



Finer Grounds Bible Study

Genesis (Part 2)

Lesson 1: Genesis 25:1-26:35

Welcome back to the Genesis study, ladies! I apologize that it has been a long time in coming, but we are finally ready to begin the second half of this great book of the Bible. I ask that you begin each study with a prayer for God to guide your understanding and to give you the humble, obedient spirit that He desires. I also want to remind you to always spend the majority of your personal study time in His word, not in these lessons. His words are the only ones that bring life and faith.

Before we dive into the second half of chapter 25, where we left off, it would probably be in our best interest to review where we are in the text. As you know, chapters 1-3 covered creation and the fall of man. Chapters 4 and 5 walked us through the first recorded murder in history when Cain murdered his brother Abel and took us through the history leading up to the time period of the flood. Chapters 6-9 detail the wickedness that prevailed in Noah's time, the building of the ark, the flood, and God's promise to never again destroy the earth with water of which the rainbow now bears witness. Chapters 10 and 11 give us the generations of Noah's sons and the tower of Babel which led to their dispersion throughout the land.

As we move into chapters 12-15, we see the call of Abraham, God's promises to him, his separation and deliverance of his nephew Lot, and the official covenant God makes with him. Chapters 16-18 chronicle the path to Abraham's

promised son with the story of Hagar and Ishmael as well as the introduction of circumcision as the sign of the covenant and the entertaining of some heavenly visitors. Chapters 19 and 20 tell of the rescue of Lot and his family as well as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Finally, in chapters 21 and 22, we see the birth of the promised son, Isaac, only to have Abraham tested to sacrifice the very one he has faithfully been waiting on for so long. Chapter 23 to where we left off in chapter 25 cover the death of Sarah, the providentially guided search for Isaac's wife, the marriage of Isaac to Rebekah, and the death of Abraham.

Now that we are all caught up in the story line, let's get started with our text for this week. If you have not prayed yet, please stop and do so now before we begin the meat of our study.

Read Genesis 25:19-26

We begin this section with Abraham's promised son finally having children of his own, which will ultimately carry out God's promises and usher in the Messiah. The text tells us that Rebekah was barren for about 20 years. Notice that Isaac was 40 when he married her (vs. 20) and 60 when she gave birth to their sons (vs.26). It is interesting to note that Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife (vs. 21). I cannot help but wonder what outcomes there would be in our families if only the leaders of every home did this as the answer to their problems and concerns.



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It doesn't take long for Rebekah to realize that there is something different about this pregnancy. Imagine you lived during this time without the technology of ultrasound to know that twins were inside of you. I have never had twins but having one baby inside kicking around is quite a sensation. I can't imagine what it would be like to have two of them fighting in the womb. Most of us would have to agree that this had to be one rough pregnancy! I love her response. She had a problem, "so she went to inquire of the Lord". Again, what would our outcomes look like if every mother did this when she had a problem with her kids? I know we don't get the direct answers that Rebekah seems to enjoy, but God still answers us.

God's answer to Rebekah is that there are two nations within her and the older is going to serve the younger. It seems probable that she may not have understood what God meant by two nations or peoples as verse 24 says that, "when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb." Perhaps she suspected it from God's answer, but there seems to be an air of surprise in the way it's expressed. Again, I can't help but draw the parallel in our lives when God answers us. Maybe His answer confuses us or we don't fully understand it in the moment, but in His time, we begin to see the blessing in it all.

Of course, we know Esau comes out first with Jacob "holding on to Esau's heel". The name Esau means "hairy", which seems to be an appropriate description. Jacob's name means "heel holder" or "supplant", which basically

means to supersede or replace. This indeed is what Jacob will do to Esau in the future, thus fulfilling God's prophecy to Rebekah.

Why did Rebekah have to suffer through a tough pregnancy?

When you have a problem or concern, do you "inquire of the Lord" and wait upon His answer?

What steps can you take to improve in this area?

How old was Abraham when Jacob and Esau were born? (Hint: See Gen. 21:5, 25:26)

How old were Jacob and Esau when Abraham died? (Hint: See previous answer and Gen. 25:7)

Read Genesis 25:27-34

As the twins grow up, their differences become quite evident. Esau seems more like a man's man with his hunting skills and love of the



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outdoors, but Jacob is a more peaceful spirit who seems content to tend sheep and remain home. The opportunity arises for Jacob to “supplant”, as his name suggests, the birthright from his brother. Although it seems lowly of Jacob to take advantage of his brother’s situation, it appears that Esau is more to blame in this scenario. The Hebrew writer calls Esau “godless” because he “sold his own birthright for a single meal” (Heb. 12:16). The Greek word for “godless” in that passage is BEBELOS and means “profane, common, unholy”. I find such terminology interesting. This was undoubtedly a foolish act, but why was this deemed a “godless” act on Esau’s part?

It might help to know what the birthright included. It is probably safe to assume the benefits of the birthright were similar to what God establishes in His covenant with Israel later. We see from Deut. 21:17 that it was the God-given right of the firstborn to be given a double portion of the inheritance. It also seems to come with a special blessing and leadership of the family. They become the patriarch of the family, which means they are not only the leader, but the priest of the family as well. It was obviously not godly to act so impetuously and foolishly. Esau traded something God given and valuable for one meal. This action was in complete subjection to physical needs, it was extremely temporal, and it was devoid of any self-control, wisdom, or trust in God to provide.

