

April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
**Jacob and Esau**  
**Genesis 25:19 – 27:46**

**BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN**

Apr 12 1 Kings 1-2	Apr 16 1 Kings 10-11
Apr 13 1 Kings 3-5	Apr 17 1 Kings 12-14
Apr 14 1 Kings 6-7	Apr 18 1 Kings 15-17
Apr 15 1 Kings 8-9	Apr 19 1 Kings 18-20

**Lesson Introduction:** *Our lesson this week fast forwards to Isaac and his offspring. After Abraham’s servant found a wife for Isaac, the very next thing we see is the death of Abraham (Ch. 25:7-11). The Lord had provided the son for Abraham that He had promised and given that son a wife. Although Abraham would die without seeing the complete promise fulfilled, he died knowing that his line would continue on through Isaac. Indeed, the Lord assured Isaac that the covenant that was made with his father would continue through him (Ch. 26:1-5). In our passage this week, we will see how God works all things according to the counsel of His will, and how He uses what seems foolish to the world to shame the wise.*

**FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS:**

- **The Lord is faithful to keep His promises (Ch. 26:1-26)**
- **The Lord works all things according to the counsel of His will (Ch. 25:19-28, Ephesians 1:11)**
- **The Lord chooses the foolish things of this world to shame the wise (Ch. 25:21-34, Ch. 27:1-40, 1 Corinthians 1:27)**

**Discussion Section 1: Shaming the Wise**

**Read Genesis 25:19 – 26:5**

*19 These are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham fathered Isaac, 20 and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife. 21 And Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren. And the Lord granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived. 22 The children struggled together within her, and she said, "If it is thus, why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the Lord. 23 And the Lord said to her,*

*"Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger."*

*24 When her days to give birth were completed, behold, there were twins in her womb. 25 The first came out red, all his body like a hairy cloak, so they called his name Esau. 26 Afterward his brother came out with his hand holding Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.*

*27 When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. 28 Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.*

*29 Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. 30 And Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!" (Therefore his name was called Edom.) 31 Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright now." 32 Esau said, "I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?" 33 Jacob said, "Swear to me now." So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.*

*26 Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines. 2 And the Lord appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. 3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. 4 I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, 5 because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."*

-Why did God promise to bless Isaac? (Ch. 26:1-5)

-What does God’s choosing of Jacob over Esau before they were even born tell us about the way God operates? (Ch. 25:23)

-What are some ways that we see God using things that might seem foolish to man in this section?

**Note:** *In the last part of the Scripture in this section, we see that God establishes His covenant with Isaac. It is clear that God intends to remain faithful to the promise that He had made to His servant Abraham many years before. Once again, the faithfulness of God is on display, as we are reminded that He is always faithful to His promises. In **26:5**, God reminds Isaac of his father's faithfulness and obedience, as if to call on Isaac to do likewise. Isaac is being called to obey the Lord just as his father had been. As we consider God's faithfulness to His promises, it should create in us a heart set on faithfulness and obedience toward Him. Why would we not walk in obedience to the One Who is constantly faithful to us, and perfect in all His ways? Following after the Lord is not burdensome, rather, it leads to abundant life (**1 John 5:2-4, John 10:10, 11:28**).*

*Interestingly, we see in this section that the way God chooses to keep His promise once again seems strange from the world's perspective. First, we learn that Isaac's wife, Rebekah, was barren (**25:21**). One of the things that is so plain in Scripture is that God loves to use barren women to fulfill His purposes. Sarah, the wife of Abraham was barren (**Genesis 11:30**). Rebekah was barren. Rachel the wife of Jacob was barren (**Genesis 29:30**). The mother of Sampson the judge was barren (**Judges 13:2**). Hannah the mother of Samuel the prophet was barren (**1 Samuel 1:5**). Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist was barren (**Luke 1:7**). In all these cases, the Lord opened the wombs of these women to bring about His purposes. Why would God continually use barren women to fulfill His purposes? Because God loves to use what seems foolish to the world to shame the wise and show that the power belongs to Him (**1 Corinthians 1:18-31, 2 Corinthians 4:7**)! When God uses barren women throughout the Bible to accomplish His purposes, it shows plainly that nothing is impossible or even difficult for Him! He is not dependent on human strength or worldly convention. He is mighty in power and brings about life from places where there was once no life. As we consider the birth of Jacob and Esau, may we be reminded that God is all-powerful, and that nothing can thwart His purposes.*

