

IN THE BEGINNING GOD

Jacob and Esau Genesis 25:19—27:40

“The LORD said to [Rebekah], ‘Two nations are in your womb...one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger.’” Genesis 25:23

Day 1: Read Genesis 25:19–28.

1. What “condition” does both Abraham’s wife, Sarah, and Isaac’s wife, Rebekah, have that threatens the fulfillment of God’s covenant promises (Gen. 15:1–5)? Why would God include this “condition” in His sovereign plan of redemption? (Gen. 18:14)

2. What does Rebekah do when she experiences problems in her pregnancy?

What is your first response to concerns in your life? Is it the response that God desires? (Phil. 4:6, 7; 1 Pet. 5:7)

3. What kind of relationship does the Lord say will exist between the twins and their descendants? How is this played out even in their birth?

4. Although Jacob and Esau are twins they are not identical in their appearance or their lifestyles. Describe the differences. (27:11)

Day 2: Read Genesis 25:29–34.

5. What irrational reason does Esau give for selling his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew? (v. 32)

6. The birthright was the oldest son’s share of the material estate of the family and was typically a double share of the inheritance (which for two sons meant the younger received nothing). In Jacob and Esau’s case it is also the inheritance of the promises of God.

What does this say about the value that Esau places on his birthright, and the promises of God?

7. Our culture encourages us to: “Have it your way!”; “If it feels good, do it!”; “Live for the moment!” How do Esau’s reasoning and choices reveal him to be a man whose mind is on things below, not on things above (Phil. 3:19)? (See Heb. 12:16, 17.)

8. Esau’s sin occupies the spotlight in this passage, but for what sinful attitudes and actions is Jacob responsible?

Day 3: Read Genesis 26:1–35.

9. How does Isaac demonstrate both faith (vv. 3–6) and unbelief (v. 7) while in Gerar?
10. How does God use Abimelech, a pagan king, to protect the seed, especially in light of Isaac's lie about Rebekah?
11. God directly and indirectly reveals himself numerous times in this passage. List all the ways you can see God at work.
12. How did Esau show contempt for the Lord and his family's values by his marriage to the Hittites Judith and Basemath (vv. 34, 35)? (Gen. 2:23, 24; 24:3, 4)

Days 4 & 5: Read Genesis 27:1–40.

13. Reread Genesis 25:28. How does the parents' favoritism come to a head in this scene? (vv. 1–10)
14. The giving of the blessing should have been a joyous and public occasion, celebrated with a big feast. Why do you think Isaac is trying to do this on the sly?
15. None of the characters in this drama is willing to trust the sovereign God to bring about his good plan. How is each character in this drama committed to his (her) own agenda? To what methods is each willing to stoop, to bring this about?
 - Isaac
 - Rebekah
 - Jacob
 - Esau
16. Rebekah loves her home-body son, but how does all her scheming rob her of what she loves the most? (vv. 42–45)
17. Think about a difficult relationship in your life. Have you been stubbornly clinging to your own agenda when reconciliation is possible? Pray that God would help you let go of that.
18. In spite of the sinful attitudes and actions of the characters on stage in this drama, God's plan is accomplished. How? (Gen. 25:23; 26:2–5; 27:27–29)