

## **Genesis 25:12-34 – The lives of Isaac, Jacob and Esau**

Remember the story so far: This is not a new story. It continues the story of the Bible: God has a plan to redeem the world. Especially, it continues the story of Abraham. God had appeared to Abraham, chosen him and given him great promises. He had said that he would become a great people, and receive the land of Canaan to live it, and be greatly blessed. The Messiah would come from that family. Why read about Isaac, Jacob and Esau? Because they were the sons of Abraham, and the promises were passed on to them. Salvation came to the world through their family. Abraham had now died; and Isaac was married to Rebekah.

Genesis 25:12-18 – Ishmael. Who was Ishmael? He was the son of Abraham through Hagar. Remember the time when they tried to bring forward God's promise their own way. Ishmael was not the son of the promise, and so the Bible has little to say about it. God gave him many earthly blessings, like he said – but he had no part in the covenant promises. So, we read little of him, though he was a great man. Many people in this world have great riches, but are not part of God's plan and shall soon be forgotten.

The birth of Jacob and Esau. Like Sarah, Rebekah also was barren. Apparent challenges to God's promises and covenant continue in each generation. Isaac sought God in prayer, and was answered. There were twins, and a prophecy was given. Both would be great nations. But, before they had done anything good or bad (see Romans 9), God had rejected the firstborn and chosen the second: for his own purposes and glory. God is God: he does all he pleases, and does not need to follow any of our ways or plans. Isaac and Rebekah, though, had a duty to love both fully and equally; their failure to do so (v28) brought many problems into the family.

Esau rejected his birth-right; Jacob showed his cunning (v27-34). Esau, as the first-born in this family, would naturally receive the promises, and a double portion of his father's wealth. But, he was a profane (godless, worldly-minded) man (Hebrews 12:16). He cared little for them, or for the distant future. To him, a good meal was something he could see and eat, but other things were doubtful. Jacob however was cunning and scheming. Perhaps he knew that God had chosen him – perhaps Rebekah had told him; we do not know. But, he knew what he wanted and he made a plan to get hold of it. Yet, it is not for us to try to bring about God's purposes with our own scheming and deceiving. We should rather do all things honestly, and then trust God to achieve what he has said. We should not despise holy things, or be worldly minded like Esau, or scheming like Jacob. But through all these human failures, the sovereign God was bringing his plans for Jesus Christ forward.