

## Genesis 25:19 - 26 Bible Study

Genesis 25 begins the story of two brothers, Jacob and Esau. Their legacy speaks to the sovereignty of God in the life of faith. This account of their birth will be written about later by the Apostle Paul in the ninth chapter of Romans. Let's take a look:

*25:19 This is the account of Isaac, the son of Abraham. Abraham became the father of Isaac. 25:20 When Isaac was forty years old, he married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean. 25:21 Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife because she was childless. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. 25:22 But the children struggled inside her, and she said, "If it is going to be like this, I'm not so sure I want to be pregnant!" So she asked the Lord, 25:23 and the Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples will be separated from within you. One people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."*

As we read the Old Testament, we must keep in mind that it is a preparation for the coming of Christ. The stories are not just the stories of the lives of faith but are preparing the people of God and the hearts of the people for the gospel of grace. That's why it is important to always return to the gospel. In order to do that here, we have to take a look at Romans 9:10 – 18:

*9:10 Not only that, but when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our ancestor Isaac— 9:11 even before they were born or had done anything good or bad (so that God's purpose in election would stand, not by works but by his calling)—9:12 it was said to her, "**The older will serve the younger,**" 9:13 just as it is written: "**Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.**" 9:14 What shall we say then? Is there injustice with God? Absolutely not! 9:15 For he says to Moses: "**I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.**" 9:16 So then, it does not depend on human desire or exertion, but on God who shows mercy. 9:17 For the scripture says to Pharaoh: "**For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may demonstrate my power in you, and that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.**" 9:18 So then, God has mercy on whom he chooses to have mercy, and he hardens whom he chooses to harden. (Romans 9:10-18)*

*What do we learn about salvation and our self-efforts in this passage? (see verse 16)*

*25:24 When the time came for Rebekah to give birth, there were twins in her womb. 25:25 The first came out reddish all over, like a hairy garment, so they named him Esau. 25:26 When his brother came out with his hand clutching Esau's heel, they named him Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when they were born. 25:27 When the boys grew up, Esau became a skilled hunter, a man of the open fields, but Jacob was an even-tempered man, living in tents. 25:28 Isaac loved Esau because he had a taste for fresh 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?"<sup>33</sup> Jacob said, "Swear to me now." So, he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob.<sup>34</sup> Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus, Esau despised his birthright. (Genesis 25:24-34)*

Jacob came into this earth a heel-grabber, a fighter, and he continues to grab at his brother's heel. Though he is open and honest about what he is doing, he is unscrupulous with his brother. In Hebrews 12:16, we see that Esau's choice to sell his birthright is unholy: *"And see to it that no one becomes an immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal."*

*What does Jacob's scheme tell you about his faith in the revelation that his elder brother would serve him?*

Someone once said that "faith is living without scheming!" Repeatedly we see the schemes of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as they navigate their lives of faith. *What does this obvious failure on the part of the progenitors of our faith tell us about the grace of God?*

*In what ways do you find yourself scheming to get the promises of God? Promises of protection, provision, salvation, forgiveness, love?*

*2 Timothy 2:13 says, "If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, since he cannot deny himself." God made a covenant with Abraham. He promised Himself to His people, yet the line of Abraham has repeatedly failed to believe. We have all failed to believe at one time or another, and this is at the heart of the gospel; God is faithful, we are not. Thankfully, our salvation does not rest on our faithfulness, but His. The gospel message repeatedly reminds us that there "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1). *Is there an area in your life where you accuse yourself of failure? Where you refuse to accept the kindness, grace and forgiveness of God?**

Remind yourself that His grace is sufficient today. You are a part of the human race. We all have sinned and will continue to sin, but God's grace is sufficient. His promises are permanent, they cannot be shaken.

## **Genesis 26**

Our children tend to inherit more than our looks, they also can inherit our behaviors, our fears and our doubts, and that's just what we see in the life of Isaac and his children. Abraham is now dead, Esau is out of the picture and Isaac is carrying on his father's legacy. Chapter 26 starts out with something of a déjà-vu. As you read, notice the similarities between Genesis 12:10 and Genesis 20 and this chapter.

