The Patriarchs from the book of Genesis Part 22 – February 11, 2024

With input from https://www.bibleref.com/Genesis25; The Genesis Record by Henry Morris pages 240-245, 408; https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/edwards/edwards\_sovereignsalvation.html; https://hermeneutics.stackexchange.com/questions/74161/why-did-esau-prosper-before-israel-genesis-36-and-deteronomy-2

Last week we noted that the next major section of Genesis actually begins in the middle of chapter 25, verse 19, with the “generations of Isaac.” After covering genealogies of Abraham and Ishmael the focus is narrowed to Jacob and Esau. Today we will focus on the relationship between Jacob and Esau, not going in a verse by verse order, so that we can see some interesting ways God will work through both of these ‘blessed’ sons of Isaac.

We noted in **Hebrews 12:16-17:** *See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. 17 Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done.*

We saw in the next verses Esau and Jacob grow up and become drastically different from each other:

*27 When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob* ***was a civilized man, living in tents****. 28 Now Isaac loved Esau because he had a taste for game; but Rebekah loved Jacob.*

Notice at that time that civilized people lived in tents. Ironically today we see homeless encampments of people *living in tents*.

*29 When Jacob had cooked a stew one day, Esau came in from the field and he was exhausted; 30 and Esau said to Jacob, “Please let me have a mouthful of that red stuff there, for I am exhausted.” Therefore he was called Edom (which means red) by name (*so were the Edomites officially the first “Redskins?”)

*31 But Jacob said, “First sell me your birthright.” 32 Esau said, “Look, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?” 33 And Jacob said, “First swear to me”; so he swore an oath to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and got up and went on his way. So Esau despised his birthright.*

**Question 1: Why does God say in Malachi Chapter 1** (repeated in Romans 9) **that he hated Esau?**

(NKJV) The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi.

Israel Beloved of God

2 “I have loved you,” says the Lord.

“Yet you say, ‘In what way have You loved us?’

Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?”

Says the Lord.

“Yet Jacob I have loved;

3 But Esau I have hated,

And laid waste his mountains and his heritage

For the jackals of the wilderness.”

4 Even though Edom has said,

“We have been impoverished,

But we will return and build the desolate places,”

Thus says the Lord of hosts:

“They may build, but I will throw down;

They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness,

And the people against whom the Lord will have indignation forever.

5 Your eyes shall see,

And you shall say,

‘The Lord is magnified beyond the border of Israel.’

**Jonathon Edwards** breaks this down for us when he preaches on **Romans 9:18**:

***Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.***

The apostle Paul, in the beginning of this chapter, expresses his great concern and sorrow of heart for the nation of the Jews, who were rejected of God. This leads him to observe the difference which God made by election between some of the Jews and others, and between the bulk of that people and the Christian Gentiles. In speaking of this he enters into a more minute discussion of the sovereignty of God in electing some to eternal life, and rejecting others, than is found in any other part of the Bible; in the course of which he quotes several passages from the Old Testament, confirming this doctrine.

In the ninth verse he refers us to what God said to Abraham, showing his election of Isaac before Ishmael - 'For this is the word of promise; At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son:' then to what God had said to Rebecca, showing his election of Jacob before Esau; 'The elder shall serve the younger:' in the thirteenth verse, to a passage from Malachi, 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated:' in the fifteenth verse, to what God said to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion:' and the verse preceding the text, to what God says to Pharaoh, 'For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.'

In what the apostle says in the text, he seems to have respect especially to the two last-cited passages: to what God said to Moses in the fifteenth verse, and to what he said to Pharaoh in the verse immediately preceding. God said to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.' To this the apostle refers in the former part of the text. And we know how often it is said of Pharaoh, that God hardened his heart. And to this the apostle seems to have respect in the latter part of the text; 'and whom he will he harden.'

We may observe in the text God's different dealing with men. He has mercy on some, and hardens others. When God is here spoken of as hardening some of the children of men, it is not to be understood that God by any positive efficiency hardens any man's heart. There is no positive act in God, as though he put forth any power to harden the heart. To suppose any such thing would be to make God the immediate author of sin. God is said to harden men in two ways: by withholding the powerful influences of his Spirit, without which their hearts will remain hardened, and grow harder and harder; in this sense he hardens them, as he leaves them to hardness. And again, by ordering those things in his providence which, through the abuse of their corruption, become the occasion of their hardening. Thus God sends his word and ordinances to men which, by their abuse, prove an occasion of their hardening.

