because they had a front row seat to God's blessing of Isaac over and over and over again despite his mistreatment by the Philistines.
- Application – By the way, when God is with you and you are walking with Him, the people around you can tell.

They say, "Hey, we've come to realize that God is with you."

And we said – perhaps in a private cabinet type meeting...

Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee – Now you have to remember that some 90 years prior to this point in time Abraham had entered into a covenant alliance with the previous ruler of Gerar and his general. As time passed, it seems that the Philistines sort of reneged on that agreement by filling in Abraham's wells. What the current ruler of Gerar and his cabinet are asking for is in essence a renewal of that alliance...a reconfirmation of that covenant agreement. (Gill)

- "oath - The word literally signifies a curse. Each side uttered an imprecation, with the prayer that it might fall upon himself if he broke the terms of the covenant." (Ellicott)

Genesis 21:22-23 - And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest: Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned.

Genesis 39:5 - And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.

Hebrews 13:5 - Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

What would the agreement entail?

29 That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou art now the blessed of the Lord.

That thou wilt do us no hurt, - that you won't do wrong by us...that there will be peace between us.

That thou wilt do us not hurt, as we have not touched thee - although Abimelech did send Isaac away from Gerar, he allowed him to do with all that he had untouched. (Gill)

- Genesis 26:11, 14-15 - And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death. For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him. For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth.

And as we have done unto thee nothing but good and have sent thee away in peace - Obviously, after Isaac moved, the Philistine herdsmen did wrong by him...but these things weren't done by order of the king. In fact, they were most likely done without his knowledge. (Gill)

Thou art now the blessed of the Lord - "In spite of their efforts to hinder his prosperity, they had to admit that Isaac was blessed of the Lord (b'ruk YHWH, in v. 29). They simply could not hinder the blessing of God (cf. Exod. 1)." (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5793-5794)

Genesis 26:12 - Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him.

Genesis 12:2 - And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

Genesis 21:22 - And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phicol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest:

"By whatever motive the proposal was dictated—whether fear of his growing power, or regret for the bad usage they had given him, the king and two of his courtiers paid a visit to



the tent of Isaac (Pr 16:7). His timid and passive temper had submitted to the annoyances of his rude neighbors; but now that they wish to renew the covenant, he evinces deep feeling at their conduct, and astonishment at their assurance, or artifice, in coming near him. Being, however, of a pacific disposition, Isaac forgave their offense, accepted their proposals, and treated them to the banquet by which the ratification of a covenant was usually crowned." (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown)

Isaac is in an interesting situation here. He is face to face with a king representing a people group that had mistreated him...and yet despite that mistreatment, he has come out on the other side with the upper hand. He has an opportunity here to give them a taste of their own medicine, so to speak...to give them the what for...to get back at those who had done him wrong....and yet what does he do? Look at verse 30.

30 And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink.

And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink – He showed them hospitality. He didn't just offer them food and drink. He welcomed them to his table, and broke bread with them...in anticipation of the covenant they would all agree to on the following day. His actions here remind me of what Jesus said in His sermon on the mount.

- Matthew 5:43-44 - 43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;
  - o If you only love people that you like and that like you, then you don't really understand what love is.
  - o Application – oh that we would have the internal strength to treat people not as they have treated us, but as He has treated us.

Genesis 19:3 - And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

Genesis 21:8 - And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.

Romans 12:18 – if it be possible, as much as Leigh in you, live peaceably with all men.

31 And they rose up betimes in the morning, and sware one to another: and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.

And they rose up betimes in the morning – they rose up early in the morning.

And sware one to another – they made a covenant of peace.

And Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace – when Isaac could have gotten even, he made peace.

- Illustration – when I think of peacemaking I can't help but think of the end of the Civil War. As southern surrender became seemingly inevitable, it became more and more apparent that northerners wanted southern blood. They wanted to confiscate all property, imprison those who were in the army, etc. etc. Yet when the time came for General Lee's surrender to General Grant at the Appomattox Court House, it was healing the country, as opposed to taking vengeance that guided the actions of Ulysess S. Grant and the Lincoln administration.
- "There would be no mass imprisonments or executions, no parading of defeated enemies through Northern streets. Lincoln's priority—shared by Grant—was 'to bind up the nation's wounds' and unite the country together again as a functioning democracy under the Constitution; extended retribution against the former Confederates would only slow down the process. The Army of Northern Virginia would surrender their arms, return home, and agree 'not to take up arms against the Government of the United States.' At Lee's request, Grant even allowed Confederates who owned their own horses to keep them so that they could tend their farms and plant spring crops." (Rubenstein)
- Peacemaking - that's what Isaac did with Abimelech. When he could have gotten even, he made peace.

Genesis 14:22 - And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

Genesis 21:31-32 - Wherefore he called that place Beersheba; because there they swear both of them. Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phicol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.

We've seen the promise of God. We've seen the peace with Abimelech. Finally, we see the provision of God.

### 3.) The Provision of God

Isaac moved, worshipped, made peace, and then...

32 And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water.

God blessed Isaac again. Once again, I think is a reminder that peacemaking is the path to prosperity in life. God blesses those who make peace.

- Romans 12:18 - If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.
- Matthew 5:9 – blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
  - o It's rare that we blow up and get even and tell someone what's really on our mind so that we don't end up regretting it later. There's a reason God gave us brains and we don't just automatically blurt out every thought that pops into our heads.

- Peacemaking – it’s not always easy, but it is for the best, and it’s what God calls us to do.

Genesis 26:25 – 25 And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well. 33 And he called it Shebah: therefore the name of the city is Beersheba unto this day.

Genesis 21:31 - Wherefore he called that place Beersheba; because there they sware both of them.

33 And he called it Shebah: therefore the name of the city is Beersheba unto this day.

“Isaac named it Shebah (sib`d) (*oath*) because of the treaty they had made at the well, much after the manner of the earlier treaty Abraham had made when he had settled at the place. The text has already indicated in verse 18 that he customarily named the wells with the names his father had used. It therefore comes as no surprise that, when he made a treaty at Beersheba with the king of Gerar as his father had done, he renamed the place to commemorate that event.” (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5797-5799)

### **Application**

The promises of God...peace with man...and the provision of God.

May we daily fill our minds with the promises of God.

May we daily ask for God’s help to pursue peace with others.

May we daily trust in God’s provision as we believe His promises and we pursue His peace.

# Genesis 26:34-27:17

## Review

Believe it or not, we are coming up towards the end of our study of the life of Isaac. You say, "Hold on a second. Didn't we just start studying Isaac?" The answer to that question is, "Yes" ...and it once again highlights how little time the Scripture actually devotes to Isaac as a main character.

Genesis 12-25 – the life of Abraham

Genesis 25-27 – the life of Isaac

Genesis 28-37 – the life of Jacob

Genesis 37-50 – the life of Joseph

Tonight, as we end chapter 26 and begin chapter 27, we are beginning the transition from Isaac to Jacob as the main character of Genesis. This transition takes place in the story of Isaac's blessing of his sons, a story that begins in 26:34 and ends in 28:9...and by the time it ends, Isaac is in the rearview. Jacob is the main character.

## THE BLESSING STORY

Introduction: Esau's Wives- Gen. 26:34-35

Scene 1: Isaac & Esau Gen. 27: 1-5

Scene 2: Rebekah & Jacob Gen. 27:6-17

Scene 3: Isaac & Jacob – Gen. 27:18-29

Scene 4: Isaac & Esau – Gen. 27:30-40

Scene 5: Rebekah & Jacob Gen. 27:41-45

Scene 6: Isaac & Jacob – Gen. 27:46-28:5

Conclusion: Esau's Wives Gen. 28:6-9

This story is important, and it's interesting because at its core it consists of an introduction revolving around Esau's pagan wives, a conclusion revolving around Esau's pagan wives, and six different scenes that take place in between. These six scenes involve the four members of the family (Isaac & Rebekah with their sons Esau and Jacob), but not one of the

scenes ever involves the whole family together. It's a fractured family full of division, and this divisiveness comes to the forefront in this story centered around Isaac's end of life arrangements.

We're going to break this story up over the course of the next four Sunday nights. Tonight, I'm going to walk us through the introduction and then scenes 1 & 2. Next week is pie and praise night, but then the following Sunday evening, Kurt McCullum is going to walk us through scene 3. The week after that, Chris McPeters is going to walk us through scene 4. Then, on Sunday night December 10th, I'm going to walk us through scenes 5, 6, and the conclusion, and we're going to put a bow on our study of the life of Isaac.

As we dive into our text this evening, look with me first at the introduction beginning in Genesis 26:34.

### 1.) The Introduction

34 And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite:

35 Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah.

So Esau is forty years old. That's the same age that his dad Isaac was when he got married. If you remember, as Abraham was getting older and his son had not yet married, he became very concerned that his son not only find a wife, but find a good wife. Abraham commissioned his right-hand man Eliezer to help arrange a marriage for Isaac (remember this is a time and place where arranged marriages were the norm). But before Abraham sent Eliezer on this quest, he made him swear an oath to him.

- Genesis 24:3 - ...I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:
  - o You will not find a wife for my son among the pagans that live here in Canaan. Rather...
- Genesis 24:4 - 4 But thou shalt go unto my country (*Ur*), and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

So Abraham had a role in helping Isaac find a non pagan wife. Yet, when Esau came of age and decided to get married, did Isaac have any role in that? It certainly doesn't seem like it, especially in light of verse 35...and when Esau does take a wife, who does he take? A pagan...and he doesn't just take one. He takes two. He doubles down.

