

Episode: Genesis & Job Series No. 09

Narrator: Esau

Primary Scriptures: Genesis 27-27

Story Summary: Isaac and Rebecca; births of Esau and Jacob; final blessings of Isaac

Location: Canaan

Time: Isaac's birth is probably 2100 - 1900 BC

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Genesis 24:12; 25:5; 26:5, 26:28; 27:41

Abraham gets very old and has no grandchildren. His son, Isaac, through whom his descendants will be numbered, is single. They live in Canaan, surrounded by people who do not believe in God. So, Abraham sends his trusted servant, whose name is unknown, back to Abraham's home country to find a bride for Isaac, specifying that the bride must be from his own clan and his father's family.

Through prayer, the faithful servant is led to Rebecca, the granddaughter of Isaac's aunt. Through the giving of gifts and negotiation with Rebecca's brother and mother, the servant receives permission to take Rebecca back to Isaac. Rebecca's brother, Laban, will come back in the story many decades later.

Lucky Isaac! He receives Rebecca and comes to love her. Through virtually no effort of his own, at the age of forty he ends up with an awesome wife!

The Bible reveals that Abraham marries Keturah after Sarah dies. Through her, Abraham has many other children. While alive, he gave these children gifts, but then sent them away. At his death, Abraham leaves everything to Isaac...nothing to the others or to Ishmael. Isaac was his sole heir!

The Bible has a lot to tell about Isaac's father and Isaac's children, but little about Isaac. Genesis 26 seems to be almost a summary of his life. There is a famine in Canaan, but Isaac stays because of God's command; just like his father, Isaac worries about getting killed by men who want his beautiful wife, so he lies about her, gets caught, and ends up being rich, moving around the countryside getting older and richer.

Rebecca was childless for two decades. Then Isaac prayed on her behalf, and she became pregnant with fraternal twins. Esau was the first to come out. He was red and hairy. He came to love the outdoors and hunting. Esau was the favorite of his father. Jacob was the second to come out, while grasping Esau's heel. Jacob liked to stay indoors and was the favorite of his mother.

The Bible is not specific about its meaning, but the oldest son of each family had a "birthright." This very likely was the right to receive an inheritance double the amount of the other sons. Through a series of deceptions, Jacob stole Esau's birthright and his father's blessing. These deceptions would have consequences that reverberate through the ages. Surely God would punish Jacob and reward Esau for such behavior? Not so!

Discussion Questions:

1. Abraham entrusted his senior servant to get a wife for Isaac. Name some reasons why Abraham would send a servant instead of Isaac himself.
2. How did Abraham expect for his servant to get a wife for Isaac?
3. How did Abraham's servant choose Rebekah?
4. Although not specified in the servant's test, what two characteristics of Rebekah should have been appealing to Isaac?
5. What was Laban's relationship to Rebekah? What caught Laban's interest?
6. Was Abraham's servant a good negotiator?

1. For some unstated reason, Abraham was adamant that Isaac not go back; the servant had proven to have good judgment; v.7 has Abraham saying that God will provide an angel to lead him to the wife; Abraham might have thought the travel too dangerous for Isaac. 2. By sending 10 camels with presents on them. The 10 camels by themselves would have shown Abraham to be wealthy. Each camel could comfortably carry 300 pounds of gifts. Abraham probably suspected that his relatives were a little greedy. 3. By specifying a test that a woman would have to pass. 4. She was beautiful. Isaac's mother was beautiful, too, so he probably would have wanted that. She was a virgin, so their firstborn would certainly be by Isaac if he protected her. 5. Laban was Rebekah's brother. He was certainly intrigued by her gold nose ring and bracelets, which would have been very expensive gifts from a stranger. 6. Yes, in that he got what he wanted. No, in that he probably paid more than he needed.

Application Questions:

1. Do you have anybody in your life that you can trust as much as Abraham trusted his servant?
2. When Abraham died, he left everything to Isaac while his other children only got gifts from him while he was alive. Do you think it is fair to leave different amounts to children when a parent dies?
3. Do you perceive Isaac was a spoiled rich kid? How does your perception of Isaac influence your understanding of his parenting skills?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. According to Genesis 25:6, Abraham treated Isaac much better than his other children. Do you think that was fair?
2. Genesis 25:9 says Isaac and Ishmael buried their father together. How do you visualize the burial ceremony? Does Genesis 25:18 indicate anything to you about their relationship, and the relationship of their descendants?
3. Rebekah was told by God about her children before they were born. Do you think that influenced how she raised them?