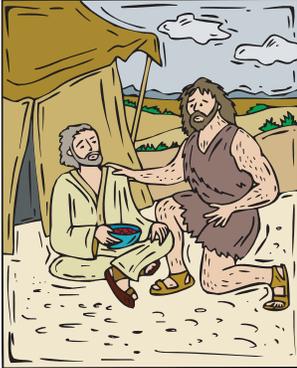




Jacob & Esau

FAMILIES IN TRUTH

Genesis 26:19-34, 27:1-40



The amazing promises that God had made to Abraham were passed down to Isaac. Those blessings would be passed down to one of his sons. Custom said it would go to the oldest son, but God had another plan.

Day #1: The Right Way

Children are a wonderful blessing from the Lord (Psalm 127:3). In Bible times, there was no greater blessing than to have children. In fact, people felt ashamed if they did not have a child.

Isaac and Rebekah knew that God had promised to give them children (Genesis 26:4) but after being married for 20 years, they still did not have children. Can you remember what Isaac's father, Abraham, did after he waited 10 years for a child? (He married a servant girl so she could have a baby for him.) Isaac did **not** take matters into his own hands as his father did.

† *Rebekah couldn't have children. So Isaac prayed to the Lord for her. And the Lord answered his prayer. His wife Rebekah became pregnant.* - Genesis 25:21

Isaac took his problem to the Lord. Isaac trusted that God's answer would be the perfect answer - far better than anything Isaac could do for himself.

The Lord says, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:9) This is not an insult to us, but it teaches us how great our God is! In fact, these words come from a beautiful passage in Isaiah where God is inviting His people to come to Him. As great as He is, He freely offers His wisdom, blessings, and love to all who choose to come to Him (Isaiah 55).

* Go outside and look straight up into the sky. Try to see as high up as you can. That is how much higher God's ways are than our ways. Why would we ever try to handle a problem on our own when our God offers to help us every time?

Day #2: Twins!

The Lord answered Isaac's prayer by making Rebekah pregnant. This was a wonderful blessing. However, soon Rebekah could feel a lot of movement inside of her. She feared something must be wrong. She, too, showed trust in the Lord because she went to Him with her concern. The Bible says when you lack wisdom, you should ask God, and He will gladly give you wisdom (James 1:5). God answered Rebekah:

† *The Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your body. Two tribes that are now inside you will be separated. One nation will be stronger than the other. **The older son will serve the younger one.**"* - Genesis 25:23

There were TWO babies inside of Rebekah! She and Isaac were going to have twin boys. God told Rebekah that each boy would grow up to have many children, or descendants. He also said that the younger son would rule over the older son. These were more promises from God, and God ALWAYS keeps His promises.

When the babies were born, the first baby was red and covered all over with hair. They named him Esau, which means "hairy." The second child was born holding onto the toe of his older brother. They named the second son Jacob, which means "heel holder," or "one that takes the place of another."

Which brother was born first? (Esau) That means he was the older brother. Look back at God's promise. Which brother would one day serve the other brother? (Esau would serve Jacob.) In Old Testament times, the oldest son was always considered the greatest of the children. God's promise to Rebekah meant something very unusual was going to happen.

* Remember our verse from yesterday. God's plan is always best, and it is often not what people expect. Always go to God for wisdom. Listen to what He tells you in His word and through prayer.

Day #3: Poor Priorities

[Note to parent: Take one penny and offer to buy something from your child that is very valuable to them, such as their bike, or pet. Ask why they refuse to sell their item to you.] Of course your _____ is more important to you than one penny. Today we will see that Esau had very poor judgment about what was really important.

As Jacob and Esau grew up, it was clear that they were very different from each other. Esau became a skillful hunter. He was bold and loved being outdoors. Jacob,

Day #3 continued:

on the other hand, was a quiet man who liked staying at home.

Back in those days, the oldest son received the birthright and the blessing from his father. The **birthright** determined how the family's land, money, and belongings were divided after the father died. The oldest son would receive twice as much of these things as the other brothers. The **blessing** was when the father prayed over his son, asking for things that money can't buy, like long life and many children. Because Esau was the oldest son, he was supposed to receive the birthright and the blessing from Isaac.

