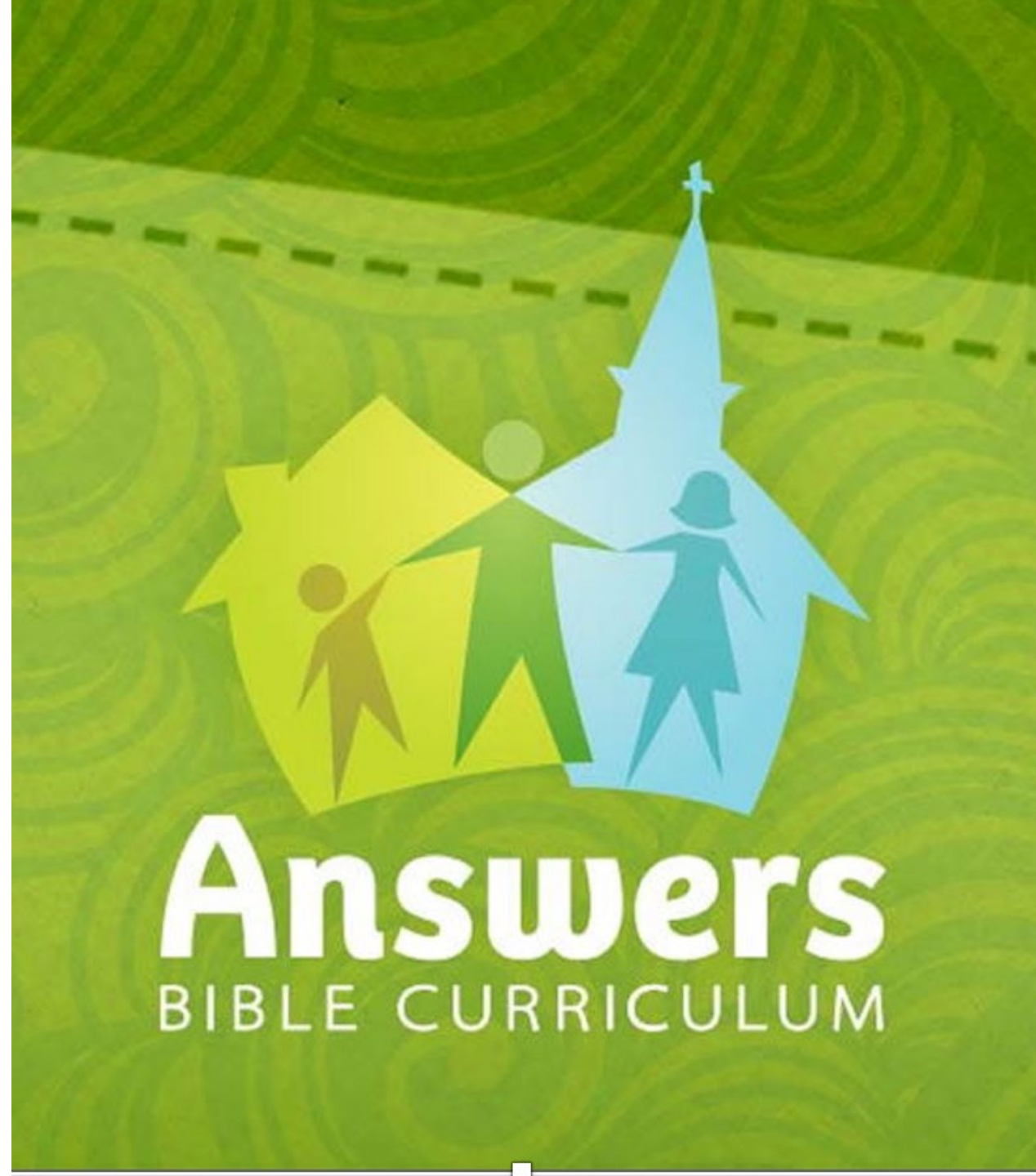
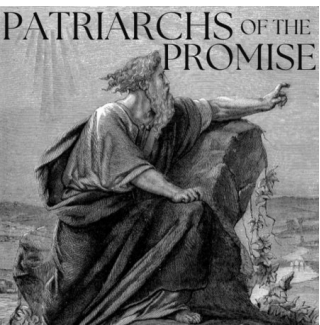


Lesson 8: Esau Sells His Birthright

March 9, 2025

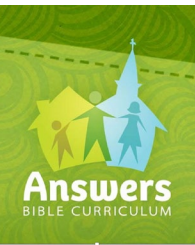


“So Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank and rose and went away. Thus Esau despised his birthright.”

(Genesis 25:34, LSB)

“...that also there be no sexually immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.”

(Hebrews 12:16-17, LSB)



Lesson Outline

- Scriptural and Historical Background
- Observation
- Interpretation / Correlation
- Application

Scriptural and Historical Background

Genesis 25, Hebrews 12:14-17

“Now it happened that when Abram was ninety-nine years old,

Yahweh appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; Walk before Me and be blameless, so that I may confirm My covenant between Me and you, And that I may multiply you exceedingly.” Then Abram fell on his face, and

God spoke with him, saying,

“As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you will be the father of a multitude of nations.”