Genesis 28:8-9 -8 And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father; 9 Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.

Genesis 27:46-28:2 - 46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me? 1 And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. 2 Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother.

These women were...

35 Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah.

They were a bitterness of mind to Isaac and Rebekah, and the significance of Esau's decision to marry these women is elaborated upon later on in the story.

Listen to what Rebekah says and what Isaac does later on in this story.

- Genesis 27:46-28:1- 46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me? 1 And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. 2 Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother.
- Esau's marrying of these pagan women is significant because it once again shows his disregard for his spiritual heritage as well as his disregard for the plans and promises of God.
- The description of Esau's actions here in verses 34-35 are not incidental. They are placed here to give us another glimpse into the character of the one through whom God would **not** keep His promises.

So the story begins with the introduction, which reminds us of the carnal nature of the oldest son Esau. Nevertheless, the introduction is followed by scene 1 involving Isaac & Esau.

2.) Scene 1: Isaac & Esau

Now Esau was carnal. He disregarded the promises of God. He had sold his birthright to his brother for a bowl of stew, but who was Isaac's favorite son? Was it Jacob, or was it Esau? It was Esau. That's right.

- Genesis 25:27-28 - 27 And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. 28 And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.

So despite the fact that Esau has shown disregard for spiritual things, and despite the fact that Esau has married pagan wives, Isaac still loves and prefers Esau. Understanding that, let's see what happens in scene 1.

1 And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, here am I.

By this point in time, Isaac is at least 100, and he's losing his eyesight. That's a key detail that will become significant later on in the story.

- "Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah (Genesis 25:20); sixty years old when Esau and Jacob were born (Genesis 25:26); and a hundred years old when Esau married Judith and Basemath (Genesis 26:34)." (Plummer, 1902)
- "When Joseph was introduced to Pharaoh he was thirty years old (Genesis 41:46), and when Jacob went into Egypt, thirty-nine, as the seven years of abundance and two of famine had then passed by (Genesis 45:6). But Jacob was at that time 130 years old (Genesis 47:9). Consequently Joseph was born before Jacob was ninety-one; and as his birth took place in the fourteenth year of Jacob's sojourn in Mesopotamia (cf. Genesis 30:25, and Genesis 29:18, Genesis 29:21, and Genesis 29:27), Jacob's flight to Laban occurred in the seventy-seventh year of his own life, and the 137th of Isaac's.)" (Keil & Delitzsch, 1857-1878)

Isaac is getting older, and he doesn't know how much time he has left.

Illustration – when you're getting older and you have children and grandchildren, what's one of the things that starts to come to your mind? You start wondering about what happens if you died, and you want to make sure you have your affairs in order.

That's where Isaac's head is at. So he calls his oldest and favorite son Esau to come and see him, which he does.

2 And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death:

Son, I'm getting up there, and I don't know how much time I have left.

3 Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons (*your arrows*), thy quiver (*for your arrows*) and thy bow (*to shoot the arrows*), and go out to the field, and take me some venison;

Illustration – when I was a kid my dad would always call my name from another room. I'd get up out of my room to go find him, and he'd say, "While you're up son, could you get your dad a glass of milk?" Or at the dinner table, he'd say, "Son, you look like you're getting taller. Stand up so that I can see how tall you are." I'd stand up. He'd say, "Son, while you're up could you get your dad a bowl of cereal?"

Anyways, I think of that when I read this verse.

Isaac says to Esau, “Son, while you’re up why don’t you go get your dad some of that venison that I love so much?”

4 And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat;

Esau wasn’t just a hunter. He would clean it and season it and cook it...and when he did, that venison was good.

So his dad makes this request of him. So far, so good. Nothing bad...but then look at how verse 4 ends.

4...that my soul may bless thee before I die.

There’s a lot going on here in the end of verse 4, and yet it’s really easy to miss because what happens here is foreign to our 21st century western context. So, we need to adjust our frame of reference a little bit to understand the significance of what happens here.

First off, we need to understand that in this time period with this family chosen by God an end-of-life blessing was a really big deal. Huge.

Illustration – The best way that I can think of to explain it is that the end-of-life blessing was sort of like a last will and testament that had spiritual components to it too.

- I think that all of us in this room can understand that whenever there is a will with a lot of assets attached to it, there is the potential for a lot of family drama. That’s really what we’re going to see happen here in this story.
- With this particular family, the blessing/this last will and testament not only had major financial implications. It had major spiritual ramifications. For, this was the family line through which God had promised the Messiah would come. It was the family line to which God had promised a great nation. It was the family line to which God promised the title deed to the Middle East. This blessing was important because there was a lot at stake in terms of who would be the new head of the family.
  - o “An Old Testament blessing of a father to his sons included words of encouragement, details regarding each son’s inheritance, and prophetic words concerning the future.” (Got Questions)
  - o “‘Listen to your father!’ never carried more weight humanly speaking than when the Bible’s patriarchs dispensed blessing to their children. Their words were not just hopeful wishes for their offspring but personal and prophetic statements of divine decree.” (Sona, 2019)
  - o “The dying blessings of Isaac and Jacob find their way into the pages of the New Testament, when the writer of Hebrews explains: ‘By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff’ (Heb. 11:20–21). The writer of Hebrews sees in the patriarchal blessings an act of faith. Every act of faith is built on the previous word and promises of God.



Isaac and Jacob were pronouncing covenant blessings in light of the previous promises God made to Abraham. Jacob's blessing his sons and the sons of Joseph 'by faith' is particularly instructive. Here, at the end of a difficult and challenging life, Jacob continues to cling to the covenant promises of God." (Batzig, 2021)

This blessing is also important for another reason. In Genesis 25, when Rebekah was pregnant with Esau and Jacob in her womb, God had told her that one of the two boys would rule over the other, would be the head of the family when Isaac passed away. Which boy did God say that about? Was it Esau or Jacob? It was Jacob, and Isaac knew that.

Then, beyond that, in Genesis 25, when Esau was famished after a day of hunting, what did he sell to Jacob for a bowl of stew? The birthright, which according to Hebrews 12:16-17, included the blessing!

- This blessing has been promised to Jacob by God. It's been sold to Jacob by Esau. It's been disregarded by Esau through his carnal actions....and yet here is Isaac preparing to give it to Esau...and on the other side of things, Esau, by agreeing to this plan, is breaking his oath that he made to Jacob when he swore him his birthright in exchange for stew. Isaac is up to no good. Esau is up to no good.
- "What would have happened to the blessing if Jacob had allowed Esau to do his hunting and to go unmolested into Isaac's tent? One answer of faith says, "Whatever it was, it would have been better for Jacob than becoming a cheat in his father's eyes." I agree... But would like to propose another answer of faith, in addition to this one, one rooted in the text. I believe that if Jacob had not cheated, lied and stolen, that Esau would have brought his meal to his father and that Isaac would have opened his mouth to bless him and ended up saying the very same things he did say. I believe Isaac would have made Esau the servant of Jacob. Isaac would have pronounced the younger the master of the elder. Esau would have wept and changed nothing, but he would have been left having to hate his brother for the wrong reasons rather than the right ones. He couldn't have accused Jacob of anything, but being God's choice, God's righteous servant. (Not that that would have saved him, mind you; it certainly didn't save Able.) Esau would have raged and threatened, but he would have had to contend with heaven in his own heart (Something else Jacob stole from Esau) and would have had to lash out at his brother unjustly." (Sargent, 2016)
  - o Numbers 23:9-13 - 9 And God came unto Balaam, and said, What men are these with thee? 10 And Balaam said unto God, Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, saying, 11 Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth: come now, curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to overcome them, and drive them out. 12 And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed. 13 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said

unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land: for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you.

5 And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it.

By the way, the significance of the venison is likely not just that Isaac loved venison. Following this end-of-life blessing, it was typical to have a ceremonial celebration in which the broader family would partake in a meal. The venison very well may have been for the feast that was going to accompany the blessing.

5 And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son.

Rebekah “accidentally” overhears this conversation between Isaac and Esau. We can imagine her snooping around in the tent with her ear up to the fabric as close as she could get it. So, she overhears this arrangement between Isaac and Esau. It is her “fortunate” overhearing of this that transitions us from scene 1 to scene 2.

Genesis 14:19 - And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:

Genesis 24:60 - And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.

Genesis 48:9 - And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them.

Genesis 48:15-20 - And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head. And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

Genesis 49:28 - All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them.

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

### 3.) Scene 2: Rebekah and Jacob

Isaac has done wrong. Esau has done wrong. Rebekah has overheard Isaac and Esau discussing their plan to do wrong. So she goes and finds her favorite son Jacob, and guess what they're going to do? They're going to plan to do wrong.

6 And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying,

7 Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and **bless thee before the Lord before my death.**

Application – what should Rebekah have done here?

