

20:20 Vision Ministries -- Devotions by Roger Browning

Week 5 (January 27-February 2, 2013)

The promises made to Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3) were featured on weeks 29 and 30 last year. God passed these blessings along to Abraham's son, Isaac (see week 39). In our study this week, we will see the same promises come to Jacob, Isaac's son.

Sunday -- January 27 (Genesis 25:19-26)

Just as Isaac's mother Sarah had trouble conceiving, so does his wife Rebekah (v. 21). God places twin boys in Rebekah's womb, answering her husband's prayer. She asks the Lord why the babies inside her are jostling so much (v. 22). His answer shows His **sovereignty** and **foreknowledge**: two nations are within her womb, but the younger boy and his nation (Israel) will have authority over his older brother and his nation (v. 23). The first boy to be born is hairy and red, so they name him Esau (v. 25). He also is known by the name Edom, which means red. The second son comes out grasping his brother's heel, so they name him Jacob (v. 26), meaning "he grasps the heel" or, literally, "he deceives." Our Sovereign Lord already knows the boy's personalities **before they are born**, which adds another pro-life truth to the devotions of weeks 3 and 4. He is awesome!

Monday -- January 28 (Genesis 25:27-34)

We see problems ahead because Isaac and Rebekah have favorite sons (v. 27-28). Jacob is a quiet man who likes to stay at home near his mother while Esau likes to roam the countryside looking for wild game to kill. God uses the boy's natural personalities to fulfill His promise to Rebekah (v. 23). Esau comes in famished from hunting and sees (and smells) some stew that his brother is cooking (v. 29-30). Jacob, the deceiver, seizes the opportunity to move up to the preferred son who will get 2/3 of his father's estate (v. 31). Esau chooses temporary gratification (v. 32-34) over long-term gain (see Hebrews 12:16). Many people make the same tragic choice today. Consequences linger for a long time!

Tuesday -- January 29 (Genesis 27:1-17)

The passing of a father's blessing is a sacred act among the Jews. In today's text, we see Isaac preparing to pass this blessing along to his oldest son, Esau (v. 1-4). Rebekah secretly listens to her husband's instructions to **his** favorite son (v. 5). She immediately devises a plan of deception and explains it to her younger son, Jacob (v. 6-10). **Her** favorite son points out the obvious physical difference between the two brothers (v. 11), expressing fear of a curse instead of a blessing (v. 12). Rebekah reassures Jacob that she is willing to take the curse upon herself (v. 13) so the two of them carry out their deceptive plan (v. 14-17). We will continue the story in tomorrow's devotions.

Wednesday -- January 30 (Genesis 27:18-40)

Jacob carries out his mother's plan to perfection (v. 18-24). Unfortunately, he blames the misdeed on God (v. 20) and lies blatantly to his father (v. 24). Isaac seems to be a bit suspicious (v. 21), but he is satisfied upon touching the hairy hands of his son (v. 22-23). He commands Jacob to bring some of the freshly cooked game to him and requests a kiss (v. 25-26). The closeness brings the aroma of Esau's clothes to Isaac's nostrils, eliminating any lingering doubts regarding his identity. He gives Jacob the blessing that is meant for his firstborn. Soon after his youngest son leaves with his father's blessing, Esau arrives from hunting with the game he has killed and cooked (v. 30-31). The rest of the story is a tragic reminder of the consequences of sinful decisions made in one's youth (v. 32-40).

Thursday -- January 31 (Genesis 27:41-46; 28:1-9)

Esau makes plans to kill his brother (v. 41). Rebekah hears about it and orders Jacob to flee to **her** brother's home in Haran (v. 42). She promises to send for him when Esau's fury subsides so that he can return home (v. 43-45). Isaac agrees with the plan (v. 46) and gives his son instructions before sending him away (28:1-5). As an act of spite, Esau marries the daughter of Ishmael (Abraham's son by Hagar, Sarah's maidservant). This further complicates the matter by mixing Jewish blood with the Arabs. Isn't it amazing how the hatred between the Jews and Arabs has been fueled for 4000 years? God's Word remains true: whoever blesses the Jews will be blessed and whoever curses them will be cursed (Genesis 12:3). Keep your eyes on the Mideast!

Friday -- February 1 (Genesis 28:10-22)

Today's text should be familiar to most of you. Using a stone for a pillow, Jacob rests because darkness delays his travel (v. 10-11). He has a dream in which he sees a stairway (ladder) reaching to heaven with angels ascending and descending on it (v. 12). God, Himself, stands above the ladder and repeats the same promise He had earlier made to Abraham and to Isaac (v. 13-14). He assures Jacob that His promises can be trusted fully (v. 15). That's the same concept I am trying to teach in my "Praying God's Promises" section of the website. Jacob acknowledges the Presence of the Lord (v. 16) and names the place Bethel, the house of God (v. 17-19). Then he makes the **first tithe pledge** (v. 20-22). I pray that you are trusting the Lord with your tithe as well!

Saturday -- February 2 (Genesis 29:1-14)

God's sovereign plan continues to unfold in today's study. Jacob arrives in Haran and meets some shepherds who know Rebekah's brother, Laban (v. 1-5). Our Lord's unseen hand leads Laban's daughter, Rachel, to the location at this exact time (v. 6). Don't miss a hidden Old Testament picture of Jesus' resurrection and the arrival of the Holy Spirit in v. 7-8! Jacob graciously rolls the heavy stone away so that Rachel can water her sheep. He identifies himself and **kisses her**, weeping aloud because of God's blessings. Verse 12 reveals that she runs home to **tell her father**, (The first girl I kissed did the same thing!) and Jacob is welcomed into Laban's home (v. 13-14). This sets the stage for next week's study on the fulfillment of God's original blessings to Abraham.