



CREATION AND THE BEGINNING OF HUMAN HISTORY

#39 – Jacob and Esau
Genesis 25:19-34

PICTURES NEEDED

- 39-1 Jacob and Esau as boys
- 39-2 Jacob cooking stew

REVIEW (Before Teaching Lesson)

- **Journal Review:** Ask students to share an important truth that they learned from their journal readings at home that week. Share some of your own insights.
- **Previous Lesson Review:** (Use the visual from the last lesson to aid in review)
What did Abraham do when God told him to sacrifice Isaac? Why was he able to do that? Why didn't Abraham sacrifice Isaac? Why was God pleased with Abraham? What did Abraham's faith do for him?
- **The Big Question Review:** How can we become righteous like Abraham?
Let the students give their answers to the question.
- **Bible Verse Review:** 2 Corinthians 5:21
We become righteous through the sacrifice of Jesus for our sin.

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

LESSON CONTENT

In the last few lessons, we have been learning about Abraham and the promise God made to him. What was God's promise to Abraham? God promised to make Abraham the father of many nations and to bless the whole earth through him.

Who was the son of the promise that God made to Abraham? Even though Abraham had other children it was his son Isaac who was born to his wife Sarah in his old age who was the son of the promise.

What had God asked Abraham to do to Isaac? God told Abraham to go to a mountain and sacrifice Isaac.

Why didn't Abraham sacrifice Isaac? God stopped him and provided a lamb for the sacrifice instead.

What pleased God about Abraham? God was pleased with Abraham because he didn't withhold his son from him. Abraham believed and trusted God and it was credited to him as righteousness.

After Isaac grew to be a man Abraham sent his chief servant back to the land Abraham had come from to get a wife for Isaac. God granted the servant success in his quest and he brought back Rebekah who was the granddaughter of Abraham's brother. She was very beautiful and Isaac loved her. Rebekah, however, was barren which means she couldn't have children. When Isaac prayed for her God answered his prayer and Rebekah became pregnant with twins.

Genesis 25:19-28 (picture 39-1)

¹⁹ *This is the account of Abraham's son Isaac.*

Abraham became the father of Isaac, ²⁰ and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean.

²¹ *Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. ²² The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.*

²³ *The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."*

²⁴ *When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. ²⁵ The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau.*

²⁶ *After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.*

²⁷ *The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents. ²⁸ Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.*

What did God say to Rebekah about her sons? God said that two nations were within her and the older would serve the younger.

Who was the first born? Esau was the firstborn of the twins so the birthright should have gone to him. Esau's name means hairy. He was also called Edom meaning red. He was the father of the Edomites who were always in conflict with God's people, the Israelites.

What is the birthright of the firstborn? According to the ancient law of primogeniture, the firstborn son is the one who receives the birthright which means he receives a double inheritance of material possessions and is the one through whom the family line passes.

Who was the second born? Jacob was the second one to be born. His name means "he grasps the heel" which is a figure of speech for "he deceives."

What does deceive mean? If you deceive someone you get the person to believe something is true that really isn't true or that something is good to do that isn't good to do. You mislead a person by lying or not telling the whole truth. Although Jacob was a sneaky and deceptive person, he was the one through whom God chose to fulfill his promise to Abraham.

What was the difference between the two brothers? Esau was a hunter and Jacob was a quiet man who liked to stay at home.

What did the parents think about the two boys? Isaac loved Esau and Rebekah loved Jacob.

What is wrong with that? Favoring one child over the other is not good as that can create conflict between both the parents and the children. Parents should love their children equally and treat them each fairly.

Genesis 25:29-34 (picture 39-2)

²⁹ Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. ³⁰ He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.)

³¹ Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright."

³² "Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?"

³³ But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.

³⁴ Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left.

So Esau despised his birthright.

What did Jacob get Esau to do? Sell him his birthright for a bowl of stew.

What was Esau's birthright? As the firstborn son the family line would pass through him and he would get double the inheritance.

What does this story tell you about Esau? Esau was a man who lived for the moment and wasn't concerned about how what he did affected his future. We would say he was motivated by short term or instant gratification. He didn't look at the ultimate outcome of his choice. All he could focus on was his hunger at the moment.

What does this story tell you about Jacob? He was sneaky (cunning and conniving) and took advantage of Esau's weakness.

Before Jacob was even born God chose him to be the one through whom his promise to Abraham would be fulfilled. It wasn't that Jacob was a perfect man. The Bible shows he was quite a deceiver. Besides getting Esau to sell him his birthright, Jacob dressed up and pretended to be Esau, tricking his father into giving him Esau's blessing.

Both Esau and Jacob were sinners, but the Bible says that God loved Jacob and hated Esau, meaning that he chose Jacob and rejected Esau. If all men are sinners what causes God to choose one person and reject another? God chooses or loves those who choose to believe in and trust him as Lord. He rejects or hates those who reject or hate him.

What does God know about a person even before he is born? God knows the heart of a person before he is born, just like he knew Jacob and Esau. God chooses or rejects a person on the basis of how they respond to him. Those who choose God are children of the promise that God made to Abraham.