- She shouldn't have even gone to Jacob. She shouldn't have tattled on her husband to her son. She should have gone to her husband and talked to him.
  - o Application – parents, please do not air your dirty laundry in front of your kids. That's not right to your spouse. That's not right to your kids. Don't try to poison your children's perspective of your spouse.
  - o But sometimes it's just way easier to talk about someone than it is to talk to them, isn't it?
- So, she's already made a mistake in going to Jacob and talking about Isaac rather than talking to him.
  - o "If Rebekah, when she heard Isaac promise the blessing to Esau, had gone to him, and with humility and seriousness put him in remembrance of that which God had said concerning their sons; if she had further showed him how Esau had forfeited the blessing, both by selling his birthright, and by marrying of strange wives; it is probable Isaac would have been prevailed with to confer the blessing upon Jacob, and needed not thus to have been cheated into it. This had been honourable and laudable, and would have looked well in history." (Benson, 1857)
- Well, what if she did that and Isaac didn't change his mind? Well, at that point she could have just left it in the Lord's hands. What would have happened if she had done that? We don't know, but I can tell you this. When God says something, it happens every time. So if God had said that the blessing would be passed down through Jacob, there's nothing Isaac could have done to prevent that.
- But does Rebekah go and talk to her husband? No. Does Rebekah give the situation to God? No. Look at verse 8.

8 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee.

Jacob is a grown man here. This is not some doting mother ordering around her teenage boy. This is an elderly mom talking to an adult son. "It's a wily woman detailing her well-

concocted scheme to a son whom she discerns to be possessed of a like crafty disposition with herself.” (Spence & Exell, 1883)

- I’ve got an idea. Here’s what you need to do.

9 Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth:

You go and grab me two of the baby goats of the flock...and I will take those baby goats and clean and season them in the way that I know your father likes his meat.

- You say, “Well, how would Isaac not notice the difference between goat meat and venison?”
  - o She probably took the most tender parts and seasoned it like nobody’s business, and remember, Isaac’s old. His sense of taste would have been dimmed just as his sense of sight was. (Poole, 1990)
- You say, “Well, why two goats as opposed to one?”
  - o “These would be about equal to one deer or animal of the larger game. After Isaac had eaten of the flesh, so solemn an occasion would doubtless be marked by a feast for those, at least in the foremost tents, if not for all the household and followers of Isaac.” (Ellicott, 1905)

10 And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.

Everything was fine and dandy with the plan until verse number 10.

“Oh I see now. The reason we’re cooking up the goat meat is to deceive dad so that he’ll give me the blessing that is rightfully mine.”

Application – The Achilles heel of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was all the same. What was it? It was lying. It was deception...deception rooted in fear. It was Rebekah and Jacob’s fear of Isaac blessing Esau that led them to take matters into their own hands and practice deception.

- Church, the root of deception will always bear the fruit of conflict and pain.
- This little lie is going to produce a life time of conflict and division between two brothers that did not need to exist.
- This passage is also a great reminder to us that the ends do not justify the means. We do not do wrong to do right. We do right, and we trust God to right all wrongs. God does not need our help to do His job and keep His word.
- Illustration – when I think of lies and the idea of ends justifying means, I can’t help but think of Richard Nixon and the Watergate Scandal. How many of you remember that? Nixon was so scared of losing his reelection bid and so convinced that he was what was best for the country, that his administration hired people to break into the DNC headquarters at the Watergate (believing that they wouldn’t get caught and that the ends would justify the means). Well, the guys got caught, and the

administration had to go into full on cover up mode. They spun lie after lie after lie. Over time the cover up just kept getting bigger and bigger and bigger until finally it all exploded. He had secretly installed tape recorders in rooms throughout the white house to help him put together his memoirs one day. The congressional investigative committee found about it and subpoenaed the tapes. On those tapes that literally had recorded for the sake of his own vanity, they literally had recordings of Nixon having incriminating conversation after incriminating conversation about his knowledge of the Watergate scandal. Of course, all of that eventually lead to his resignation from office, right after his reelection to a second term...a second term that he had won with 520/537 electoral votes. He didn't need to break into the DNC to win reelection, and yet he allowed fear and pragmatism to lead him into deception and deviousness believing that the ends would justify the means.

- That's what Rebekah and Jacob do here. They concoct a plan of deception because they believed that the ends would justify the means, and they believed that God needed their help.

11 And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man:

And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "But mom that's not right. We shouldn't do that. We should trust God and not try to help Him keep His word." Is that what he says? Nope.

He says, "Behold Esau my brother is a hairy man (*remember that's what Esau means: hairy*), and I am a smooth man.

12 My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing."

Jacob wasn't concerned about doing wrong. He was concerned about getting caught. He says, "Mom, he might not be able to see anymore, but he can still feel me...and there's a big difference between my silky-smooth skin and the walking piece of carpet I call my brother...and if I get caught, dad might curse me and rightfully so. Mom, he might write me out of the will altogether."

Genesis 25:25 - And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.

Genesis 27:36 - And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

Genesis 9:25 - And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

13 And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them.

14 And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved.

Obviously, all of this takes time, but they're likely working quickly and on the assumption that Esau would be gone for most of the day. I guess worst case scenario, if Esau showed back up early, before they had a chance to do the deed, they could just call the whole thing off and comfort themselves with some well-seasoned goat meat.

15 And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son:

Rebekah took Esau's Sunday best... "the clothes worn by Esau on solemn occasions which would have born his familiar aroma", and she put them on Jacob. (Plummer, 1902)

16 And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck:

You've got to give it to Rebekah. She's resourceful, using every part of those goats for this charade. She takes their skins and puts them on Jacob's hands and necks, the two most likely parts of Jacob's hairless body to be discovered. (Poole, 1990)

17 And she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

Jacob is dressed in his brother's clothes which smell like his brother. He has goat skin on his hands and neck so that he feels like his brother. He has a dish of meat in one hand and bread in the other prepared to cater like his brother. The stage has been set for scene 3 with Isaac and Jacob which you and I will have to wait until next time to dive into.

## **Application**

Here's what I want you to walk away from tonight with: do right and leave the rest up to God. Don't fall into the trap of pragmatism, convincing yourself that the ends justify the means. God doesn't need your help to do His job. You do right and leave the rest up to God.

# Genesis 27:18-29

Speaker: Kurt McCullum

## Review

Tonight we are going to continue our study on the life of Isaac. We will be in Genesis 27 verses 18-29. But before we dive into the text, I want to give a quick review on the events leading up to our passage of scripture.

When Isaac was forty years old, he married Rebekah. And when Rebekah became pregnant she was pregnant with twins. When she inquired of the Lord to ask what was happening inside here, God responded with the following, which can be found in Genesis 25 verse 23 “And the Lord said unto her, two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger”

Isaac and Rebekah are given this wonderful insight into the future of their children. But it would appear that the struggle between Esau and Jacob started before they were born as they wrestled with one another in the womb. And to add to this conflict, when the boys were born both Isaac and Rebekah had their favorite. Isaac favors Esau. He is a man of the field. A great hunter with his bow and quiver of arrows. And Isaac loves his son's venison! Rebekah prefers Jacob, and what we are told about him is that he is a plain man who dwells in tents.

Tradition in that culture would have been for Esau, the firstborn, to have the birthright. However, there came a day when Esau came in from hunting, faint from having no food, and there was Jacob, with some fresh bread and worm lentil soup. He offered it to Esau in exchange for his birthright. And Esau, driven by his appetite, sells it to him.

This shows us that Esau was unworthy to receive the birthright due to his blatant disregard for it. He shows again that he is unworthy when he marries not one, but two pagan wives.

Years pass and Isaac is getting older. He is blind and spends most of his time in bed. Not knowing how much time he has left, he decides to set his affairs in order. He calls in his favorite son, tells him to take his bow and kill some venison, so that he may eat it and bless him before he dies. Keep in mind that this is the blessing that should be going to Jacob, not Esau.

As chance would have it, Rebekah just happened to be listening in to their conversation. But rather than confront Isaac, she takes matters into her own hands. She calls in Jacob and the two hatch a plan to steal the blessing from Esau.

Jacob goes out and kills two goats and brings them to Rebekah. She prepares them just the way her husband likes. Then she takes some of the skins from those goats and puts them on

Jacob's hands and neck just in case Isaac wants to touch him. Then after coaching Jacob on exactly what to say, she puts one of Esau's garments on Jacob and sends him in to Isaac.

Now it is up to Jacob to keep his cool and not get caught.

## **Sermon**

Okay, the stage is set, let's look at the text. Turn with my to Genesis 27, verse 18.

Read Gen 27:18-29

You know, the Bible gives quite a few examples of dysfunctional families, and this is a prime example. A mother and son scheme together to deceive a father and son.

The first thing I want us to look at tonight is

1.) The Deception Of Isaac.

V18 -

Isaac may be blind, but he isn't deaf. I am sure Jacob is doing his best to pull off his brother Esau's voice. But it just isn't working. Isaac is confused and asks, "Who are you?"

But Jacob manages to keep his cool and starts by telling his first lie.

V19a – And Jacob said to his father, I am Esau, thy firstborn.

And then he follows up with lie number two

v19b – I have done according as thou badest me.

But this lie adds some validity to his claim. Remember, as far as Isaac knows, only he and Esau know about that he asked Esau to do. But who else knows? Rebekah! Who just happened to overhear the conversation. So by Jacob saying "I have done as you asked" it makes his claim of being Esau more believable.

V19c – Arise, I pray the, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.

Lie number 3. Jacob doesn't have venison. He has goat meat doctored up to taste like venison. But then Jacob reveals his true desire. He wants that blessing, and he is willing to do anything to get it.

I am sure Jacob was rationalizing all of these lies in his head. He had probably been told by his mother many times about what God had promised. These lies were just a way of helping God accomplish it. Or he could point to Esau who had sold his birthright to Jacob, He was just lying to get what was rightfully his.

