

OT-OV

Lesson 56

1. Last week we completed our study of Abraham and Lot, I then taught the Doctrine of Isaac and the Doctrine of Rebekah.

2. Now for the Doctrine of Jacob which must of necessity include information concerning his brother Esau.

Doctrine of Jacob

1. In Hebrew the name Ya'aqob means "heel catcher," "trickster," or "supplanter."

2. Jacob was the younger twin son of Isaac and Rebekah; he is later called Israel.

3. The life of Jacob in Palestine is described in Genesis chapters 25-27.

3.1 The birth of Jacob and Esau is recorded in Gen 25:21-26.

Gen 25:21 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.

Gen 25:22 The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.

Gen 25:23 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."

Gen 25:24 When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb.

Gen 25:25 The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau.

Gen 25:26 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.

3.2 Rebekah, like Sarah (cf. Gen 11:30 with 16:1-2), was barren. Isaac's prayer for his wife was heard and rewarded. She gave birth to twin boys, who wrestled in the womb as they would do later in life.

4. Let's review a brief history of their long and bitter struggle.

4.1 These twins struggled in the womb before birth. (Gen 25:22)

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Gen 25:23 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."

4.2 At birth Jacob seized Esau's heel, indicating further the locked struggle of the future between these brothers and their posterities, the Israelites (the sons of Jacob) and the Edomites (the sons of Esau, compare Deu 2:4-6).

Deu 2:4 Give the people these orders: 'You are about to pass through the territory of your brothers the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir. They will be afraid of you, but be very careful.

Deu 2:5 Do not provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land, not even enough to put your foot on. I have given Esau the hill country of Seir as his own.

Deu 2:6 You are to pay them in silver for the food you eat and the water you drink."

4.3 Jacob revealed an eagerness to gain advantage over his brother. (Hos 12:3)

Hos 12:2 The LORD has a charge to bring against Judah; he will punish Jacob according to his ways and repay him according to his deeds.

Hos 12:3 In the womb he grasped his brother's heel; as a man he struggled with God.

4.4 Esau was the firstborn, but Jacob would be his master. This prophecy is reiterated by other Jacob-Esau passages. (Mal 1:2-3 and Rom 9:10-13)

Rom 9:10 Not only that, but Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac.

Rom 9:11 Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad--in order that God's purpose in election might stand:

Rom 9:12 not by works but by him who calls-- she was told, "The older will serve the younger."

Rom 9:13 Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

Mal 1:2 "I have loved you," says the LORD. "But you ask, 'How have you loved us?' "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" the LORD says. "Yet I have loved Jacob,

Mal 1:3 but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his mountains into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals."

4.5 Jacob was the introvert and meditative type; but Esau was an extrovert and a man of the field who became a skillful hunter.

4.6 He was the favorite of his father Isaac, while Jacob became the favorite of his mother Rebekah.

4.7 Esau provided his father with his favorite meats from his hunting expeditions, but Esau's love for the chase became his downfall.

4.8 One day as Esau returned, tired and hungry, Jacob was waiting for him with a steaming hot vessel of red pottage.

4.8.1 As the aroma of this food hit Esau's nostrils he exclaimed, "Give me some of that red stuff," literally, "Pray let me swallow some of that red stuff - that red stuff there - for I am famished." (Gen 25:30-34)

Gen 25:30 He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.)

Gen 25:31 Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright."

Gen 25:32 "Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?"

Gen 25:33 But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.

Gen 25:34 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.

4.9 Since his lack of self-control was a weakness from birth, Esau must have this food and at once to satisfy his appetite! He paid a dear price in hastily agreeing to the demands of Jacob to surrender his birthright.

4.9.1 Fearing what might occur between her two sons Rebekah, with the permission of Isaac, sent Jacob away to Mesopotamia.

4.10 The term birthright denotes the advantages and rights normally enjoyed by the eldest son.

4.11 These included a position of honor at the head of the family (Gen 27:29), and a double share of the inheritance. (Deu 21:15-17)

Gen 27:29 May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed."

