

Genesis

Memorize the TRUTH!

Lesson 14
Isaac — Abraham's Heir
Genesis 25–26

If you belong to Christ,
then you are Abraham's seed,
and heirs according to the promise.
Galatians 3:29

Abraham's Legacy — Genesis 25:1-18

Day 1

1. How many sons of Abraham are listed in this passage?
2.
 - a. Which son was chosen to retain the birthright of God's covenant?
 - b. Who made that determination?
3.
 - a. How does the Bible describe Abraham at his death?
 - b. Where, and by whom, was he buried?
4. What is the most important lesson you have learned from the life of Abraham?

Learn the TRUTH!



Spiritual growth cannot be inherited; God must shape the lives of sinners with each new generation. Like his father Abraham, Isaac stumbles at the beginning, but he learns that *Yahweh's* faithfulness is independent of his own. God will do so whether or not Isaac merits such benefits. Thank God for His faithfulness to us.

Isaac's Twin Boys — Genesis 25:19-26

Day 2

5. What prompted Rebekah to "inquire of the Lord" during her pregnancy?
6.
 - a. What plan did God reveal for Rebekah's unborn sons at that time?
 - b. What does this plan tell us about God?

Romans 9:10-16

Despised Heritage
Genesis 25:27-34

Day 3

7. How do the first two verses of this passage help set the stage for a lifetime of conflict between Isaac's sons?

8. The birthright gave the firstborn son a double portion of the inheritance and leadership of the family after the father's death.
 - a. What was Esau's attitude toward his birthright?

 - b. What does his attitude reveal about his character?

9. What can we learn about Jacob from this account?

Promise and Failure
Genesis 26:1-11

Day 4

10.
 - a. Why did God appear to Isaac?

 - b. What specific promises to Abraham were to be passed down to Isaac?

 - c. What did God say about Abraham's life?

11.
 - a. With God's promises still fresh in his mind, what sinful decisions did Isaac still make?

 - b. What harm came because of this?

 - c. What harm comes from our sins?

God's Blessings to Isaac
Genesis 26:12-35

Day 5

12.
 - a. What was the evidence of God's blessing to Isaac?

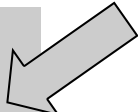
 - b. How did Isaac's neighbors react to this?

 - c. Besides economic provision, what other ways are God's blessings visible in a believer's life?

13. Why do you think Esau's choice of a wife caused his parents so much grief?

14. Why does our heavenly Father care whom we choose as a spouse or close friend?

Live the TRUTH!



Esau was living for instant gratification. He was willing to trade away his birthright — a double portion of his father's wealth and the promise that through his bloodline all people on earth would be blessed — for a bowl of red stew. Esau certainly had his values mixed up! Today, worldly success ranks above spirituality. Are you starving for our culture's "red stew," or are you desiring a relationship with God and an eternal inheritance as an heir with Christ Jesus?

Commentary Genesis Lesson 14

Abraham lives for 38 years after the death of Sarah and takes additional concubines. The only concubine named, Keturah, bears Abraham six sons. Abraham gives other sons monetary gifts and sends them away. He does this so it is clear that Isaac is his sole heir in keeping with divine instruction. The sons of Keturah and the other concubine(s) settle east of the Promised Land. Abraham dies at the advanced age of 175 years. His sons bury him in the Machpelah cave where Sarah has lain for 38 years.

Genesis now comes to a major turning point: The life of Abraham is over and a new era is beginning. Of the three major patriarchs, Isaac receives the smallest space by far; he primarily serves as the bridge between Abraham and Jacob.

Like Abraham, Isaac soon finds that his wife is barren. Recognizing that God is the one who opens and closes the womb, Isaac prays for Rebekah. He has to wait 20 years for his first child to arrive. When the pregnancy finally happens, she realizes that her pregnancy is not normal. She goes to “inquire of the Lord” regarding the cause. Rebekah may not have been surprised to learn that she was bearing twins. The youngsters would grow up, according to prophecy, to be the heads of two distinct nations which would not live in harmony. One family group would be more powerful, and the dominant family would be that of the younger son. When the twins are born, the first son to arrive is named *Esau*, which means *hairy*. Jacob enters the world grasping Esau’s heel. This is prophetic, suggesting that the boys would be competitive. *Jacob* means *supplanter* (Genesis 27:36) and is related to the Hebrew word for *heel*.

Two significant themes in Genesis find their most important expression in Isaac and Jacob. The first is “divine reversals,” where an older and stronger person is set aside in favor of a younger, weaker one. A second theme, the importance of God’s sovereign choice, is evident in each case. God reveals His plan to have compassion on a person without claim to a blessing, a secondary person who does not deserve certain benefits. God shows Himself to be a God of purpose and grace from the beginning.