I'm here to tell you tonight, you can try to rationalize lies away, but they are still lies.



V20- And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou has found it so quickly, my son?"

Isaac may be old, but he isn't stupid. He suspects something. The voice is off, and the timing isn't right. It normally would have taken Esau much longer to prepare it But at this point, Jacob is all in and he tells lie number 4.

V20b – And he said, Because the lord thy God brought it to me.

Dad you wouldn't believe it. I was just over the first ridge and God caused a huge buck to walk ten yards in front of me. One arrow and he dropped like a stone.

Not only is this a lie, but it's blasphemy.

One more thing I want you to notice about this verse. Jacob says, "The Lord THY God," not The lord MY God, or The Lord OUT God. This may not seem like a big deal, but it is a clear indication that Jacob has not committed to following the Lord.

V21- And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my son Esau or not.

Can you feel the tension here. Isaac isn't convinced yet. But he does know one way for sure to tell his boys apart. The hair! Remember, Esau is a hairy man and Jacob is smooth skinned.

What must have been going through Jacob's mind at that moment. His heart must have been racing and I'm sure he was thinking "Oh man I hope this works!"

v22-23 And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, the voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. And he decerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him.

Can you imagine the relief that Jacob must have felt at that moment. The deception had worked, and his father was about to bless him. This brings us to our second point tonight.

## 2.) The Blessing of Jacob

v24 – And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said I am.

At this point Isaac has decided to go ahead with the blessing but he asks one more direct question. "You're Esau, right?" And Jacob is right there with yet another lie. "Dad, of course I am."

v25 – And he said, Bring it near me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat; and he brought him wine, and he drank.

I would imagine at this point, Jacob would have preferred to skip the meal and go straight to the blessing. After all, there is still a very real possibility that Esau could show up at any

moment. He is eager for the meal to be over, but Isaac isn't. He has been looking forward to this meal and he intends to enjoy every bite. It isn't until he has eaten that Isaac begins the blessing.

V26- And his father Isaac said unto him, come near now, and kiss me my son.

The act of kissing can be seen in a few different ways here. It is a sign of affection between a parent and child. It is a sign of friendship, and it is a symbol of a child paying homage to the patriarch of the family.

V27- And he came near, and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his raiment and blessed him, and said, See the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed.

When Jacob leans in to kiss his father, the last part of Rebekah's plan comes into play. Remember, Jacob is wearing Esau's clothes and what do we know about Esau. He is a man of action, and he is hairy. A good combination for leaving some odor on your clothes. So when Jacob lean in, Isaac takes a whiff and says "Yep, that's my boy!"

v28 – Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.

Kristin and I spent several days last week in a small town in Kansas. We met up with an old family friend who is a wheat farmer. He explained the process of dry farming. In the fall he prepares his 380 acres of land and plants the seed. Then he prays for rain. On a good year, he can make a lot of money. But if it doesn't, he doesn't rain, he doesn't make anything.

What Isaac is saying in this blessing is for God to give him not just fertile ground, but just the right amount of rain, at the right time, to provide abundant crops. A condition that would make Jacob a wealthy man.

V29a- Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee.

The wealth of the fields would not only bring Jacob riches, but it would raise him to a level of preeminence over the surrounding nations.

V29b- Be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee

This is where we get to see the family dirt come to light. Isaac wants Esau to be the patriarch of the family when he dies. But it's not just that, he wants Jacob to bow down to Esau. How is that for a blessing?

Years and years of playing favorites have led to this moment. Isaac has preferred Esau since he was a boy. But think of Rebekah. How many times do you think she said "Remember what God said Isaac. The older shall serve the younger." Can you imagine how sick and tired Isaac was of being reminded of that truth? So he was taking matters in his own hands and ending this squabble once and for all. And he was going to end it HIS way.

Isaac finished with the final part of his blessing.

V29c- Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.

This is the same blessing that God gave to Abraham, and now it is being passed to Jacob. It is a blessing of protection over the wealth and position the rest of the blessing provides.

### **Application**

So what is the take away here? Jacob has carried out the plan he and Rebekah cooked up. But what are the consequences of their deception? Let me read what one commentary had to say about this passage.

The fate of all such attempts to manage God's matters by keeping things dark, and misrepresenting fact, is written for all those who care to understand the results of this scheme of Rebekah's and Jacob's. They gained nothing; for God had promised that the birthright would be Jacob's and God would have given it to him in some way redounding to his credit and not to his shame. And they lost a great deal. The mother lost her son; Jacob had to flee for his life, and, for all we know, Rebekah never saw him again. And Jacob lost all the comforts of home and all those possessions his father had accumulated. He had to flee with nothing but his staff, an outcast to begin the world for himself. From this first step onwards to his death, he was pursued by misfortune, until his own verdict on his life was "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been."

Jacob realized, at the end of his life, the devastating consequences of his sin. There are always consequences to lying. No matter how we try to justify those lies, they are still wrong. And one lie will eventually lead to another, and another, and another. In the end the trail of lies becomes impossible to maintain.

It is far better to tell the truth, and let God work things out in his own way and in his own timing.

# Genesis 27:30-40

## Review

Chris McPeters was supposed to be speaking for us tonight, but he has a kidney stone, and so I will be subbing in (sorry to disappoint!). As a reminder, over the course of the last several weeks we have been progressing through the blessing story that takes place at the end of Isaac's life. This story is significant as it marks the transition from Isaac to Jacob as the main character of the book of Genesis.

Now, this story has six scenes, of which we have walked through three of them.

### THE BLESSING STORY

Introduction: Esau's Wives- Gen. 26:34-35  
Scene 1: Isaac & Esau- Gen. 27: 1-5  
Scene 2: Rebekah & Jacob- Gen. 27:6-17  
Scene 3: Isaac & Jacob- Gen. 27:18-29  
Scene 4: Isaac & Esau- Gen. 27:30-40  
Scene 5: Rebekah & Jacob- Gen. 27:41-45  
Scene 6: Isaac & Jacob- Gen. 27:46-28:5  
Conclusion: Esau's Wives- Gen. 28:6-9

Scene 1 took place in Genesis 27:1-5. It involved Isaac and Esau plotting to do wrong. Isaac knew that Jacob should have received the end-of-life blessing, but Esau was his favorite. So Isaac commissioned Esau to go hunt for and prepare him some venison so that he might bless him. Rebekah overheard this conversation, and she went and found Jacob.

Cue scene number 2.

Scene 2 took place in Genesis 27:6-17. It involved Rebekah and Jacob plotting to do wrong. Rebekah concocted this plan wherein Jacob would pretend to be Esau and trick his dad into giving him the blessing that was rightfully his and that God had promised to him.

Then Scene 3 took place in Genesis 27:18-29. Last week Kurt walked us through this scene involving Isaac and Jacob. In this scene, Jacob successfully carried out the deception that he and his mother had planned out. Over and over again in this scene Jacob lied to his dad, the result being that at the end of the scene Isaac blessed Jacob. He blessed him with prosperity, power, and protection, and thus scene 3 came to a close.

Tonight, as we continue through this story, we're going to pick up the Scripture with scene 4 taking place in Genesis 27:30-40 involving the return of Esau and his encounter with his dad. As we dive into scene 4, the first aspect that we're going to see is the discovery of the deception.

## Sermon

## 1.) The Discovery of the Deception

Look with me at verse number 30.

30 And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

Jacob had literally just left his father's tent when Esau arrived back from his hunting. You might imagine scene 3 (a scene with a great deal of tension) coming to a close with minutes to spare. If Esau had arrived moments earlier, scene 4 would have merged into scene 3, and who knows what would have happened? Isaac might have cursed Jacob. Esau might have killed Jacob. It was a close call, and it was a close call with significant ramifications. As I was thinking about this during the past week, it reminded me of a close call that Lincoln had towards the end of his first term as President.

- Illustration – It was July of 1864, four months before the fall presidential election would take place and about nine months before the Civil War would actually end. This close call took place at the Battle of Fort Stevens in Washington DC.
  - Fort Stevens was one of 68 forts that surrounded Washington DC. This battle, believe it or not, was actually the only battle of the Civil War to take place within Washington.
  - The battle was significant for two reasons.
    - Because the union won the battle, it prevented the fall of Washington. The white house was five miles from Fort Stevens. If the Confederacy had won this surprise attack in which most of the Union troops were elsewhere, the White House could have been burned to the ground and Lincoln very well may have lost reelection that November resulting in a permanent North-South split in the country.
    - It was also significant because Lincoln was at Fort Stevens during the battle. During the battle, he was exposed to gunfire and a union surgeon standing next to Lincoln was shot at one point in the battle. Lincoln came about “” that close to dying during the Battle of Fort Stevens. It was a close call that no doubt would have had significant ramification for world history, and the same is true of this close call between Esau and Jacob. Who knows what would have happened if Esau had walked in on Jacob impersonating him to their dad?

Nevertheless, Esau arrives in Isaac's tents mere moments after Jacob has left it.

31 And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.

Esau walks in the tent, cooked venison in hand. He brings it to his dad, and the words that come out of his mouth are almost identical to what Jacob had just said to Isaac in the previous scene.

- Jacob in verse 19 said: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.
- Esau here in verse 31: Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.

It's a big deal because it's like Isaac hears an instant replay of something that just happened.