*There was a famine in the land, subsequent to the earlier famine that occurred in the days of Abraham. Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines at Gerar. 26:2 The Lord appeared to Isaac and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; settle down in the land that I will point out to you. 26:3 Stay in this land. Then I will be with you and will bless you, for I will give all these lands to you and to your descendants, and I will fulfill the solemn promise I made to your father Abraham. 26:4 I will multiply your descendants so they will be as numerous as the stars in the sky, and I will give them all these lands. All the nations of the earth will pronounce blessings on one another using the name of your descendants. 26:5 All this will come to pass because Abraham obeyed me and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." 26:6 So Isaac settled in Gerar. (Genesis 26:1-6)*

Why do you think that scripture would be so deliberate as to tell us these striking similarities between Abraham and Isaac; The famine, Gerar, giving all the land to the descendants, etc.?

As you read the next passage, notice the similarities between it and Genesis 20:

*26:7 When the men of that place asked him about his wife, he replied, "She is my sister." He was afraid to say, "She is my wife," for he thought to himself, "The men of this place will kill me to get Rebekah because she is very beautiful." 26:8 After Isaac had been there a long time, Abimelech king of the Philistines happened to look out a window and observed Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah. 26:9 So Abimelech summoned Isaac and said, "She is really your wife! Why did you say, 'She is my sister'?" Isaac replied, "Because I thought someone might kill me to get her." 26:10 Then Abimelech exclaimed, "What in the world have you done to us? One of the men might easily have had sexual relations with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us!" 26:11 So Abimelech commanded all the people, "Whoever touches this man or his wife will surely be put to death." (Genesis 26:7-11)*

What does Isaac calling his wife his sister say about his faith?

Both the father of the Israelites and his son received the promised blessing from the Lord and in fear gave up the very women who would be the mothers of their nation. *It can be easy to see these reactions and scoff, but if you are honest with yourself, can you remember a time when out of fear you attempted to protect yourself rather than trusting in the Lord's protection? Why do you think we tend to believe we have to help God out?*

*26:12 When Isaac planted in that land, he reaped in the same year a hundred times what he had sown, because the Lord blessed him. 26:13 The man became wealthy. His influence continued to grow until he became very prominent. 26:14 He had so many sheep and cattle and such a great household of servants that the Philistines became jealous of him. 26:15 So the Philistines took dirt and filled up all the wells that his father's servants had dug back in the days of his father Abraham.*

*26:16 Then Abimelech said to Isaac, "Leave us and go elsewhere, for you have become much more powerful than we are." 26:17 So Isaac left there and settled in the Gerar Valley. 26:18 Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug back in the days of his father Abraham, for the Philistines had stopped them up after Abraham died. Isaac gave these wells the same names his father had given them. (Genesis 26:12-18)*

Here we see Isaac's life flourishing in the same way his father's did, unfortunately life is not free from trouble for the heir to the promise. Back in Genesis 21:22-34, Abraham dug some wells. Wells are an important motif in Genesis, symbolizing the divine blessing of God in the form of abundant water in the midst of the desert. *What do you notice is happening to the wells in this passage? (see verses 15 and 18)*

*What do these happenings tell you about God's promises in light of the enemies attempts to destroy them?*

*The inheritance that Isaac receives is in the hands of God and not man, just as our inheritance is in the hand of God. Ephesians 1:11 is a beautiful reminder of the power of God to do what God has promised to do for us in the same way he made promise to Abraham and his offspring:*

*"In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will," (Ephesians 1:11)*

In this chapter, God goes on to reveal the permanence of his promises and the persistence of his power. Let's take a look:

*26:19 When Isaac's servants dug in the valley and discovered a well with fresh flowing water there, 26:20 the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water belongs to us!" So Isaac named the well Esek because they argued with him about it. 26:21 His servants dug another well, but they quarreled over it too, so Isaac named it Sitnah. 26:22 Then he moved away from there and dug another well. They did not quarrel over it, so Isaac named it Rehoboth, saying, "For now the Lord has made room for us, and we will prosper in the land." 26:23 From there Isaac went up to Beer Sheba. 26:24 The Lord appeared to him that night and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham." 26:25 Then Isaac built an altar there and worshiped the Lord. He pitched his tent there, and his servants dug a well. (Genesis 26:19-25)*

