

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Our study tonight brings us to the end of the life of Abraham.

Even though he was not perfect in all he did.

Scriptures tell us that he was a man of faith.

Scriptures tell us the Abraham believed God and God considered him righteous.

We are given Abraham as an example to follow –

You see,

Abraham never lost sight of the eternal

Abraham had a real relationship with God

And Abraham demonstrated remarkable obedience

In the New Testament alone Abraham is mentioned over 70 different times.

Only Moses is mentioned more times than Abraham in the New Testament.

Regarding Abraham, James writes the following,

[Jas 2:23 NKJV] 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.

This evening, we will come to the end of Abraham's life. One third of the book of Genesis has been given to this incredible patriarch.

And even in his death, we will be reminded of God's faithfulness.

After all, in life, God had given Abraham the promise that his descendants would be like the stars in the sky and like the dust in the ground.

And, every night, as Abraham looked up into the sky and saw the stars in the sky, he was reminded of the promise of God, and during the day as he walked and he saw the dust everywhere, he would also be reminded of the promise of God.

The torch will now be passed to Isaac and then to Jacob. And we will see them learn the same lessons that Abraham had to learn in life.

Let's pray...

[Gen 25:1-18 NKJV] 1 Abraham again took a wife, and her name [was] **Keturah**. 2 And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. 3 Jokshan begot Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim. 4 And the sons of Midian [were] Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abidah, and Eldaah. All these [were] the children of Keturah. 5 And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. 6 But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east. 7 This [is] the sum of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: one hundred and seventy-five years. 8 Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full [of years], and was gathered to his people. 9 And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, which [is] before Mamre, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, 10 the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth. There Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife. 11 And it came to pass, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac dwelt at Beer Lahai Roi. 12 Now this [is] the genealogy of

Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maidservant, bore to Abraham. 13 And these [were] the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, 14 Mishma, Dumah, Massa, 15 Hadar, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. 16 These [were] the sons of Ishmael and these [were] their names, by their towns and their settlements, twelve princes according to their nations. 17 These [were] the years of the life of Ishmael: one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people. 18 (They dwelt from Havilah as far as Shur, which [is] east of Egypt as you go toward Assyria.) He died in the presence of all his brethren.

So we begin our study with Abraham remarrying.

He is 140 years old – Sarah has passed away. He has been a widow now for about twenty years – and he decides to get remarried.

He married Keturah – and her name means “incense” or “spice”.

Not only does he get remarried, he has an additional six children – at 140 years old.

Many of these names of these sons are associated with various Arab tribes. Median became the father of the Midianites – and later on we will see that Joseph is sold by his brothers to Midianite traders who took Joseph into Egypt.

Look at verse 5 again,

5 And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac.

Despite the family getting much larger, Abraham now has a total of 8 sons; Isaac, Ishmael and Keturah's sons.

Notice how Abraham is still obedient to the will of God and recognizes that Isaac is the son through whom the promise was made.

He still gives gifts to the other sons but he also sends them away because he didn't want them being near the inheritance that belonged to Isaac – the deed to the land of the Canaanites, the choice herds – all belonged to Isaac and Abraham responded by giving all to Isaac.

Then in verse seven it says that Abraham lived up to the age of 175 –

Abraham was alive for the births of Jacob and Esau –

8 Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full [of years], and was gathered to his people.

So here in verse eight, we're even given the reason for his death.

Well what did Abraham die of? He was old!

God determined that Abraham's time on earth had come to an end – so he died.

Now in my Bible and perhaps in yours too, the words 'of years' are italicized, are they? That's because in the original Hebrew 'of years' isn't there.

It's thought to be implied by the text.

It simply says, 'Abraham died full.'

Isn't that a great way to die?

I'm full. I'm satisfied. And by the way, the term can sometimes carry a more than quantity but quality of life. He died full.

God had blessed him. He was full; he was rich, he was enriched, he was satisfied.

He had walked with the Lord! He had walked with the Lord for over 100 years in a relationship. Then he died full. And he was gathered together with his people.