You can just try to imagine the mindsets of the different characters in this scene. As Esau says these words to his dad, he no doubt feels accomplished and excited. He got his deer. He killed it. He cleaned it. He cooked it. He brought it to his dad. His dad's going to be so proud, and he's going to receive this very significant end of life blessing. That's where Esau is at in his mind.

But then on the other side of things is Isaac. As he hears these words come out of Esau's mouth (let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless thee), he would have been taken back...bewildered...caught into the midst of a sense of de ja vu. Hold on a second. What is going on here? Am I losing my mind? Didn't this just happen?

Illustration – have you ever had a moment like that where you got really confused about something?

- I remember after I had my ACL surgery back in Florida in December of 2013. They did the surgery, and they gave me some pretty heavy pain killers. I only ended up taking them for a few days, but it just so happened that a day or two after the surgery was a Sunday, and I had visitors lined up to come to church with me that weekend. Well, I took those painkillers early in the morning before church, and then I went to church to host my visitors, and let's just say I don't remember much about Sunday other than nodding off about 30 seconds and being really confused a lot of the time. I don't think that visiting family ever came back a second time. But man I was confused...and I just imagine Isaac as the old blind man getting really confused right here.

32 And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau.

Isaac's really confused and so he says to his son, "Hold on a second. Who are you?"

- You can imagine Isaac asking this question with a serious tone to it.

And now all of a sudden, it's not just Isaac that's confused. Esau's confused too. (What do you mean 'who am I'? Is dad losing his mind? Did he forget what he just asked me to do?).

- Esau replies, "I'm (1) your son... (2) your firstborn... (3) Esau."
- Esau certainly senses that something is not right.

33 And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed.

And Isaac trembled very exceedingly – the Hebrew repeats the word for tremble/fear so as to add emphasis. Isaac didn't just tremble. He trembled trembled. You might imagine him just taking a moment here to process what has happened, that Jacob has deceived him and that he has in fact given the blessing to Jacob.

- In this moment, he realizes that despite his intention to circumvent the will of God by blessing Esau, God's providence would not allow him to do so. He trembles because he had fought against God and lost.
- He trembles because of the disappointment that he knows he is going to have lay down on Esau.
- He trembles because of the family conflict that he no doubt knows is going to ensue because of what has happened.

He trembles greatly. He takes a moment to process what has happened and the ramifications of it, and then Isaac says...

Who? Where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? - where is the guy who just came in here, claiming to be you, and delivering me venison? Where is the Esau that I just blessed?...

You might imagine Isaac pausing here, lowering his tone, and almost in an attitude of surrender saying...

Yea and he (Jacob) shall be blessed – This is not a question. It's a statement. Why does Isaac make this statement? I believe it's not just because the blessing had been given, but because the blessing was in fulfillment of what God had said...and as such it's coming to pass was inevitable.

We've seen the discovery of the deception. Next we see the sorrow of Esau.

## 2.) The Sorrow of Esau

34 And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.

Why did Esau cry so bitterly? It was not over his sin in despising his birthright or marrying pagan wives. Rather, it was over the consequences of his sin. There's a difference. There's a difference between being sorry for your sin and being sorry for the consequences of your sin. By the way, don't be deceived. You will reap the consequences of your sin.

- Hebrews 12:16-17 - 16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.
- Illustration - In some ways, sin is like a credit card. It brings short term gratification no money down...and as time passes, one might think that credit card purchase costs nothing...but the more time that passes, behind the scenes more and more interest is accruing...and make no mistake there is a due date coming and the balance will be much more than you likely would have ever thought. Sin is like that. It takes you further than you want to go, keeps you longer than you want to stay, and costs you more than you want to pay.
- Esau's grief here in this verse is the direct result of his realization that there was a price tag to his actions. He has lost a great deal.

Esau is distraught, and he says, "Well, bless me too."

- "I'm just as much a child of yours as Jacob is." Keep in mind that Esau has not heard what the blessing was that Isaac gave to Jacob. So he has this idea to just have his dad bless him too in addition to Jacob.

35 And he (*Isaac*) said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.

Esau, your brother came under false pretenses and has taken away your blessing. Esau, it's gone. What you want from me is gone.

36 And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? – remember, the name "Jacob" means "heel holder". It refers to one who grabs the heel for the purpose of tripping up and overtaking another.

- What Jacob had been named to commemorate his grabbing of Esau's heel during their birth takes on a more sinister meaning here in the mind of Esau. He's not just the one who grabbed my heel at birth. He's the one who's tripped me up and supplanted me twice.

He took away my birthright; and behold, now he hath taken away my blessing – It's interesting how Esau phrases this. Esau claims that Jacob took away his birthright. Is that true? No. Not at all. Esau gave away his birthright for a bowl of lentil stew.

- Application: this is a great example of Esau not taking responsibility for his own choices. When Esau was confronted with the consequences of his actions, he didn't accept responsibility. He assigned blame. He didn't look within. He looked without.



- Moreover, with regards to the blessing, it's important to remember that the blessing was never Esau's to begin with. God had always intended it for Jacob.
- Now in the reading this verse, you might wonder to yourself as I did, "Well, what's the difference between the birthright and the blessing? They seem very closely connected, and yet in this verse, Esau refers to them as two separate things."
  - o I like one how one commentary put it. "A birthright was an honor given to the firstborn, bestowing "head of household" status and the right to inherit his father's estate. The son with the birthright would receive a double portion of whatever was passed down (see Deuteronomy 21:17). In contrast, a blessing could be given regardless of birthright. However, a greater blessing was given to the one who held the birthright. While a birthright belonged to the firstborn son, anyone could receive a blessing. In the time of the patriarchs, such blessings acted as a "last will and testament" and were highly prized as a means of revealing God's will." (Got Questions)

And he said, hast thou not reserved a blessing for me? – Esau repeats his request for his dad to give him a blessing too...probably with the idea being of his dad giving him a greater blessing.

- By the way, there's nothing out of the ordinary about issuing blessings of differing degrees amongst sons.
- For instance, in Genesis 49, Jacob gave blessings to all 12 of his sons.

37 And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?

And Isaac answered and said unto Esau – son, you don't understand what I've given to your brother in the blessing.

Behold I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants – part of his blessing was in relation to you. I gave him dominion over you and over the family and over the surrounding peoples as well. I've blessed him with power in relation to you, and I've also blessed him with prosperity.

And with corn and wine have I sustained him –

And what shall I do now unto thee, my son? – son, what do you want me to do? What's left for me to say, for me to give to you in light of that?

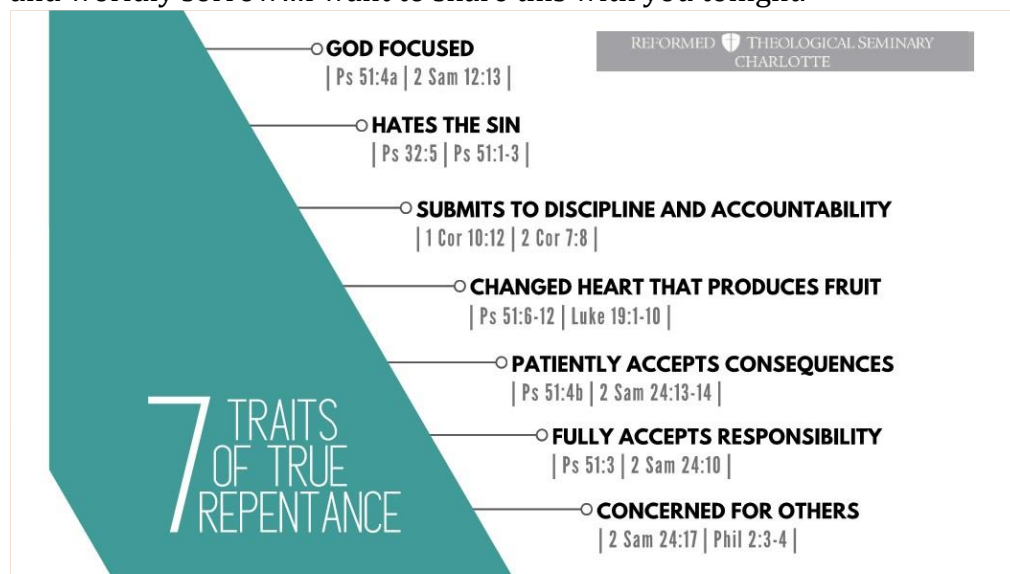
38 And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept.

And Esau said unto his father, hast thou but one blessing, my father? – come on dad. Give me something. Do you really only have one blessing?

Bless me, even me also, O my father – bless me, dad.

And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept – why? Because he realized what he had lost.

- Application: this is a great illustration of the difference between godly and worldly sorrow. Paul talks about this concept in 2 Corinthians 7.
  - 2 Cor. 7:9-11 - 9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing (*as such the sorrow did not damage you. It helped you*). 10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of (*with no regret*): but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort (*what did this godly sorrow bring about?*), what carefulness (*eagerness*) it wrought in you (*eagerness to do what? To purge that sin from your life. Godly sorrow does that*), yea, what clearing of yourselves (*a desire to be in the right*), yea, what indignation (*hatred towards your own sin*), yea, what fear (*fear of God, fear of the consequences of continued sin*), yea, what vehement desire (*to do right*), yea, what zeal (*passion for God*), yea, what revenge (*vindication*)! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.
  - Worldly sorrow leads to regret. Godly sorrow leads to repentance.
  - Illustration - Years ago I was given a two-sided card from a Christian counselor on the difference between godly sorrow that leads to repentance and worldly sorrow...I want to share this with you tonight.