(Genesis 17:1-4, LSB)

Scriptural and Historical Background

Genesis 25, Hebrews 12:14-17

““Listen to Me, you who pursue righteousness, Who seek Yahweh: Look to the rock from which you were hewn And to the quarry from which you were dug. “Look to Abraham your father And to Sarah who brought you forth through labor pains;

**When he was but one I called him,
Then I blessed him and multiplied him.””**

(Isaiah 51:1-2, LSB, with emphasis)

Scriptural and Historical Background

Genesis 25, Hebrews 12:14-17

- Promises of multiplication fulfilled:
 - Birth of Isaac
 - Jacob and Esau
 - Jacob and the tribes of Israel
 - Egypt and the Exodus
 - Inheriting the Land, Exile, and Return

Scriptural and Historical Background

Genesis 25, Hebrews 12:14-17

- Ishmael multiplied (vv. 12-18) while Isaac did not (vv.19-21)
- Isaac entreated Yahweh based on the promise (v.21) and Yahweh blessed
- Again there were 2 sons (v.24) to demonstrate God's choice and purpose

Scriptural and Historical Background

Genesis 25, Hebrews 12:14-17

“...in the times of the biblical patriarchs... the birthright bestowed significant privileges on the firstborn son. The firstborn son would assume the leadership and responsibilities of his father when he died. He also received a double portion of his father’s inheritance. A father could remove the birthright from his firstborn and give it to a younger son, but this was not typical.”

(AIG Study Guide)

Scriptural and Historical Background

Genesis 25, Hebrews 12:14-17

- God promised that the older would serve the younger (v.23)
- Jacob means ‘heel catcher’ (v.26), ‘deceiver’, or ‘supplanter’, a born sinful character.
- Even knowing God’s promise, Isaac and Rebecca chose personal favorites (v. 28)
- Human favoritism or manipulation would not thwart God’s purposes

Observation:

Genesis 25, Hebrews 12:14-17

- What was unique about Isaac and Rebekah's marriage?

Abraham had sent his servant Eliezer back to Haran to find a bride for Isaac from his family (not wanting Isaac to marry a pagan wife). God's providence brought Rebekah to the well at the moment Eliezer arrived. She willingly received the offer to marry Isaac, and Eliezer's prayer was answered

Observation: Genesis 25:1-6

Princes of Abraham's Activity

- Do you recognize any names in this list as the names of future societies?

Sheba and Midian and possibly Kedar. We will see the Midianites in the account of Joseph being sold into slavery

- What do you notice about the number of sons descended from Ishmael compared to Genesis 17:20?

God promised 12 princes from Ishmael, so here we have a confirmation of God being faithful to his promises.

Observation: Genesis 25:1-6

Princes of Abraham's Activity

- What is confirmed in these passages about the significance of Isaac and his inheritance?

The other sons were sent away, and Isaac was given Abraham's possessions in Canaan. Isaac was the son of promise and received the fullest part of Abraham's inheritance.

Observation: Genesis 25:7-18

Abraham's Death, Generations Continue

- How long did Abraham and Ishmael live?
v.7 - Abraham lived to 175
v.17 - Ishmael lived to 137
- Where did Abraham's descendants live?
His descendants lived in the western and northern parts of Arabia, Havilah, and Shur (Genesis 25:18). Verse 11 tells us that Isaac dwelt in Beer-lahai-roi (the place Hagar fled from Sarah, see 16:7-14)

Observation: Genesis 25:19-28

Twins are Born

- What do we learn about Rebekah's condition in this passage?
She was barren (a euphemism for not being able to have children).
- How did Isaac respond to her barrenness?
He asked the Lord to give his wife a child.
- How long were Isaac and Rebekah married when Isaac was born (see vv. 20, 26)?
20 years; Isaac aged from 40 to 60 years

Observation: Genesis 25:19-28

Twins are Born

- What prompted Rebekah's question in verse 22?
The babies inside of her were struggling with one another. She seemed to wonder whether her pregnancy was normal in light of the turmoil in her womb.
- What literary form is used in verse 23?
This is a poetic form with a parallel structure where line one relates to line two and line three relates to line four. Most Bibles will set the text in a different typeface.

Observation: Genesis 25:19-28

Twins are Born

- What did she do to get an answer to her question?
She went to ask God—she prayed. Some commentators suggest she sought out a prophet, but that is not indicated in the text.
- What things would be true about these twins?
1) They would grow into two nations/peoples, 2) they would be divided from one another, 3) one would be stronger than the other, 4) the older would serve the younger.