Gen 27:30 After Isaac finished blessing him and Jacob had scarcely left his father's presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting.

Deu 21:15 If a man has two wives, and he loves one but not the other, and both bear him sons but the firstborn is the son of the wife he does not love,

Deu 21:16 when he wills his property to his sons, he must not give the rights of the firstborn to the son of the wife he loves in preference to his actual firstborn, the son of the wife he does not love.

Deu 21:17 He must acknowledge the son of his unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double share of all he has. That son is the first sign of his father's strength. The right of the firstborn belongs to him.

4.11.1 When applied to tribes or nations, it conveys the idea of political and material superiority. This impulsive act stripped Esau of the headship of the people through which the redemptive purpose of God would flow.

4.11.2 Also he forfeited the secular advantage of the first born son's share in the father's temporal goods.

4.12 With his birthright gone, Esau was still eligible to receive from Isaac the blessing of the oldest son if cunning, shrewd Rebekah had not risen to the occasion. (Gen 27:1-10)

Gen 27:1 When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see, he called for Esau his older son and said to him, "My son." "Here I am," he answered.

Gen 27:2 Isaac said, "I am now an old man and don't know the day of my death.

Gen 27:3 Now then, get your weapons-- your quiver and bow-- and go out to the open country to hunt some wild game for me.

Gen 27:4 Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die."

Gen 27:5 Now Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau left for the open country to hunt game and bring it back,

Gen 27:6 Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "Look, I overheard your father say to your brother Esau,

Gen 27:7 'Bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat, so that I may give you my blessing in the presence of the LORD before I die.'

Gen 27:8 Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you:

Gen 27:9 Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it.

Gen 27:10 Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies."

4.13 Oral blessings of deathbed wills were recognized as valid in early patriarchal societies.

4.14 Esau received a blessing, but he was not to share in the fertile land of Palestine. "Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be, and away from the dew of heaven on high." (Gen 27:39)

Gen 27:39 His father Isaac answered him, "Your dwelling will be away from the earth's richness, away from the dew of heaven above.

Gen 27:40 You will live by the sword and you will serve your brother. But when you grow restless, you will throw his yoke from off your neck."

4.15 Esau perceived that by marrying a non-Canaanite woman he would please his parents, so he married a relative of Ishmael (Gen 28:6 and 9) in "the land of Seir."

Gen 28:6 Now Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him to Paddan Aram to take a wife from there, and that when he blessed him he commanded him, "Do not marry a Canaanite woman,"

Gen 28:7 and that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Paddan Aram.

Gen 28:8 Esau then realized how displeasing the Canaanite women were to his father Isaac;

Gen 28:9 so he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, the sister of Nebaioth and daughter of Ishmael son of Abraham, in addition to the wives he already had.

4.16 Since the land of Seir was a good environment for one who lived by the bow, Esau made it his permanent home.

4.17 Esau was living there when Jacob returned from Mesopotamia years later. As Jacob neared Palestine he dreaded to face his wronged brother and laid minute plans to allay Esau's anger.

4.18 Jacob earnestly petitioned God to soften Esau's attitude. (Gen 32:9-12)

Gen 32:9 Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O LORD, who said to me, 'Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,'

Gen 32:10 I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two groups.

Gen 32:11 Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children.

Gen 32:12 But you have said, 'I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.'"

4.19 Esau, leading his 400 armed men, graciously embraced his guilty brother and received him without malice or recrimination. (Gen 33:4-10)

Gen 33:4 But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept.

Gen 33:5 Then Esau looked up and saw the women and children. "Who are these with you?" he asked. Jacob answered, "They are the children God has graciously given your servant."

Gen 33:6 Then the maidservants and their children approached and bowed down.

Gen 33:7 Next, Leah and her children came and bowed down. Last of all came Joseph and Rachel, and they too bowed down.

Gen 33:8 Esau asked, "What do you mean by all these droves I met?" "To find favor in your eyes, my lord," he said.

Gen 33:9 But Esau said, "I already have plenty, my brother. Keep what you have for yourself."