- 
- 7 Traits of Godly Sorrow/True Repentance
  - God focused – against thee, thee only have I sinned.
  - Hates the sin - Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.
  - Submits to discipline and accountability.

- Changed heart that produces fruit – by their fruits you will know them.
- Patiently accepts consequences.
- Fully accepts responsibility.
- Concern for others
- Worldly sorrow is different, and it's what we see with Esau.



- - Esau's sorrow wasn't God focused. It was self-focused.
  - He hated the consequences of sin.
  - He had no concern for accountability or discipline. He disregarded his parent's wishes.
  - His sorrow didn't lead to a change in actions.
  - He demanded, and he blamed others.

We've seen the discovery of the deception. We've seen the sorrow of Esau. Finally this evening, we see the blessing from Isaac.

### 3.) The Blessing from Isaac

I struggle with even calling this a blessing because I'm not sure that it actually is. It's definitely a prophecy about Esau's future, but it's sort of a mixed bag.

39 And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above;

And Isaac his father answered and said unto him Behold thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth (in reference to good soil), and of the dew of heaven from above (in reference to a good water supply) – It seems here that Isaac is giving to Esau a blessing of prosperity...a similar blessing to the one that he gave Jacob though not to the same extent.

- “Son, you will be prosperous, though not as prosperous as your brother.”

- “this agrees with part of the blessing of Jacob, only the clauses are inverted, and no mention made of corn and wine; the land of Edom not being so fat and fruitful as the land of Canaan.” (Gill, 1811)
- “Mount Seir, the heritage of Esau, was a fertile place, refreshed with dews and showers.” (Benson, 1857)
  - Alternate interpretation - “Since Isaac said (Genesis 27:37) he had given Jacob the blessing of the super-abundance of corn and wine, he could not possibly promise Esau also fat fields and the dew of heaven. Nor would this agree with the words which follows, "By thy sword wilt thou live." Moreover, the privative sense of מִן is thoroughly poetical (cf. 2 Samuel 1:22; Job 11:15, etc.). The idea expressed in the words, therefore, was that the dwelling-place of Esau would be the very opposite of the land of Canaan, viz., an unfruitful land. This is generally the condition of the mountainous country of Edom, which, although not without its fertile slopes and valleys, especially in the eastern portion (cf. Robinson, Pal. ii. p. 552), is thoroughly waste and barren in the western; so that Seetzen says it consists of "the most desolate and barren mountains probably in the world." (Keil & Delitzsch, 1857-1878)

40 And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.

And by the sword shalt thou live – Isaac prophecies that not only will Esau be prosperous. He will also be violent and contentious. This prophecy was true of both Esau and his descendants. “He (*himself*) was a cunning hunter, a man of the field, and his descendants got possession of mount Seir by force and violence, expelling thence the Horites, the former inhabitants, Deuteronomy 2:22. They (*the descendants of Esau*) were almost continually at war with the Jews, both before and after the Babylonish captivity. Josephus says, they were so fond of broils, that they went to war as others would do to a banquet.” (Benson, 1857)

“Son, you’ll be prosperous. You’ll be contentious. You’ll be a servant to your brother.”

And shalt serve thy brother – This is in direct agreement with what God had said in Genesis 25:23, and this came to pass (about 1000 years later) during the reign of David when he conquered the Edomites. (Cf. 2 Samuel 8:14) (Plummer, 1902)

You’ll be prosperous (great!). You’ll be contentious (not so great). You’ll be a servant to your brother (awful)...but you won’t be his servant forever (I guess that’s not as awful).

And it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion (*when you gain power*), that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck – “The verb מָרַד, used of beasts which have broken the yoke and wander freely about (Gesenius, Furst), appear to hint at an incessant restlessness on the part of Edom while under Israel’s yoke which should eventually terminate in regaining their independence. The exact rendering of the clause is obscure, but perhaps means that when Edom should roam about as a freebooter (Lange), or should

revolt (Alford), or should toss, shake, or struggle against the yoke (Vulgate, Keil, Hengstenberg, 'Speaker's Commentary), he should succeed." (Spence & Exell, 1883)

- "when they should get a greater degree of strength, power, authority, and dominion in the world." (Gill, 1811)
- "The mental eye of the patriarch discerned in the son his whole future family in its attitude to its brother-nation, and he promised Edom, not freedom from the dominion of Israel (for Esau was to serve his brother, as Jehovah had predicted before their birth), but only a repeated and not unsuccessful struggle for freedom.
- What Isaac prophesied regarding the relationship between the descendants of Esau and the descendants of Jacob absolutely came to pass. The historical relation of Edom to Israel assumed the form of a constant cycle of servitude, revolt, and reconquest. After a long period of independence at the first, the Edomites were defeated by Saul (1 Samuel 14:47) and subjugated by David (2 Samuel 8:14); and, in spite of an attempt at revolt under Solomon (1 Kings 11:14.), they remained subject to the kingdom of Judah until the time of Joram, when they rebelled after 150 years. They were subdued again by Amaziah about 50 years later (2 Kings 14:7; 2 Chronicles 25:11.), and remained in subjection under Uzziah and Jotham (2 Kings 14:22; 2 Chronicles 26:2). It was not till the reign of Ahaz some 60 years later that they shook the yoke of Judah entirely off (2 Kings 16:6; 2 Chronicles 28:17), without Judah being ever able to reduce them again." (Keil & Delitzsch, 1857-1878)

So we see the blessing from Isaac regarding Esau.

- You'll be prosperous (great!). You'll be contentious (not so great). You'll be a servant to your brother (awful)...but you won't be his servant forever (I guess that's the silver lining).

## **Application**

The discovery of the deception.... the sorrow of Esau...and the blessing from Isaac.

What's the takeaway from tonight? Here it is. Sin has a price tag, and it will be paid. Be not deceived. God is not mocked. You will sow what you reap. And if/when that price tag comes due in your life, don't sorrow as the world does. Sorrow with a godly sorrow that leads to repentance...a sorrow that is God focused, sin hating, submissive, change oriented, responsible, and accountable.

# Genesis 27:41-28:9

## Review

Tonight we draw to a close the story of Isaac's end of life blessing of his sons. This story is important as it marks the transition from Isaac to Jacob as the main character of the book of Genesis, and it's important because it has major long term spiritual and historical ramifications for both the descendants of Jacob (the Jews) and the descendants of Esau (the Edomites).

### THE BLESSING STORY

Introduction: Esau's Wives- Gen. 26:34-35  
Scene 1: Isaac & Esau- Gen. 27: 1-5  
Scene 2: Rebekah & Jacob- Gen. 27:6-17  
Scene 3: Isaac & Jacob- Gen. 27:18-29  
Scene 4: Isaac & Esau- Gen. 27:30-40  
Scene 5: Rebekah & Jacob- Gen. 27:41-45  
Scene 6: Isaac & Jacob- Gen. 27:46-28:5  
Conclusion: Esau's Wives- Gen. 28:6-9

As a reminder, this story has an introduction and a conclusion that revolve around Esau's marrying of pagan wives, and then the body of the story consists of six unique but consecutive scenes.

Scene 1 begins with Isaac plotting to bless his favorite son Esau, even though God had told him and his wife years prior that Esau, the eldest, would serve Jacob, the youngest.

Rebekah overhears this conversation and plots with her favorite son Jacob to impersonate Esau and trick the aging Isaac into blessing him as the son of promise. That was scene 2, and the tension of the story begins to build.

In scene 3 Jacob successfully fools his father into issuing the blessing. In scene 4, everything explodes as Isaac and Esau both come to realize what Jacob has done.

And tonight, in scene 5 we're going to begin to see the aftermath that is left in the wake of the deception that Jacob has carried out. Take your Bible and turn to Genesis 27:41 as we examine the conversation that occurs between Rebekah and Jacob in scene 5.

## Sermon

### 1.) Scene 5 – Rebekah & Jacob

41 And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.

And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him – there’s a couple things going on here. First off, Jacob’s deception of his brother was not without consequence. It stirred up deep hatred within his brother towards him. This is another great example of what we’ve been talking about for several weeks now: lies have consequences.

- Secondly, I want you to take note of how Esau’s deep sorrow from the previous verses manifests itself here. Last week we talked about the difference between godly sorrow and what other kind of sorrow? Worldly sorrow. Godly sorrow leads to what? Repentance. But here in verse 41, does Esau’s sorrow result in repentance? No. It leads to hatred further evidence of the type of sorrow he had.
- So Esau hated Jacob because of what he had done.

And Esau said in his (where?) heart (that’s where murderous intentions always begin), The days of mourning for my father are at hand, then will I slay my brother Jacob –

- Mark 7:21-23 - 21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: 23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.
- What does he reason in his heart?

The days of mourning for my father are at hand – my father is nearing the end of his life. Killing Jacob would be too heavy of a burden to lay on him in his last days. So I won’t take my vengeance yet. But as soon as dad is out of the picture...

Then will I slay my brother Jacob – As soon as dad’s gone, Jacob will be too.