By the time the twins are young adults, Esau is his father’s favorite and Jacob is Rebekah’s. We now read of an important encounter: Jacob is at home, cooking stew when Esau arrives home. The aroma of Jacob’s stew appeals to his hearty appetite. “Quick,” he insists, “Let me have some of that red stew!” Jacob is willing to satisfy Esau’s hunger, but for a steep price. He demands the sale of the birthright that was normally the inheritance of the elder son. Esau readily agrees. The sacred writer points forcibly to the true lesson of the story: “So Esau despised his birthright.”

Esau’s action is condemned in the New Testament as the action of a person who has no sense of what is genuinely valuable. The author of Hebrews wrote, “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. Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected” (Hebrews 12:16-17). Esau is willing to toss aside his future rewards for the sake of earthly comfort and short-term benefits.

Check It Out:

Isaac was rather ordinary, but he played an essential role in the redemption story. His one claim to fame was his willingness to be bound and laid on an altar as a boy. Do you ever feel as if God overlooked you when He was passing out the talents and abilities? The apostle Paul explains, “Brothers [and sisters] think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things ... so that no one may boast before Him” (1 Corinthians 1:26-29). All of us ordinary people have important roles to play in the ongoing redemption story.

God begins to draw Isaac to Himself, and — as in the case of his father — He starts by allowing a famine to reach the patriarch's home area. Isaac passes through Gerar, where years earlier, a king named Abimelech had taken Sarah into his harem and had rebuked Abraham for deceiving him. Now, another king named Abimelech does the same with Rebekah. (These Abimelechs were almost certainly not the same individual. *Abimelech*, which means *my father is king*, is a dynastic title.)

During the famine, God appears to Isaac and warns him against going to Egypt. Instead, he should dwell in the region controlled by Abimelech, where God will bless him. Although Isaac obeys God by staying in Gerar, he soon stumbles, as his father did, by not trusting God to protect him. Rebekah, a beautiful woman, attracts a great deal of attention from the local men. Fearful of losing his life if he admits that Rebekah is his wife, Isaac claims that she is his sister. Eventually the truth emerges. Abimelech then holds Isaac accountable for his deception. Like his father, this patriarch finds himself in the embarrassing position of receiving a moral rebuke from a man with a limited knowledge of God

A recurring pattern in Genesis is to find a patriarch misbehaving in one paragraph and then to find a reference to his prospering in the next. After the episode at Gerar, Isaac turns to farming. In the following year he reaps an enormous crop. God does not wait until His people have gained spiritual maturity before He blesses them — He does so whenever He pleases.

Isaac's wealth increases so much that the Philistines around Gerar envy him. They stop up the wells that Abraham's servants had dug long before. Abimelech himself urges Isaac to move away. Isaac moves repeatedly, re-digging old wells and digging new ones, all the while experiencing conflict over water rights. He eventually returns to his old camp at Beersheba. As Isaac wonders if he will ever be safe in the Land of Promise, God appears to him to confirm His covenant and encourage the patriarch to trust Him. Isaac commemorates the occasion by building an altar and calling on the name of God in worship. Soon Abimelech and his advisers appear at Isaac's tent. They recognize that God's hand is upon Isaac, and so they come to Beersheba to establish a treaty.

Esau is now 40 years old; his father Isaac was 40 when Abraham's servant brought Rebekah to be his bride. As two worshipers of God, they were to pass the covenant on to a new generation. Esau has no such concerns. Instead of marrying a follower of the living God, Esau chooses to marry two Hittite women, who would not have shared the patriarch's convictions. As a result, "they were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah" (26:35). Esau cares little for the spiritual side of life and even less for his birthright. He proves himself unworthy of the blessing that Jacob will steal from him in the next chapter.



"When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies live at peace with him" (Proverbs 16:7). Acting as a true patriarch, Isaac settles down in the land as instructed by God, then graciously moves away and digs new wells when jealous Philistines stop up the old ones. When the Lord appears to him, he immediately sets up an altar and worships. Even the Philistines recognize God's blessing on him and seek him out, asking for a peace treaty. Graciously, he serves a feast and the sides declare peace. That same day, Isaac's servants race in with news: "We've found water" (26:32)! God not only arranges for Isaac's enemies to live at peace with him, but provides the water Isaac needs. Let's choose to live lives pleasing to the Lord. This world needs peacemakers. Who knows, God may choose to pour out His blessings on our peacemaking efforts, too!



What do these verses teach about faith in God's promises?

Hebrews 10:23

Hebrews 12:28-29