King Solomon in the book of Proverbs provides us with the following,

[Pro 16:31 NKJV] 31 The silver-haired head [is] a crown of glory, [If] it is found in the way of righteousness.

Now, as a result of the death of Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael reunite to bury their father.

From the time that Abraham forced Hagar and Ishmael to leave; it's been about 72 years. Remember, Abraham kicked both of them out after the party that Abraham threw because Isaac had been weaned.

So it is possible that Ishmael and Isaac haven't seen each other during this time.

So the two brothers bury Abraham in the same cave that Sarah was buried in and then the scriptures demonstrate God's faithfulness again by providing us with the descendants of Ishmael in verses 12-17.

God had blessed Ishmael just like He had promised Abraham. Abraham did become the father of many nations – just like God had promised him.

And then verse 17 tells us that Ishmael died at the age of 137 years.

This closes the book of Ishmael and his descendants.

Now, the scriptures will now focus on Isaac and his descendants.

[Gen 25:19-26 NKJV] 19 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.

Twenty years had come and gone from the time that Isaac married Rebekah and there were still no children.

This is very similar to what had happened with Abraham and Sarah. Now, we are never told the age of Rebekah – the only woman whose age is given in scripture is Sarah.

Isaac has no children and Ishmael had 12 sons already.

Had Abraham kicked out the wrong son?

However, unlike his father – who took Hagar, Isaac doesn't rely on self,

Isaac prays for Rebekah. This is what Abraham should have done years

earlier – and here we see Isaac doing it.

It's a challenging thing to pray for the same thing over and over again without seeing anything happen.

We go through all sorts of inner questions and turmoil.

Are we praying for the right thing? Should we quit? Does God even still care?

However, Isaac continued to pray.

Sometimes as we continue to pray for the same thing, we realize that our motives aren't right.

We've been praying for that big promotion at work, but the more we ask, the more we realize that it's just about your pride.

We've been praying for God to change our spouse so they'll stop being a nag about things, when we realize they actually have a point and we're the one that needs changing.

Isaac continued to pray.

He didn't give up on his wife just because it seemed like she had a problem.

He prayed for her.

Here's a husband praying for his wife and here's why he's praying: because she was barren. She can't have children. "And the Lord granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived."

Now children were always seen as a direct blessing of God.

[Psa 127:3 NKJV] 3 Behold, children [are] a heritage from the LORD, The fruit of the womb [is] a reward.

I like the way that the New Living Translation put is -

[Psa 127:3 NLT] 3 Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a reward from him.

So God answers Isaac's prayers and Rebekah becomes pregnant. Not only does she become pregnant, she is expecting twins.

[Gen 25:22 NKJV] 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.

The word that is used here for struggle in the Hebrew means to crush or oppress. This was going inside Rebekah during her pregnancy.

So here at the end of verse 22, we find out that Isaac wasn't the only person that prayed in the family – now we have Rebekah praying to find out what is going on inside of her.

[Gen 25:23 NKJV] 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."

The Lord responds to Rebekah and tells her that she is indeed pregnant with twins. That she is going to deliver the twins and that each of them will become a great nation.

However, the Lord also reveals to her that the youngest will serve the oldest.

This goes against everything that was culturally normal during this time.

It was the oldest who got the double portion of the inheritance.

It was the oldest who became the spiritual leader of the house upon the death of the father.

But God tells Rebekah that the older shall serve the younger.

Throughout scripture God demonstrates that His election isn't dependent upon social norms. That His criteria for choosing someone is very different than the worlds.

- Seth was not a firstborn
- Isaac was not a firstborn
- Jacob was not a first born
- Joseph was the youngest child at the time when he was given the dream that his brothers were going to bow down to him.
- David was the smallest child

You see there is a reason that God does this.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 1

[1Cor 1:26-29 NKJV] 26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, [are called]. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base

things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.