- It’s interesting because this is exactly what Joseph’s brothers thought he would do to them. As soon as their dad died, the brothers all started freaking because they imagined that Joseph would now take his revenge. So what Joseph’s brothers feared is exactly what had taken root in the heart of Esau.
- “I’m going to take this whole thing into my own hands. I’ll end Jacob, and then we’ll see what comes of that blessing he’s been given. What good will his blessing be to him if he’s dead?”
- Sorrow has turned to hatred which has concocted a plan for vengeance.
- Illustration: When I think of vengeance, I can’t help but think of the story of the Count of Monte Cristo.
  - o For those of you who aren’t familiar with the classic story by Alexander Dumas it begins with...
  - o “Edmond Dantès, a handsome, promising young sailor, skillfully docking the three-masted French ship, the Pharaon, in Marseilles after its captain died en route home. As a reward, Dantès is promised a captainship, but before he can claim his new post and be married to his fiancée, Mercédès’, a conspiracy of four jealous and unsavory men arrange for him to be seized and secretly

imprisoned in solitary confinement in the infamous Chateau d'If, a prison from which no one has ever escaped...for many years Dantes barely endures life in the prison until one day he's introduced to an old man who tells him of the location of a large lost treasure. The old man eventually dies and Dantes escapes by hiding the man's body and sowing himself inside of the man's burial sack. Upon escaping, Dantes finds the treasure and then reemerges within French society as the very rich and handsome Count of Monte Cristo. From there, the rest of the story revolves around the Count of Monte Cristo taking vengeance on the four men who wronged him." (Cliffs Notes)

- Application – It's an incredibly captivating story and you find yourself rooting for Dantes to take his revenge, and yet that indulgence of vengeance is not Christian.
  - What does the Bible say? Romans 12:19 - 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.
  - And yet vengeance is all that Esau can think about. Hatred in his heart has led to thoughts of vengeance in his mind.

Genesis 37:4 - And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

Amos 1:11-12 - Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever: But I will send a fire upon Teman, which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.

Obadiah 1:10-14 - For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress. Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity; Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress.

42 And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee.

Good news travels fast. Bad news travels faster. Rebekah is connected and resourceful. She trades in information having her ear to the ground.



And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah – although Esau’s nefarious intentions originated within his heart, they did not stay there. Apparently he shared these plans with some confidants who in turn shared the news with Rebekah.

And she sent and called Jacob her younger son – when she hears this news, she once again calls for Jacob.

- She doesn’t go to Esau. She calls for Jacob.

And said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee – She relays the news of Esau’s intentions with Jacob. It’s interesting to break down what exactly Rebekah had heard through the grapevine.

- It had been told to her that Esau consoled himself by purposing to murder Jacob.
  - o The idea is that he “hugs himself,’ or ‘takes satisfaction,’ in the thought that he will shortly kill thee.” (Plummer, 1902)
  - o Application – it is a dangerous place to be when you find pleasure in your mind or comfort yourself by imagining the downfall of others. When those types of negative thoughts begin to percolate in your mind, you need to repent of them and replace them immediately. If you don’t, they will begin to take root and rot your mind from the inside out.

Rebekah hears of these dark thoughts and statements by Esau and shares them with Jacob, and then she says...

43 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran;

Now therefore, my son, obey my voice – This is the second time she’s said this to Jacob. The first time didn’t turn out so well. It got them into this whole mess.

- Genesis 27:8 - Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee.
- Genesis 27:13 - And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them.

Because of what your brother plans to do, here’s what you need to do.

Arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran – Jacob, you need to leave, or you are going to die. Go stay with my brother back in Haran.



- 
- This isn't some short distance either. The distance between where they were in Beersheba and where Rebekah's family was in Haran was about 450 miles. That's a longer trip than from here to Sacramento.
- Remember back in Bible times, you could travel about 20-25 miles a day. So, this was about a twenty-day trip, and you thought your cross-country flight taking a nap in your air-conditioned seat was a long day of travel.
  - o This is interesting because if you remember, Abraham was very intent that Isaac not go back to Haran, lest he get comfortable and stay there rather than occupy the Promised Land.

Jacob, you need to go to my brother Laban in Haran.

44 And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away;

Does anyone know how long Jacob would actually end up staying in Haran? 7300 days...Twenty years. A few days turned into twenty years. (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5954-5955)

- And yet those years would be an important time in Jacob's life in which God would grow him and prepare him for his calling.
- Moses spent 40 years in Midian before he led the Jews out of slavery.
- Jesus spent 30 years in Nazareth before He began His ministry.
- Jacob spent 20 years in Haran before he would return to the Promised Land.

Jacob, go stay with my brother for a little bit...

45 Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?

Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence – “In what must have been surprising to Jacob, Rebekah placed the responsibility for the crisis on Jacob.” (Ross, 1997, p. Loc 5954)

- Rebekah never sent for her son, and this is one of the consequences of her deception in that she never sees her son again.

Why should I be deprived also of you both in one day? – Can anyone think of another mom and dad in the Bible that lost both of their sons in one day because of a similar situation in which one hated the other? Adam and Eve with their boys Cain and Abel.

- Cain (the older brother) was angry with his younger brother (Abel) because God had favored him, and so what did he do? He murdered him, and then he was banished.
  - o Genesis 4:2-8 - And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.
  - o “The expression seems to be a reference to the custom of blood-revenge, as in 2 Samuel 14:7. The life of the murderer would be required by the family. He must either be banished from the family, or judicially put to death. In either case the parents would be bereaved of both.” (Plummer, 1902)
    - Genesis 9:5-6 - And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.
- This may be what Rebekah is referring to here...or when she talks about losing both of them she might be referring not to losing in the same day Jacob and Esau, but Jacob and Isaac...assuming that Esau would take his revenge on the very day that Isaac died.

Thus ends scene 5 which centers around the ungodly vengeance that had taken root in the mind of Esau.

Rebekah has this conversation with Jacob in scene 5, and then scene 6 transitions to a conversation between Isaac and Jacob.

## 2.) Scene 6 – Isaac & Jacob

But before Isaac and Jacob talk, Rebekah has a quick, slightly manipulative conversation with her husband Isaac. She is going to get his backing in sending Jacob away to Padanaram, but she's not going to tell him the most pressing reason for why Jacob needs to leave. Rather than framing this request in light of Esau's plan to murder Jacob. She's going to frame it in light of the importance Jacob finding a good non pagan wife.

- Illustration - How Rebekah talks to Isaac here is sort of like how I negotiate deals when I'm playing board games. I'll frame the offer like I'm trying to help my opponent, but in reality I've got my own interests tucked away in my back pocket.

46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?

And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth – Honey, I am heartbroken because of these pagan wives that Esau has taken.

- “They are continually vexing and teasing her by their impiety and idolatry, their irreligion and profaneness, their disobedience and contradiction, their froward temper and behaviour:” (Gill, 1811)

If Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me? – if Jacob were to follow in the footsteps of his older brother, what reason would I even have for living? (Spence & Exell, 1883)

- Rebekah is hinting here to her husband that they need to send Jacob away to find a wife.
- “but of course her secret reason for sending Jacob to Haran was not to seek a wife, as she seems to have desired Isaac to believe, but to elude the fury of his incensed brother” (Spence & Exell, 1883)

Nevertheless, her nudging works...

1 And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

And Isaac called Jacob –

- Imagine being Jacob and getting called back in to see your dad after the stunt you had just pulled. I don't know about you, but I would have been nervous.
- Well what did Isaac do? Did he chide him or rebuke him to his face? No. Not at all. He did what he should have done in the first place. He...

and blessed him

- Whereas his prior blessing of Jacob was unintentional due to deception, Isaac's blessing of his son here was on purpose. Isaac needed to do the right thing, and he needed to confirm in his son's heart the blessing that God had ordained.
- I think Isaac knew that especially with him preparing to send his son away that his son needed his reassurance...and that without it he might struggle the rest of his life with doubts and insecurities over his calling.
- "He was about to be sent away from his father's house solitary and destitute, to go into another country, where he was to be for awhile in a state of servitude; all which might seem to contradict the blessing and promises he had received, and would be a trial of his faith in them, as well as a chastisement on him for the fraudulent manner in which he obtained them:" (Gill, 1811)

So then rather than trying to somehow revoke the blessing, Isaac reconfirmed it with Jacob. Then he...

And charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan

– His dad said to him the same thing that my dad said to me, "Jacob, don't you marry one of these pagan Canaanite women you see carousing all around."

- "it was time that he was married; for he was now, as the Jewish writers (e) say, seventy seven, years of age, which exactly agrees with what Polyhistor (f), an Heathen writer, relates from Demetrius, that Jacob was seventy seven years of age when he came to Haran, and also his father Isaac was then one hundred and thirty seven years old; and so it is calculated by the best chronologers, and as he must be, since he was born when his father was sixty years of age; see Gill on Genesis 27:1; and being now declared the heir of the promised land, it was proper he should marry, but not with any of the Canaanites, who were to be dispossessed of the land of Canaan, and therefore their seed, and Abraham's, to whom it was given, must not be mixed." (Gill, 1811)

Rather, here's what you need to do.

2 Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother.

Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father – Jacob, go to your mom's hometown (i.e. Haran) and find her family.

There

Take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother – "though Isaac's wife was found for him, he does not think of imitating Abraham and dispatching another Eliezer in search of a spouse for Rebekah's son. Probably he saw that Jacob could attend to that business sufficiently without assistance from others" (Spence & Exell, 1883)

- Now this is interesting. Did Isaac get to choose his own wife? Nope. His dad sent a servant to arrange a marriage for him. But such would not be the case with Jacob. Jacob would get to pick out his own wife. What a novel idea.