**Question 2: Why did Esau prosper before Jacob (Israel)** (Genesis 36 and Deuteronomy 2)?

**Deuteronomy 2: 1-7:**

*“Then we turned and set out for the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea, as the Lord spoke to me, and we circled Mount Seir for many days. 2 And the Lord spoke to me, saying, 3 ‘You have circled this mountain long enough. Now turn north, 4 and command the people, saying, “You are going to pass through the territory of your brothers the sons of Esau, who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. So be very careful; 5 do not provoke them, for I will not give you any of their land, not even as much as a footprint, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession.*

*6 You are to buy food from them with money so that you may eat, and you shall also purchase water from them with money so that you may drink. 7 For the Lord your God has blessed you in all that you have done; He has known your wandering through this great wilderness. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you; you have not lacked anything.”’*

One of the writers of https://hermeneutics.stackexchange.com explains it like this:

There are many ways to approach this highly interesting question, which I will outline here. First, God told Abram that his descendants would not inherit the Promised Land until “they [the Egyptians, as we learn later] shall afflict them [the Israelites, as they will come to be called] four hundred years” (Gen 15:13). It is enough simply to say that Jacob and his sons could not come into their own land, as Esau did, without rendering this prophecy false.

But look also at the reason God gave to Abram for the delay: “the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.” This suggests that the Lord would not approve the extirpation of whole peoples by his own chosen people, and the transference of their land, except as just punishment. Moreover, perhaps the Israelites could not serve as the instruments of his holy wrath unless they themselves had been properly humbled.

Throughout the narrative of Genesis and indeed the whole Pentateuch, God’s chosen representatives are made to wait, even as their relatives and enemies prosper. As Abram waited for an heir, his brother Nahor and his nephew Lot reproduced without difficulty. Hagar produced a son as soon as she tried, after Sarai waited decades. Isaac and Rebekah had to wait 20 years, as Ishmael began his family. Esau had at least three wives (quite possibly four) before Jacob had even one. In short, the Lord taught through these examples that the emergence of the seed through which he would fulfill his promise was dependent entirely upon his own good pleasure, in his own time.

Then, while Jacob was blessed with a large family and wealth like his father and grandfather, his brother had not only that, but made his sons into Dukes (or Chiefs) in a land given to them by God “for a possession” (Deut 2:5); soon after that, even as the Israelites toiled in slavery, Esau’s children “had destroyed them [the Horites of Seir] from before them, and dwelt in their stead” (Deut 2:12). Later, as the newly freed Israelites venture through Sinai and wander in the wilderness, they encounter tribes descended from Abraham and Isaac that are established and prosperous. The result was humiliating for a people promised by God to inherit a land flowing with milk and honey, through whom all the nations would be blessed.

Only later, in the Psalms and wisdom literature, is it stated explicitly and repeatedly that the Lord requires patience and humility, and that the prosperity of the wicked must be endured. *“Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; Do not get upset because of one who is successful in his way,*

*Because of the person who carries out wicked schemes.”* (Psalm 37:7)

Rather than "humiliated," the children of Israel were instead "humbled," and, it seems, deliberately so. Jacob and his sons were likely chastised for their various sins by their having finally to bow down to their brother, as according to his prophetic dreams, with their punishment even extending to the fourth generation by the captivity in Egypt. After that, they were humbled and shown to be wholly dependent upon the Lord, and upon their release, were a people better prepared to be “a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.” (Ex 19:6) This was a thing far greater and more difficult than the mere capture of a pagan nation like Seir; because it required that humility and patient faith in the providence of the Lord be instilled into an entire nation, it was not a thing that God chose to do quickly, not with the rough clay of fallen humanity.

Esau is mentioned next in the last verse of chapter 26 – **Genesis 26:34**:

*34 When Esau was forty years old he married Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite; 35 and they brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah.*

**Genesis 27:**

*Now it came about, when Isaac was old and his eyes were too dim to see, that he called his older son Esau and said to him, “My son.” And he said to him, “Here I am.” 2 Then Isaac said, “Behold now, I am old and I do not know the day of my death. 3 Now then, please take your gear, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me; 4 and prepare a delicious meal for me such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, so that my soul may bless you before I die.”*

*5 Now Rebekah was listening while Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game to bring home, 6 Rebekah said to her son Jacob, “Behold, I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, saying, 7 ‘Bring me some game and prepare a delicious meal for me, so that I may eat, and bless you in the presence of the Lord before my death.’ 8 So now, my son, listen to me as I command you. 9 Go now to the flock and bring me two choice young goats from there, so that I may prepare them as a delicious meal for your father, such as he loves. 10 Then you shall bring it to your father, that he may eat, so that he may bless you before his death.”*