One day, Isaac went out hunting. When he returned home, he could smell something good cooking. Jacob had made some stew. Esau begged Jacob to give him the stew.

† *Jacob replied, "First sell me the rights that belong to you as the oldest son in the family." - Genesis 25:31*

The birthright was worth a great deal because Isaac was a very rich man. Foolishly, Esau traded his birthright for a simple bowl of stew!

Esau's priorities were wrong. That means he did not value what was really important. He chose one meal over His proper place in God's specially chosen family. Esau didn't care anything at all about the rights that belonged to him as the oldest son. The Bible calls Esau's behavior ungodly (Hebrews 12:16).

* Your priorities are also very important. On a piece of paper, list the things in your life that you value the most. Abiding with God should be at the top of your list. Stop and ask God to reveal if there are changes you should make in your priorities.

Day #4: The Trick

When Isaac was very old and could no longer see, he called Esau to his side. Isaac thought he would die soon, so it was time to give his blessing to his oldest son. Isaac instructed Esau to go hunt some wild animals and prepare a nice meal for him. Then Isaac would give Esau his blessing.

Rebekah overheard what Isaac said to Esau. She wanted the blessing to go to Jacob instead of Esau. Rebekah called Jacob. She told him to get two goats from their flock so she could prepare a tasty meal for Isaac. Then she told Jacob to dress up in Esau's clothes and take the meal to his father. She told Jacob to tell Isaac that he was Esau, so he could get the blessing. Jacob was afraid to do this, but Rebekah insisted.

Jacob entered Isaac's room with a platter of food, and goatskins on his arms. When Isaac smelled Esau's clothes and felt the hairy arms, he was fooled. He unknowingly blessed Jacob.

Day #4 continued:

† *"May God give you dew from heaven. May He give you the richness of the earth. May He give you plenty of grain and fresh wine. May nations serve you. May they bow down to you. Rule over your brothers. May the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who call down curses on you be cursed. And may those who bless you be blessed." - Genesis 27:28-29*

Rebekah got what she wanted, but we will see that she will pay a heavy price because she deceived her husband. The Bible says that Jacob was Rebekah's favorite son (Genesis 25:28). This may have been because God had told her that Jacob would rule over Esau. But, in any case, Rebekah should have trusted that God could secure the blessing for Jacob without her lying to get it (Hebrews 12:16-17). After all, God said, "The older will serve the younger." Once God speaks, nothing can change His plan.

* God cares about the methods we use. It is NEVER right to sin - not even in order to do good in the end. Do what you know is right, and trust God to make things work out according to His plan (Proverbs 3:5).

Day #5: Bitter Weeping

Right after Jacob left with his father's blessing, Esau came in from hunting. He had prepared a meal just as Isaac had instructed him. Esau was ready to receive his blessing. But when Isaac heard Esau's voice, he asked who was there.

† *"I'm your son," he answered. "I'm your oldest son. I'm Esau." - Genesis 27:32b*

Isaac realized that Jacob had tricked him, but it was too late. Jacob had received Esau's blessing, as well as his birthright.

Esau heard his father's words. Then he began crying loudly and bitterly. He said to his father, "Bless me! Bless me too, my father!" - Genesis 27:34

It seems that Esau finally realized the value of what he had lost. Esau became very angry with Jacob. He was so angry that he threatened to kill him (Genesis 27:414). Fearing for Jacob's life, Rebekah told Jacob to leave right away. She sent him far away, to the home of her brother, where he would be safe from Esau.

Because Rebekah chose to trick Isaac instead of letting God take care of the blessing, she would not see her favorite son for many years (Genesis 28:18, 27).

* Discuss what Rebekah should have done instead of deceiving her husband. (Hint: We saw her do this in Day #2.) Isn't it interesting that at one time Rebekah leaned on God, and at another time she depended on herself? The key to trusting God all the time is abiding in Him. When you remain with Him, you can't help but trust Him completely.