Isaac blessed Jacob. He charged Jacob, and then he called upon God to bless Jacob. I love what Isaac does and says here because Isaac's actions in this passage are an example of godly sorrow. Esau's sorrow led to hatred and vengeance. Isaac's sorrow led to repentance. He turned from his sin and did what he should have done in the first place.

I read this story, and this scene: scene 6, is the best scene in the whole story. It's the only good scene really, and it's because Isaac chose to do the right thing.

- Scenes 1-5 bring pain. Scene 6 is the one good one.

Listen to what Isaac says to Jacob.

3 And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;

And God Almighty (*El Shaddai*) bless thee – El Shaddai

- Here Isaac uses the same name that God Himself had used in Genesis 17:1-2 when he affirmed his covenant with Abraham.
- Here Isaac is entrusting his son to God as he prepares to send him away.
  - o Illustration – being prayed over by my church in Florida before heading out to Bible college in California.
- Genesis 17:1 – And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. 2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people – God bless you by making you into a great people. Of course this ties in directly with the Abrahamic blessing of a great people. He's passing that promise down to his son.

- In so doing it's an act of faith because at this point in time Jacob's not even married.
- Genesis 12:1-3 - Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

4 And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.

And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee – “Which was promised to Abraham, and was entailed upon Isaac and his seed, and now upon Jacob and his seed,” (Gill, 1811)

- He’s calling upon God to pass down that Abrahamic blessing from him to his son, and he’s going to describe another aspect of it.
  - o Genesis 17:8 - 8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

That thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham – “the land of Canaan, which was given to Abraham by promise, but not in possession; he was a sojourner and stranger in it, and so Isaac had been all his days, and now Jacob” (Gill, 1811)

- He’s already mentioned the great nation aspect of the promise in his prayer.
- Here he reminds Jacob of the land promise. I think he emphasizes the seed because that, in his mind, is the reason that Jacob is going to Haran: to find a wife. He emphasizes the land because that is the reason that Jacob must one day return.

5 And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padanaram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.

- “Jacob complies with his mother's advice and his father's command, and, at the same time, reaps the bitter fruit of his fraud against his brother in the hardship and treachery of an exile of twenty years.” (Barnes)
- “God's people who know God's will must not stoop to deceptive, manipulative schemes to gain spiritual success but must strive to achieve God's will righteously.” (Ross, 1997, pp. Loc 5964-5965)

We’ve seen the hatred and vengeance of Esau in scene 5. We’ve seen the repentance of Isaac in scene 6. Finally, this evening we see a last-ditch effort by Esau to supplant Jacob in the conclusion which involves Esau taking one more wife.

### 3.) Conclusion – Esau’s Wives

6 When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padanaram (*Esau realizes that Jacob is now out of the picture, at least for the moment. It’s just him with his mom and dad*), to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; (*Ok. Jacob’s gone, and dad told him not to marry a Canaanite, which I’ve done twice..*)

7 And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram;

8 And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father; (*Esau puts two and two together about how much his dad does not like these pagan young ladies*)

So Esau realizes that his brother is gone, and his parents can't stand these Canaanite women...and so he does something. What does he do?

9 Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.

Now, I've always read this as Esau taking a third pagan wife so as to spite his parents after they had sent Jacob away...but that's not at all what is happening here. Esau in this verse is actually trying to please his parents by taking a non-Canaanite wife. He's trying to get on their good side with Jacob out of the picture. Remember, Ishmael was a descendant of Abraham. His descendants were a part of the Abrahamic tree.

But whereas before he disregarded his parents' wishes in the marrying of Canaanite wives, here he misunderstands their wishes in his marrying of a descendant of Ishmael.

Esau didn't realize that Ishmael had been separated from the house of Abraham and the family of promise by the appointment of God. So his actions here only furnished another proof that he had no spiritual discernment and that he was unworthy of being the son through which God's promises to Abraham and his descendants would pass.

Illustration – What Esau did here would be kind of life being married to two atheists and then going out and marrying a Mormon.

- Ok, two wives is one wives too many...and Mormons aren't Christians.

### **Application**

Thus the story of the blessing ends in the same way that it started with Esau showing his spiritual unworthiness to be the heir of God's promises.

What's the takeaway from tonight?

- Sorrow and hurt in your heart as a result of sin can take you down two very different paths.
  - o Esau took one. It led him from sorrow to hatred and vengeance. It was a dark path, and it was the wrong one.
  - o Isaac took the other. It led him to repentance, and it led him to ending his life on a positive night.

My encouragement for our church in closing tonight would be for us to follow in the footsteps of Isaac and not of Esau.



# Bibliography

- Barnes, A. (1834). *Notes on the Bible*. Retrieved from sacred-texts.com
- Batzig, N. (2021, November 10). *What is the Patriarchal Blessing?* Retrieved from Ligonier: <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/patriarchal-blessing>
- Benson, J. (1857). *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*. New York: T. Carlton & J. Porter.
- Bible History. (n.d.). *Map of the Journeys of Isaac*. Retrieved from Bible History: <https://bible-history.com/maps/isaacs-journeys>
- Cliffs Notes. (n.d.). *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Retrieved from Cliffs Notes: <https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/c/the-count-of-monte-cristo/book-summary>
- Craig, W. L. (2013, October 7). *God's Unconditional Love*. Retrieved from Reasonable Faith: <https://www.reasonablefaith.org/writings/question-answer/gods-unconditional-love>
- Ellicott, C. (1905). *A Bible Commentary for English Readers*. London, Paris, New York, and Melbourne: Cassell and Company, Limited.
- Gill, J. (1811). *Exposition of the Entire Bible*. William W Woodward.
- Got Questions. (n.d.). *What is an altar?* Retrieved from Got Questions: <https://www.gotquestions.org/what-is-an-altar.html>
- Got Questions. (n.d.). *What is the difference between a blessing and a birthright (Genesis 25)?* Retrieved from Got Questions: <https://www.gotquestions.org/blessing-birthright.html>
- Got Questions. (n.d.). *Why was a father's blessing so highly valued in the Old Testament?* Retrieved from Got Questions: <https://www.gotquestions.org/fathers-blessing.html>
- GotQuestions. (n.d.). *Why is the birthright so emphasized in the Bible?* Retrieved from GotQuestions.org: <https://www.gotquestions.org/birthright-Bible.html>
- Greear, J. (2018, January 8). *You Don't Reap What You Sow; You Reap More*. Retrieved from J.D. Greear Ministries: <https://jdgreear.com/dont-reap-sow-reap/>
- Henry, M. (n.d.). *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*.
- Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1884). *A Commentary, Critical, Practical, and Explanatory on the Old and New Testaments*. Toledo: Jerome B. Names & Co.

- Keil, C. F., & Delitzsch, F. (1857-1878). *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*. Text Courtesy of Internet Sacred Texts Archive.
- Klein, W. (2015). *The New Chosen People*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock.
- Mason, B. (n.d.). Trust His Heart. *Trust His Heart*. Concord Music Publishing.
- Pirie, M. (2019, August 4). *WHEN IDI AMIN EXPELLED 50,000 'ASIANS' FROM UGANDA*. Retrieved from Adam Smith Institute: <https://www.adamsmith.org/blog/when-idi-amin-expelled-50000-asians-from-uganda>
- Plummer, A. (1902). *The Cambridge bible for Schools and Publishers*. Cambridge University Press.
- Pompliano, J. (2023, June 14). *The \$400 Million Investment Fund That Gives Athletes Cash In Exchange For Future Earnings*. Retrieved from Huddle Up: [https://huddleup.substack.com/p/the-400-million-investment-fund-that#:~:text=Big%20League%20Advantage%20\(BLA\)%20has,of%20the%202023%20NFL%20Draft](https://huddleup.substack.com/p/the-400-million-investment-fund-that#:~:text=Big%20League%20Advantage%20(BLA)%20has,of%20the%202023%20NFL%20Draft)).
- Poole, M. (1990). *Commentary on the Whole Bible*. Hendrickson Publishers Marketing.
- Radford, A. (n.d.). *Who is Andrew Tate? The self-proclaimed misogynist influencer*. Retrieved from BBC: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-64125045>
- Ross, A. P. (1997). *Creation & Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis*. Ada: Baker Publishing Group.
- Rubenstein, H. (n.d.). *The Gentleman's Agreement That Ended the Civil War*. Retrieved from The Smithsonian: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/gentlemans-agreement-ended-civil-war-180954810/>
- Sargent, A. (2016, December 28). *God's Will by God's Means: Did Jacob NEED to Trick Isaac to Fulfill God's Plan?* Retrieved from Dr Andrew Sargent: <https://drandrewsargent.com/2016/12/gods-will-by-gods-means-did-jacob-need-to-trick-isaac-to-fulfill-gods-plan/>
- Sona, F. (2019, April). *Bless You: Isaac Blessing Jacob*. Retrieved from Truth and Tidings: <https://truthandtidings.com/2019/04/bless-you-isaac-blessing-jacob/>
- Sorenson, D. (2007). *Understanding the Bible*. Duluth: Northstar Ministries.
- Spence, H. D., & Exell, J. (1883). *The Pulpit Commentary*. McLean: MacDonald Publishing Company.