*11 But Jacob said to his mother Rebekah, “Behold, my brother Esau is a hairy man and I am a smooth man. 12 Perhaps my father will touch me, then I will be like a deceiver in his sight, and I will bring upon myself a curse and not a blessing.” 13 But his mother said to him, “Your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get the goats for me.”*

*14 So he went and got them, and brought them to his mother; and his mother made a delicious meal such as his father loved. 15 Then Rebekah took the [g]best garments of her elder son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob. 16 And she put the skins of the young goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. 17 She also gave the delicious meal and the bread which she had made to her son Jacob.*

*18 Then he came to his father and said, “My father.” And he said, “Here I am. Who are you, my son?” 19 Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau your firstborn; I have done as you told me. Come now, sit and eat of my game, so that you may bless me.” 20 Isaac said to his son, “How is it that you have it so quickly, my son?” And he said, “Because the Lord your God made it come to me.”*

*21 Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Please come close, so that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not.” 22 So Jacob came close to his father Isaac, and he touched him and said, “The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” 23 And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau’s hands; so he blessed him.*

*24 And he said, “Are you really my son Esau?” And he said, “I am.” 25 So he said, “Bring it to me, and I will eat of my son’s game, that I may bless you.” And he brought it to him, and he ate; he also brought him wine and he drank. 26 Then his father Isaac said to him, “Please come close and kiss me, my son.” 27 So he came close and kissed him; and when he smelled the smell of his garments, he blessed him and said,*

*“See, the smell of my son*

*Is like the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed;*

*28 Now may God give you of the dew of heaven,*

*And of the fatness of the earth,*

*And an abundance of grain and new wine;*

*29 May peoples serve you,*

*And nations bow down to you;*

*Be master of your brothers,*

*And may your mother’s sons bow down to you.*

*Cursed be those who curse you,*

*And blessed be those who bless you.”*

The Stolen Blessing

*30 Now it came about, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had hardly gone out from the presence of his father Isaac, that his brother Esau came in from his hunting. 31 Then he also made a delicious meal, and brought it to his father; and he said to his father, “Let my father arise and eat of his son’s game, that you may bless me.”*

*32 His father Isaac said to him, “Who are you?” And he said, “I am your son, your firstborn, Esau.” 33 Then Isaac trembled violently, and said, “Who then was he who hunted game and brought it to me, so that I ate from all of it before you came, and blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed.” 34 When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, “Bless me, me as well, my father!”*

*35 And he said, “Your brother came deceitfully and has taken away your blessing.” 36 Then Esau said, “Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he has betrayed me these two times? He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing.” And he said, “Have you not reserved a blessing for me?” 37 But Isaac replied to Esau, “Behold, I have made him your master, and I have given to him all his relatives as servants; and with grain and new wine I have sustained him. What then can I do for you, my son?” 38 Esau said to his father, “Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me, me as well, my father.” So Esau raised his voice and wept.*

*39 Then his father Isaac answered and said to him,*

*“Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling,*

*And away from the dew of heaven from above.*

*40 And by your sword you shall live,*

*And you shall serve your brother;*

*But it shall come about when you become restless,*

*That you will break his yoke from your neck.”*

*41 So Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him; and Esau said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob.” 42 Now when the words of her elder son Esau were reported to Rebekah, she sent word and called her younger son Jacob, and said to him, “Behold your brother Esau is consoling himself concerning you by planning to kill you.*

*43 Now then, my son, obey my voice, and arise, flee to Haran, to my brother Laban! 44 Stay with him a few days, until your brother’s fury subsides, 45 until your brother’s anger against you subsides and he forgets what you did to him. Then I will send word and get you from there. Why should I lose you both in one day?”*

*46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, “I am tired of living because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife from the daughters of Heth like these from the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?”*

Rebekah does not tell Isaac her true fear that Esau would kill Jacob. Perhaps she doesn't think that would compel Isaac to act quickly enough. Perhaps she doesn't think Isaac would believe such a thing of his favorite son. Instead, Rebekah manipulates Isaac once again, this time by complaining about Esau's wives, the Hittite women who had made life bitter for both of them, according to Genesis 26:35. Now she says to Isaac colorfully that she hates her life because of those women. In fact, what good will her life even be if Jacob also marries one of the local women?

She does not come out and say directly that Isaac should send Jacob to her brother to find a wife. At least, we're not told that she does so. Still, in the following verses Isaac will send Jacob away for that very reason. Rebekah has accomplished her goal to get Jacob out of town. This, so far as Scripture is concerned, is the last time Rebekah will see Jacob (Genesis 27:43–44). His reunion with Isaac will happen many years later (Genesis 35:27), but no mention is made of his mother, who presumably has passed away, never again seeing her favorite son (Genesis 49:31).