Observation: Genesis 25:19-28

Twins are Born

- Who was the first born and how was he described?
Esau. He was red and covered with hair, so much so that he appeared to be wearing a cloak.
- Who was the second born and how was he described?
Jacob. His behavior and not his appearance are described, Jacob grabbing on to Esau's heel. This would preview his future behavior as a deceiver or as the name can mean 'one who grabs the heel' or 'one who trips up'

Observation: Genesis 25:19-28

Twins are Born

- What do we learn about Esau as he grew up?
Esau was a skilled hunter who inhabited the fields (roamed about).
- What do we learn about Jacob as he grew up?
Jacob was quiet and dwelt in tents (stayed close to home).
- How did the parents treat the two boys?
Isaac favored Esau, while Rebekah favored Jacob.

Observation: Genesis 25:19-28

Twins are Born

- What parallels do you see between Isaac and Rebekah's experience and that of Abraham and Sarai?

Both couples knew that the Seed had been promised through them, and they both experienced a period of barrenness in waiting to become pregnant. Both Abraham and Isaac prayed to God and asked him to bring about his promise.

Interpretation / Correlation

Genesis 25:19-28

- God continues to be faithful to His promises.
- As is common in the O.T., names have specific and often prophetic meanings.

Interpretation / Correlation

Genesis 25:19-28

“The prophecy given to Rebekah makes it clear that the older son, Esau, would serve the younger, Jacob. The custom of the time was that the oldest son would receive the birthright—a claim to inherit the estate and majority of the father’s goods and land. Though written much later, Deuteronomy 21:17 identifies this as a double portion of the inheritance for the firstborn. Additionally, he would take the role of family patriarch at his father’s death. We saw this concept overturned when Isaac received the birthright even though Ishmael had been born first.”

(AIG Study Guide)

Observation: Genesis 25:29-34

The Deceiver's First Move

- How much time passed between verses 26 and 29?
We can't say for sure, but we know that the boys have grown up. It may even be that this event happened after what is described in chapter 26, and it was placed here to provide the clear connections between the birth account and this one.
- How does verse 29 support what we learned about the boys earlier?
Jacob was at home cooking a stew while Esau had been out in the field, apparently working to the point of exhaustion.

Observation: Genesis 25:29-34

The Deceiver's First Move

- What was Esau's request of Jacob?
To eat some of the red stew Jacob was cooking.
- What bargain did Jacob strike?
Jacob asked for Esau's birthright in exchange for a bowl of the stew.
- How did Esau respond?
He was willing to make the exchange, noting that if he died of starvation, his birthright would be no good to him.

Observation: Genesis 25:29-34

The Deceiver's First Move

- What did Jacob do to confirm the transaction?
He asked Esau to swear an oath, and he did.
- What does Esau's response reveal about his character?
It seems that Esau was willing to meet his immediate needs with little consideration for the future.
- What does the text reveal about Esau's attitude toward his birthright?
He despised it.

Observation: Genesis 25:29-34

The Deceiver's First Move

- How does the behavior of Jacob and Esau compare with the faith of their parents?

Similar as both manipulated towards a desired outcome.

Different in the sense that no faith was shown, although this would be seen later with Jacob.

Observation: Hebrews 12:14-17

The Godlessness of Esau

- Back to Genesis 25, what did the stew have to do with Esau's name?

The parenthetical statement indicates that Esau was also called "Edom." The Hebrew word "Edom" is related to the word "red" (admoni).

Observation: Hebrews 12:14-17

The Godlessness of Esau

- How does this connect to what we learned about Esau at his birth?

He was red and hairy when he was born (25:25). It seems his birth foreshadowed this event, and the Hebrew reader would have connected these ideas based on the linguistic similarities.

Observation: Hebrews 12:14-17

The Godlessness of Esau

- Why is Edom important?

The nation descended from Esau will be known as Edom through the Old Testament. For example, the Israelites wanted to pass through Edom but were denied (Numbers 20:14–18). Seir is another name associated with Edom (Genesis 36:8).

Interpretation / Correlation

Genesis 29:25-34, Hebrews 12:15-17

- What is the connection to what we just read and the fulfillment of the prophecy given to Rebekah?

As God had promised, the younger had gained a position above the older by buying the birthright. While it had not yet been completely fulfilled, we can see this was a first step toward Jacob ruling over Esau.

Interpretation / Correlation

Genesis 29:25-34, Hebrews 12:15-17

- How do we see Jacob fulfilling the name given to him as the “heel grabber”?

He used Esau’s impetuous character to basically trick him into selling his birthright for nothing. Jacob used a type of deception—he took advantage of his brother’s character flaw and his physical situation to gain an advantage.

Q & A

Application Questions

- We know that the things written in the Old Testament have been given to us as an example. What negative lessons can we learn from Esau and Jacob?
- How does the character of these two men compare to how Jesus acted while he was on the earth?
- What do we have at our disposal to help us when we are tempted to deceive others or to seek our own immediate satisfaction?
- How should you respond when you fail and find yourself giving in to indulge your flesh in a sinful way or acting deceptively toward others or manipulating them?