This begs the question of our own lives. Are we consistently willing to deprive ourselves of fleshly desires in order to grow more self-controlled, to practice wisdom, and to demonstrate a complete faith in God? This could

take a lot of different forms in our lives. Are we willing to skip lunch so we can spend that time in prayer and fasting for a brother or sister? Are we willing to skip that next episode of our favorite show to spend time with that neighbor or co-worker who’s hurting or in need of friendship? Are we willing to humbly wait on God in submission to our husbands or are we going to take the lead because we want to control the outcome?

I wonder sometimes if I have the minimal self-control it takes to walk away from a candy bar in the supermarket line. Ladies, if we cannot have self-control in the little things, how in the world do we expect to have it in the things that really matter? Now, let me be clear, there is nothing wrong with eating lunch, watching a clean program, working hard, or eating a candy bar. However, when they are chosen in place of something God has put before us, we are no better than Esau in this moment. Studying Esau has reinforced the need for me to learn to tell myself no when needed. The word “no” is not always a bad word, it is often a healthy one that I need to practice daily.

I am certain we can all relate to committing some foolish, godless act like Esau did at some point in our lives. The Hebrew writer sheds more light on this when he says in Hebrews 12:17 that Esau is rejected from receiving his blessing because “he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears”. This aspect of Esau’s story reminds me of another sorrowful man who failed to repent. Judas felt remorse when he betrayed the Son of God, yet he failed to trust God by seeking forgiveness through repentance. May we never linger in our sorrow as



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Esau and Judas, but rather run back to God, turn from wrong, and start walking with Him.

Jacob is already beginning to take that lead over Esau just as God foretold. It is not surprising that this part of the story ends with Esau despising his birthright. We can take another lesson from Esau in that small statement as well. Instead of despising things or people we have acted foolishly with, why don't we choose the higher road. May we humble ourselves to learn from our mistakes, repent, and practice wisdom in the future.

Can you remember a time when you had a fleshly desire that just seemed too powerful to deny? What was it and how did you respond?

Does sorrow alone absolve us of our sins?

What must follow that sorrow? (Hint: 2 Cor. 7:9)

Can you think of a time when you acted foolishly and then despised something or someone afterwards?

Have you seen consistent growth in your self-control and patience? If not, why not and what can you start doing to change that?

What have Christians crucified according to Gal. 5:24?

Read Genesis 26:1-35

We get a slight break in the story line of Jacob and Esau in chapter 26 with the story of Isaac's time in Gerar and his interaction with the Philistines. Another famine is in the land and God tells Isaac where to go and where not to go. He also reiterates the promises of the land and his descendants which was made to his father Abraham. God has not forgotten His promises or Abraham's obedience (vs. 5). Isaac doesn't seem to hesitate to obey God, but he does seem to waver in the same fear as Abraham did about his wife and fails to be completely honest. The story line is remarkably similar to Abraham's story in chapters 20 and 21 with the lie about his wife, the fueling over the wells, and the peace treaty. Although similar, it is not however surprising as our human nature seems to follow patterns, especially within families. Fortunately, King Abimelech spots Isaac caressing Rebekah and corrects the problem before too much damage is done.

God continues to bless Isaac with protection and expansion. He becomes so wealthy that the Philistines become envious and ultimately afraid



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of his power. They send him away to the Valley of Gerar, where a continual battle over wells ensues. Water is so valuable and important. These wells mean life and death for the people and their livestock. The Philistines had stopped up all the wells that Abraham had dug when he lived there, but Isaac sets to digging them up again. However, a quarrel ensues over the first two because the Philistines want them for themselves. Finally, there is peace with the third well and Isaac goes up to Beersheba, where the Lord once again comforts and reaffirms His promises. We see that Isaac builds an altar, calls upon the name of the Lord, and pitches his tent there.

Lastly in this chapter, King Abimelech, his adviser Ahuzzath, and the commander of his army Phicol pay Isaac a visit. The Philistines are descendants of Ham (Gen. 10:6, 13-14) and are believed to be “sea people” who migrated from the island of Crete to the western seacoast of Canaan. The word “philistine” means “immigrants”. It is important to understand that they do not yet seem to be the powerful force that they become during David’s time. History seems to reveal that a large number of them migrated after they were defeated by Rameses III in a naval battle in 1188 B.C., which would account for their greater presence at a later time. The Philistines here in Isaac’s time have seen with their own eyes that Isaac is blessed by God. This knowledge prompts them to make a peace treaty with Isaac. Beersheba is the place where Abraham made the first peace treaty with Abimelech. It means “well of the sevenfold oath”, which Abraham named it when he gave Abimelech seven ewe lambs to prove that he had dug the well there. This is truly

a story of “like father, like son” in more ways than one.

We get a little bit of information about Esau in the last two verses of the chapter. He ends up marrying two Hittite women when he is 40 years old and the statement is made that “they brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah”. Like the Philistines, the Hittites were descendants of Ham. Specifically, the Hittites were descendants of Heth, who was the son of Canaan (one of Ham’s sons). These women that Esau marries are not a part of God’s chosen people.

List all the wells that Isaac had dug. What did he name each one and why?

Why do you think Esau’s decision to marry Hittite women was so grievous to Isaac and Rebekah?

Do you believe God cares or is indifferent about who we marry? What scriptures do you have to support your belief?

We have come to the end of our first lesson in the second part of our Genesis study. I hope you will continue along with us as we make this journey. I pray you will find growth, strength, and a deeper faith as we strive to learn what is



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pleasing to the Lord together. Keep reading and keep running the race!