*Another thing we see in this passage is God's plan for the younger son to rule over the older, and to create two nations from the same pregnancy (**25:23**). It was customary in that day for the first born son to "enjoy the*

***privileges of precedence in the household and at the father's death receive a double share of the inheritance and become the recognized head of the family (Exodus 22:29, Numbers 8:14-17, Deuteronomy 21:17)"***

*(MacArthur). God's word to Rebekah about why there was conflict in her womb must have been shocking to her. Why would God choose the younger of the two twins to be the one who would receive the blessing? Again, we learn that God works in these ways that are contrary to the world's expectations so that He might show that the power and glory belong to Him.*

*One of the ways that God so clearly shows His glory is through the way He freely gives grace. Romans 9 tells us that God did not choose Jacob over Esau based on any works that they had done (since they had not yet been born when He chose Jacob over Esau). Instead, God chose Jacob over Esau "in order that His purpose of election might continue, not because of works, but because of Him who calls" (**Romans 9:11**). In choosing Jacob over Esau, God shows that He is the ultimate determining factor when it comes to our fates. His grace shines brightly as we consider how He chose Jacob, especially when we consider the type of person that Jacob was (which we will see in our next section).*

*Like Jacob, we too have done nothing to earn God's favor. Before we were born, not based on anything we would do or not do, but based on His grace alone, God chose us to be His children, so that His name would be praised for His glorious grace (**Ephesians 1:3-14**). As we consider this passage, we should be driven to praise God for the way that He is able to execute His sovereign plan to perfection and for the fact that He has included us in His plan to create for himself a holy people for His own possession (**1 Peter 2:9**).*

## **Discussion Section 2: The Faithful Providence of God**

### **Read Genesis Ch. 27**

-What sins do we see committed in this passage?

-How do we reconcile the sins that are committed in this passage with the reality that God used this situation to accomplish His purposes?

-What does this passage teach us about man? What do we learn about God?

**Note:** Chapter 27 is a passage where we simultaneously see the sinful schemes of man and the purposes of God at work. At the end of chapter 25, we saw how Esau “despised his birthright,” selling it for a bowl of stew that his brother was making. Chapter 27 tells the story of how Rebekah and Jacob schemed to trick Isaac into giving Jacob his blessing instead of Esau. There is so much at play in this passage, but the main thing that we must see is that, even in the midst of this scheme, God is using it to accomplish His purposes.

Isaac was intent on blessing Esau even though God had previously prophesied that He would bless Jacob over Esau. We see in this passage the partiality that both parents show toward their children, and how it led to deception and scheming. Ultimately, it is important that we call sin out and make no mistake about what is happening here. Rebekah and Jacob’s plan was deceptive and underhanded. There was nothing good about the way they went about getting Isaac to bless Jacob instead of Esau. Yet though it all God’s promise is worked, and His purposes are accomplished.

This passage teaches us plainly that man is sinful to the core and will always work to preserve and exalt self. Amazingly, it also teaches us how God is faithful to keep His promises and will use even the sins of man to accomplish His will. There is no scheme of man that is too great for God to redeem and use for His purposes. Although sin abounds in this passage, God’s will is not thwarted, and it becomes clear that His providential hand is at work in the mess of this situation. As you study this section, be encouraged by how gracious God is to work His purposes in and through us even though we are messed up, lowly sinners. Next week we will see some of what Jacob had to suffer because of his scheming ways, but we will ultimately see how God remained faithful to Him through that time of discipline.