Gen 33:10 "No, please!" said Jacob. "If I have found favor in your eyes, accept this gift from me. For to see your face is like seeing the face of God, now that you have received me favorably.

4.20 Although Esau cordially welcomed his brother, Jacob was dubious of Esau's complete forgiveness.

4.20.1 Because he doubted the extent of Esau's forgiveness, Jacob managed, through deceit, to travel a separate way toward Bethel, stopping long at Succoth and Shechem, while Esau returned to Seir. (Gen 33:12-18)

Gen 33:12 Then Esau said, "Let us be on our way; I'll accompany you."

Gen 33:13 But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children are tender and that I must care for the ewes and cows that are nursing their young. If they are driven hard just one day, all the animals will die.

Gen 33:14 So let my lord go on ahead of his servant, while I move along slowly at the pace of the droves before me and that of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir."

Gen 33:15 Esau said, "Then let me leave some of my men with you." "But why do that?" Jacob asked. "Just let me find favor in the eyes of my lord."

Gen 33:16 So that day Esau started on his way back to Seir.

Gen 33:17 Jacob, however, went to Succoth, where he built a place for himself and made shelters for his livestock. That is why the place is called Succ Roth.

Gen 33:18 After Jacob came from Paddan Aram, he arrived safely at the city of Shechem in Canaan and camped within sight of the city.

4.21 If the old animosity was buried at the last meeting of the twin brothers, it was soon resurrected and handed down from generation to generation by their descendants.

4.22 The history of their descendants is one of continuous fratricidal struggle. Israel's foes rose and fell like waves, but the Edomites were always their enemies.

4.23 These two peoples scorned and hated each other with a relentlessness that finds no analogy between kindred and neighbor nations anywhere in history.

4.24 From c. 1000 B.C. under King David to c. 120 B.C. under the Hasmoneans, Israel was at war with Edom.

4.25 Between these two dates, prophet after prophet cried for vengeance upon Edom's heartless conduct.

5. Let's look at the life of Jacob in Mesopotamia. (Gen 28-30)

5.1 As noted when the full impact of Rebekah and Jacob's plot was uncovered, Jacob was sent away to his relatives in Haran.

5.2 En route from Beer-sheba Jacob, as a weary, troubled, and sinful fugitive, spent his first night near the ancient Canaanite sanctuary of Luz, later to be called Bethel.

5.3 In a night vision God revealed Himself to this wanderer as the God of his father. God also reminded Jacob Abraham's promises were his.

5.3.1 The promises in part to Abraham were:

Gen 12:7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

Gen 13:14 The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west.

Gen 13:15 All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.

Gen 13:16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted.

Gen 13:17 Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you."

Gen 26:3 Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham.

Gen 26:4 I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed,

Gen 26:5 because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws."

5.3.2 He also renewed the covenant blessing, promised him the land, appointed him to a universal mission, and assured him of divine guidance and a prosperous life, Jacob responded with a personal vow and renamed the place Bethel.

Gen 28:10 Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran.

Gen 28:11 When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and slept.

Gen 28:12 He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

Gen 28:13 There above it stood the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying.

Gen 28:14 Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.

5.4 Jacob arrived in his mother's homeland where he met Rachel at the well and it was love at first sight.

Gen 29:4 Jacob asked the shepherds, "My brothers, where are you from?" "We're from Haran," they replied.

Gen 29:5 He said to them, "Do you know Laban, Nahor's grandson?" "Yes, we know him," they answered.

Gen 29:6 Then Jacob asked them, "Is he well?" "Yes, he is," they said, "and here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep ..."

Gen 29:9 While he was still talking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess.

Gen 29:10 When Jacob saw Rachel daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and Laban's sheep, he went over and rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well and watered his uncle's sheep.

Gen 29:11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep aloud.

Gen 29:12 He had told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and a son of Rebekah. So she ran and told her father.

Gen 29:13 As soon as Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister's son, he hurried to meet him. He embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his home, and there Jacob told him all these things.

End Lesson