Although God promised land to Abraham and Isaac, the people of the land don't seem to be in agreement. Arguments abound over who owns the land and its wells. *From what God says to Isaac, what can you say about Isaac's reaction to the quarreling over water and land? (notice what God says to him in verse 24)*

God continues to reinforce to Isaac that though it might not look like it, He is with Him and He will bless him. These words are a confirmation of the Abrahamic Covenant. *What is the response of both Abraham and Isaac to this promise? (see verses 26:25 and 12:7-8)*

Isaac has separated himself from the Philistines in verse 23. Now we see Abimelech come to Isaac:

*26:26 Now Abimelech had come to him from Gerar along with Ahuzzah his friend and Phicol the commander of his army. 26:27 Isaac asked them, "Why have you come to me? You hate me and sent me away from you." 26:28 They replied, "We could plainly see that the Lord is with you. So, we decided there should be a pact between us—between us and you. Allow us to make a treaty with you 26:29 so that you will not do us any harm, just as we have not harmed you, but have always treated you well before sending you away in peace. Now you are blessed by the Lord." 26:30 So Isaac held a feast for them and they celebrated. 26:31 Early in the morning the men made a treaty with each other. Isaac sent them off; they separated on good terms. 26:32 That day Isaac's servants came and told him about the well they had dug. "We've found water," they reported. 26:33 So he named it Shibah; that is why the name of the city has been Beer Sheba to this day. (Genesis 26:26-32)*

George Williams summarizes this final scene this way, "It is when Isaac definitely separates himself from the men of Gerar that they come to him seeking blessing from God.... The Christian best helps the world when living in separation from it."

*What do you think it means today to live separate from the world?*

Notice, that what happens after Isaac makes this non-aggression pact with Abimelech. (see verse 31) This pact mirrors the one his father Abraham made with Abimelech in the same location. (see verse 21:31)

The final passage in this chapter reveals more about the life of Esau. Let's have a look:

*When Esau was forty years old, he took Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite to be his wife, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite, <sup>35</sup> and they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah. (Genesis 26:34-35)*

*Why do you think these marriages made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah?*

Hittites lived in the region promised to Abraham. They also lived the land of Canaan while the Israelites were in Egypt and were among the people who had to be driven out when Israel conquered Canaan under Joshua (Ex. 3:8, 17; Deut. 7:1; Judg. 3:5).<sup>1</sup> So, when Esau marries two Hittite women, he is what the Bible calls, unequally yoked. The New Testament talks about this idea in 2 Corinthians 6:14, "*Do not become partners with those who do not*

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<sup>1</sup> Ronald F. Youngblood, F. F. Bruce, and R. K. Harrison, Thomas Nelson Publishers, eds., [Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary](#) (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1995).

*believe, for what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship does light have with darkness?"*

*Why do you think God desires believers not be unequally yoked?*

*2 Corinthians 6 goes on to say this, "And what mutual agreement does the temple of God have with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, just as God said, "I will live in them and will walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore come out from their midst, and be separate," says the Lord, "and touch no unclean thing, and I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters," says the All-Powerful Lord." (2 Corinthians 6:16-18)*

*What does God promise to those of us who separate ourselves from the non-believers?*

This idea of separation from the world is a difficult one. We tend to love the world. It seems right, especially in light of sharing the gospel with the world but being in the world is different from being of the world. 1 John 2:15-17 sheds some light on this very important idea:

*2:15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him, 2:16 because all that is in the world (the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the arrogance produced by material possessions) is not from the Father but is from the world. 2:17 And the world is passing away with all its desires, but the person who does the will of God remains forever.*

*What do you notice in verse 16 that helps you understand what it means to be in the world but not of it?*

*This week check yourself as you go. Ask yourself if what you are doing or thinking is of the world. Are you setting yourself apart or are you joining in with the crowd? In what ways can you come out of the world and separate yourself to Christ and be different than the world?*