



## TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

### Talk Genesis 25:19-28: Jacob and Esau, Twins who Were Very Different, are Born

---

#### Lesson 57

*"This is the genealogy of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham begot Isaac. 20 Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah as wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian. 21 Now Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. 22 But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If all is well, why am I like this?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.*

*23 And the LORD said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger."*

*24 So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb. 25 And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau. 26 Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.*

*27 So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents. 28 And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob."*

#### Background Notes

Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel and the sister of Laban, who were Arameans of Padan Aram. In Genesis 24, we learned that Abraham's servant traveled about 500 miles away from home to find a wife for Isaac. Abraham didn't want his son, Isaac, to marry someone outside his extended family, and certainly not a pagan Canaanite woman. So Rebekah became the wife of Isaac. Rebekah and Isaac were cousins once removed because Isaac and Bethuel, Rebekah's father, were first cousins. Although Isaac was a generation older than Rebekah, not that many years would have separated them because Isaac was born when his mother Sarah was ninety. So the age difference between Rebekah and Isaac may have been as little as ten to fifteen years.

Isaac was sixty years old when Jacob and Esau were born (v26), so that means that Isaac and Rebekah were married for 20 years without any children. Now some people in our culture might say, "How great to be children-free for the first twenty years of your married life!" But that certainly was not the case in the culture of that time, because children were considered a great blessing from the Lord -- and rightly so! Children are a gift from the Lord. Psalm 127:3 says: *"Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, and the fruit of the womb is a reward."*

When it was apparent that Rebekah was barren, Isaac did the right thing -- he prayed about the situation. Before we go to our doctrinal points, let me share with you how the Lord used verse 25 in my life, in a humorous way. Verse 25 tells us that when Esau was born, he *"came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau.* When our daughter Catherine was born, she was red all over because she was crying loudly. I'll never forget my first glimpse of our daughter -- I was sure something was wrong because she was so red! But the Lord brought this verse about Esau to mind, so I thought, "Well, Esau was red all over, and he grew up to be normal. And I sure am glad that she doesn't look like a hairy garment!"

In this section of Genesis 25 we have two doctrinal points on the subject of prayer.

## **Doctrinal Points**

### **1. God's will is accomplished through answered prayer.**

*" Now Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived"(v21).* Wait a minute you say, was the birth of these boys answered prayer, or was it the sovereign pre-planned will of God being carried out? What's the answer? It was both! We know God's sovereign plans were being carried out because He had promised that a great nation would come through Abraham, and then through Isaac, and Jacob and Esau were the only children who were born to Isaac and Rebekah. But we also know that it was answered prayer, because verse 21 says, *" the LORD granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived."*

How does this work anyway? On the one hand, you have God's sovereign will, his pre-planned will being carried out, and yet you have answers to prayer. We can't completely comprehend how this works. We know that God has a sovereign pre-planned will. Ephesians 1:11 says: *"In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will."* God knows the end from the beginning. Everything is in His plan. God never has to go through the decision making process as we do, and yet God answers prayer. In fact you can say, God's will is accomplished through answered prayer.

Recently I was teaching a one-week course on how to interpret Scripture, and I asked a student named Jessica how she had decided to come and study the Bible. She told me that after she became a Christian a few years ago, she heard about this Bible school and she began to pray that she would be able to come and study the Bible.. Meanwhile her father, who was not a Christian, had some money set aside for her college education. When he heard that his daughter wanted to go to Bible school he said, "No way!" Because he was so antagonistic to Bible school, she planned to go to a secular college. However, she kept on praying that God would change her father's mind and she would be able to go to Bible school. Well, guess what? A few weeks before classes began, her father changed his mind and said, "You can go to Bible school if that is what you really want. Here's the money, you can go!"

God's sovereign will from eternity past was that Jessica go to that Bible school to study the Bible, but God also answered Jessica's prayers! The same is true in your life and in my life. God's will is accomplished through answered prayer.

## **2. God's will is revealed through answered prayer.**

*"But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If all is well, why am I like this?" So she went to inquire of the LORD" (v22).* Like Isaac, Rebekah did the right thing -- she went to the Lord in prayer. When Rebekah asked the Lord for insight into her problem, He gave her an answer. He told her that she was going to have twins, and that these boys would be the fathers of two nations. The two nations would not be equal, however, and the older son would serve the younger son.

When we have problems, we should follow Rebekah's example. Look at James 1:5: *"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."* The context of this promise is the various trials we face in life. We can go to the Lord and ask Him for wisdom as to why He has allowed certain things in our lives, things that we don't understand. He promises here that He will give us insight.

When the boys were born, there was a preview of what was to come. Jacob, the younger twin, was grasping Esau's heel. When God answered Rebekah's prayer, He revealed His will. It was the sovereign will of God that Jacob was chosen over Esau. It would be through Jacob that the nation of Israel would come. It would be through the lineage of Jacob that the Savior for all mankind would come.

In Romans 9:10-13 we read: *"And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac 11 (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), 12 it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." 13 As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."* The word "hated" here is not to be understood in the sense of an emotional hatred, but in reference to God's sovereign choice of Jacob over Esau. It could be said, relatively speaking, that God loved Jacob and did not love (or "hated") Esau. God revealed His sovereign will to Isaac and Rebekah as an answer to Rebekah's prayer. It was not the answer they expected, and it was certainly not the answer that Isaac wanted to hear. But God's will was revealed.

The same is true today. In answer to our prayers, God's will is revealed. The question is, are we willing to accept His will and submit to Him? Sometimes it is not easy! For example, suppose we are praying for the recovery of someone who is sick, and God answers our prayers by revealing that it is His will for that person *not* to be healed. That's not the answer we desired, and it's not easy to take, and it's not easy to understand, but sometimes that is God's will. Remember, God's will is revealed through answered prayer.

### **Practical Application**

#### **Don't play favorites with your children.**

*"So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents. 28 And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob" (v27-28).* Jacob and Esau were very different in their personalities and characteristics. Esau was a man of the fields; he became a skillful hunter. As a result, Isaac favored Esau because he liked the wild game that he hunted and brought home. Jacob was not as "macho" as Esau. He was a mild-mannered man who stayed closer to

home, and he was Rebekah's favorite son. So you see, Isaac and Rebekah "played favorites" with their children. This was wrong, and it definitely led to problems down the road. Don't play favorites with your children!

There's often a tendency for parents to have a "favorite" child. The athletic father, for example, may tend to favor the son or daughter who is more athletic over the child who doesn't like sports. If there are two daughters, the mother may tend to favor the daughter through whom she can best relive her younger years. There are many factors that naturally cause us to play favorites with our children. Don't let it happen! It will cause problems, both present and future. It will cause family friction. There will be bad fallout -- for sure! Don't play favorites with your children.

Each one of your children is different and each one is unique. Each child was given to you by the Lord, and is uniquely gifted and designed. It's up to us as parents to recognize and encourage the strengths and gifts and talents of each child. It's up to us to help develop that child for the glory of God. Don't play favorites with your children!