Even though Jacob was a sinner, he believed God and was the one chosen to be the son of the promise. Esau lived for the moment and rejected the idea that God was Lord. His heart was hard towards God. The Bible describes Esau as godless.

Hebrews 12:16 says, *See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son.*

What does it mean to be godless? If a person is godless he is without God. Godless people reject God and his ways. They live their lives apart from God and don't experience the blessing of a relationship with God. They choose to follow their sinful nature rather than look ahead to eternity.

We need to be careful not to be godless like Esau and have a hard heart towards God. We need to choose to believe in and follow God as Abraham did, and become a child of the promise.

LESSON WRAP-UP

- **Overview Questions:** What is the birthright of the firstborn? Who did the birthright belong to? Why? How did Jacob get Esau's birthright?
- **Thought Questions:** What does it mean to look ahead to your reward? What causes a person to look ahead for his reward? How would looking ahead to your reward affect your decisions in life? Why is making a decision on how you feel at the moment a bad idea?
- **Prayer:** Thank God that his way is good and right and following it will bring you great benefit. Pray that you would look ahead to God's promises and choose to make good decisions based on his truth and what has eternal value.

- **The Big Question:** Why did Esau give up his birthright?

Let the students give their answers to the question. Share the memory verse. Ask how it answers the question.

- **Memory Verse:** Hebrews 12:16

Esau was godless and lived for the moment.

(See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son.)

Question: What does it mean to be godless? Why would Esau sell his inheritance for a single meal?

ACTIVITIES (Completed after the lesson)

Any age appropriate activity can be included which fits into the class time. The activities with a star are included on the class notes.

- ★ **Lesson Notes:** Ask the students to summarize in one sentence what the lesson was about. Then have them give three main points covered in the lesson. An example is below.

Theme: Isaac's wife Rebekah was barren and couldn't have children but when Isaac prayed for her she became pregnant with twins.

1. While the twins were growing in her womb God told her that the older one would serve the younger one.
2. Esau was born first and then Jacob came out holding on to his heel.
3. Jacob got Esau to sell him his birthright of the firstborn for a bowl of stew.

- ★ **Memory Verse:** Read the memory verse on the cover of the class notes and then have the students fill in the blanks in the verse.

- ★ **Activity Page:** Hidden Message

Instructions: Unscramble the words of foods that might be in a stew to find the hidden message: lentils, beans, meat, carrots, celery, onions, tomatoes, peppers

Hidden Message: Don't be godless like Esau.

- ★ **Further Understanding:** Bible Study Skills

Instructions:

1. Read the whole passage below to the students as they read along in their Bibles or on the discussion notes.
2. Read the passage verse by verse and have the students explain each verse.
3. Have the students extract one important truth from the passage. This can be done as an entire class or you can break into pairs or small groups.
4. Have the students answer the additional two questions: How can you apply this truth in your life? What will be the result of applying that truth?

Romans 9:6-13 – God’s promise came through Jacob.

⁶It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. ⁷Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."⁸In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring. ⁹For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son."

¹⁰Not only that, but Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac. ¹¹Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad--in order that God's purpose in election might stand: ¹²not by works but by him who calls--she was told, "The older will serve the younger."¹³Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

Discussion Questions: What makes a person one of Abraham’s offspring? Why would a person be hated or rejected by God? Can God be unfair in the way he deals with people? Why not?

JOURNAL

The journal is passed out at the end of class for the students to complete at home. It has six readings that answer a digging deeper question. It would be beneficial for the teacher to work through the journal readings also.

Digging Deeper: Journal Focus – Genesis, chapters 26-27

Reading 1: Reading 1: Genesis 26:1-11 Isaac lies to Abimelech.

Why did Isaac stay where he was during the famine instead of going to Egypt? What did that show about Isaac? Why did Isaac say Rebekah was his sister? What did that show about Isaac?

Reading 2: Genesis 26:12-22 The Philistines quarrel with Isaac.

What caused problems between Isaac and the Philistines? What did the Philistines keep doing with Isaac? What did Isaac do in response? What did that show about Isaac?

Reading 3: Genesis 26:23-35 Isaac makes a treaty with Abimelech

Why did Isaac build an altar to the Lord at Beersheba? Why did Abimelech want to make a treaty with Isaac?

Reading 4: Genesis 27: 1-40 Jacob tricks his father.

What did Isaac want to do for Esau? How did Jacob get the blessing instead of Esau? What did that show about Jacob? What was the blessing Isaac gave to Jacob? What was the blessing Isaac gave to Esau?

Reading 5: Genesis 27:41-28:9 Jacob is sent away.

Why did Rebekah really want to send Jacob to live with her brother? What caused Isaac to send Jacob away? What did that show about Rebekah? How did Isaac bless Jacob?

Reading 6: Romans 9:6-13 God’s promise came through Jacob.

What makes a person one of Abraham’s offspring? Why would a person be hated or rejected by God? Can God be unfair in the way he deals with people? Why not?