

- i. Jacob knows that the firstborn, by birthright, gets it. Yet he also knows that it can be transferred to another.
- ii. Esau asks, **“What good is a birthright to me?”** He completely misses the true value of Abraham's blessing.

The conflict between Jacob and Esau is secondary to the conflict between God's purposes and man's will to fight against it.

LIVE THE STORY

The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- How do we immediately see that Isaac, upon receiving Abraham's blessing, has to walk by faith?
- What is one of the key expressions of Isaac and Rebekah's dependence on the Lord in faith?
- What is a birthright? What does it have to do with the blessing? Who does God declare will receive the blessing?
- What contrast(s) do we see between Jacob and Esau's attitude toward the blessing? What do these tell us about our own desire for the blessing given Abraham?
- What are some of the things we learn in this text about birthright and blessing that are important to the Christian faith? What about the doctrine of election is important to the Christian faith?
- Do you want the blessing enough to wrestle an angel of God for it?
- What truths does Paul draw from these verses about God's election? How does what Paul say prevent an understanding of election that says that God looks down the corridor of time and sees those who will chose Him and therefore chooses them?

Truth for Understanding Your World (Part 17)

What Good is a Birthright to Me?

Jerry Cisar — September 25, 2016

Text: Genesis 25

Introduction (Genesis 25:27-34)

- A. *“What good is the birthright to me?”* (see also Hebrews 13:16-17)
- B. How the promise is received by the next generation

I. Faith and the Blessing (25:1-23)

- A. Faithfulness to the covenant is always concerned with passing on the covenant and blessing to the next generation.
 - i. *5-6 Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac... and sent [the brothers] away to the land of the east.*
 - ii. *11 After Abraham's death, God blessed his son Isaac, who then lived near Beer Lahai Roi.*
 - a) Genesis 26:1-5
 - b) Genesis 16:13-14
 - c) Isaac has received the blessing... but like Abraham, will have to walk by faith.
- B. Isaac and Rebekah Pray (25:21-23)
 - i. Ishmael has his 12 princes, Isaac's wife is barren. Isaac prays.

Every generation has to learn lessons of faith. Sarah was barren; Rebekah is barren. Barrenness wasn't a curse from the Lord, but an opportunity to grow in faith.

- ii. A troubled pregnancy – Rebekah also prays.

Rebekah gets insight into something very significant: insight into the sovereign choice of God in election. God has chosen the younger to receive the blessing... the blessing of the firstborn.

II. Election and the Blessing (Romans 9:8-13)

- A. Key truths Paul teaches about God's election from Genesis 25:23.
 - i. Romans 9:8 Abraham's offspring are not counted from physical descent.
 - ii. Romans 9:9-13 God's election determines the recipients of promise.
 - a) God's election of those who will be saved is not based on anything those individuals do.
 - b) Some want to define God's election as *“God looking down the corridor of time and seeing those who would choose Him, and therefore God chooses them, in election.”*
 - c) God chooses irrespective of anything which the child may or may not do in the future.
 - d) Malachi 1:2-3
 - The Lord “loving” Jacob, means he chose to give him the blessing of the inheritance, and the Lord “hating” Esau means that he did not give him what was seemingly his due as the firstborn. Rather he gave the inheritance of the firstborn to the second born, Jacob.

- B. God does not choose anybody based on their natural position or place.

- i. This has huge implications for the Christian faith.

- a) Hosea 11:1-2

- b) Matthew 2:15

- ii. All who are in Jesus comprise the chosen people of God. That is why Paul could say, *“it is not the children **by physical descent** who are God's children, but it is the **children of the promise** who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.”*

- iii. Galatians 3:7-9, 13-14, 29

- C. God chooses how He will distribute the blessing. He chooses who will be the firstborn, and gives the blessing to them. And He has chosen Jesus, and all who have faith in Him.

III. Desire and the Blessing (25:27-34)

- A. We know that the Lord chose Jacob; Isaac prefers Esau.

Adam fell because of what looked to be good for food; Noah sinned in drinking; Isaac's weakness appears to be his desire for tasty food! And in the next scene, it is food that once again becomes Esau's downfall.

- B. Esau and Jacob

- C. This story is about two young men, one who desperately wants the blessing, and the other... who thinks he has it...but doesn't value it.