So nine months have come and gone – Rebekah is ready to give birth and the first child that came out was red and hairy, so they named him Chewbaca! – they actually named him Esau which means “hairy”

Then, the brother came out and they named him Jacob which means “heal catcher”

[Gen 25:27-28 NKJV] 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.

So Esau and Jacob grow older and just like many siblings they are very different from each other.

Now, verse 27 tells us that Esau was a hunter, there are only two references of hunters in scripture – Esau and Nimrod – and we studied him back in Genesis (He is the one that built the great cities of Babel where they build the tower of Babel as well as Nineveh)

Jacob is described as mild -

The Hebrew word for mild actually means that he was complete or perfect. Upright would have been a better translation.

However, we also start to see the parents playing favorites, Isaac with Esau and Rebekah with Jacob.

Now, earlier in the chapter, we saw that Abraham was obedient to the will of God as he gave all to Isaac.

Here, God has already revealed to Rebekah that Esau was going to serve Jacob – yet Isaac favors Esau simply because enjoys eating his barbeque.

As we studied the life of Abraham, we saw his faith continue to grow culminating with the incident on Mt. Moriah.

Isaac also demonstrated his faith that day on Mt. Moriah as he allowed Abraham to bind him. However, his obedience to the will of God will come into question over the next few chapters.

Esau represents the flesh. We had already been told that he was a hunter. However, Esau was not a hunter out of necessity.

Remember, Isaac had inherited all from Abraham – they were rich.

Esau purpose was to pursue the desires of the flesh – later on, we will see him fulfill his desires by the women he chooses to marry.

29 Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he [was] weary. 30 And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red [stew], for I [am] weary." Therefore his name was called Edom. 31 But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day." 32 And Esau said, "Look, I [am] about to die; so what [is] this birthright to me?" 33 Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. 34 And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised [his] birthright.

Our study ends this evening with Jacob deceiving Esau into selling him his birthright for a bowl of lentil soup.

Now, we must remember that every single word in the scriptures is inspired by the Holy Spirit. So, there is a reason that the portion that we just read, indicates that Jacob was cooking a stew. Not just any stew, but a red stew.

Remember, Esau was red at birth – it appears that Jacob was cooking Esau's favorite stew.

This appears to be all planned by Jacob.

Esau gets home from a long day in the field and he smells the sweet aroma of his favorite stew.

He comes over to Jacob's tent and asks for stew and Jacob wants his birthright in return.

"I will give you stew for your birthright"

Now, Esau because he just wants to feed the flesh and because he only cares about the now, he agrees and sells the birthright for a bowl of the lentils.

Esau wasn't really about to die – if he was really about to die, he wouldn't have jumped up after he ate the lentils and taken off. He could have had one of the servants bring him something else instead of selling his birthright.

But because he wanted the red stew, he sold his birthright.

Now, before we start criticizing Esau for making such a dumb decision, think about all the decisions that we make without counting the consequences.

People that commit adultery, why do they do it? They want to satisfy the flesh – not only do they want to satisfy it, they want to satisfy it now.

They want to eat their bowl of stew without considering the consequences, just like Esau.

And we can substitute adultery with any other sin.

Think about all those people who reject Jesus Christ because they choose their red stew. Many of them are only living in the now – they have placed eternity in the back burner.

The scriptures do not look kindly on the decision that Esau made.

Turn with me to the book of Hebrews

[Heb 12:14-17 NKJV] 14 Pursue peace with all [people], and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: 15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; 16 lest there [be] any fornicator or profane person like Esau, **who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 17 For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.**

Jacob is never criticized for what he did to Esau by God.

One of the things that is overlooked is that Jacob didn't have to do this. He didn't have to resort to deception in order to acquire the birthright.

God had already elected Jacob over Esau.

[Eph 1:3-6 NKJV] 3 Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly [places] in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by

Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

We have been chosen, just like Jacob and Isaac – however, God has still given to us free will. We decide if we are going to forgo our inheritance.

Do we keep our eyes on the eternal? or do sell it for a bowl of stew?

That is the decision that we have to make.

Let's pray...



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