

Monday Week 10 Isaac's Sons

Q37 Who were Isaac's sons?

A Isaac's sons were Jacob and Esau. Gen. 25:21-26

Gypsies are people who often don't have anywhere to call home, so they move from place to place. In one such family the mother died, leaving the father to raise five boys. They were lonely, and sad and lost. But when God looked in that tent, He saw what they would be. There were six preachers in that tent. A time came when the dad heard about Jesus. He put his trust in the truth of the Gospel and became a Christian. In time, all of his boys were preachers. The most famous of them was a great evangelist who was known around the world as Gypsy Smith.

God does great things through families. He was doing something great through Isaac, and it was through Isaac's family that God would bless the world. God can make you a great blessing also. Put your faith in Him.

Thinking Deeper

God specifically blessed the world through Isaac's son Jacob. Why not Esau? Some see the passage in Romans 9 which says "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" as evidence of unconditional election. Adam Clarke makes the significant point that this statement is a quotation from the Old Testament book of Malachi, where the Lord through the prophet spoke of the posterity of Jacob and the posterity of Esau. The description of Esau serving Jacob certainly did not fit the individuals, for that didn't happen in their personal lives. It did happen, though, in their national lives in the years when Malachi was prophesying. So if it did not apply to the individuals themselves, then the interpretation that Romans 9 teaches unconditional election must be rejected. God had His sovereign purpose for the nations, but individuals in those nations are free to make own choices.

We can safely conclude that we also as individuals have the responsibility to choose to believe God. It is not predetermined what we will do. God has not made us robots who only act according to a preset program. We are truly free moral agents.

With that said, it was in the sovereign foreknowledge of God to know through which son He would choose to bless the world. That was Jacob. God could see the end from the beginning, and determined that His purposes would be served through Jacob.

Tuesday Week 10 Isaac's Sons

Q38 What did Esau do with his birthright?

A Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of pottage. Gen. 25:29-34

Jesus told the story of a son who took his things from home and went away to have a good time. He left his home for what he thought was something better. But he ran out of money and ended up starving. He actually ate with the pigs. We know him as the prodigal son. He sold his birthright. He had a good home and a loving father but he gave it up for something that didn't last. He was like Esau who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage.

What seems like a good idea right now may actually be a very bad thing. It is always wise to consider the outcome before you make a decision. If you are in a Christian family, you have a wonderful birthright. Don't sell it for something that will not last.

Thinking Deeper

In Sociology classes in the 1970s, a student would learn some distinctions between upper class society and lower middle class rural society. The upper classes were more into delayed gratification, whereas lower classes were more likely to want instant gratification. This played out morally, where, according to the sociologists, lower classes were less likely to be virgins heading into marriage. If that was true then, it has certainly changed. "Generation Y" youth are characterized by instant gratification, and a rejection of the mores of the older generation. The results are not good. A study reported in 2008 that 25% of teenage girls had a sexually transmitted disease. Postmodernism has made lower middle classes of everyone, if we use the sociologists definitions of the 1970s.

This is not universally true. Those who honestly follow the Bible understand the value of delayed gratification. The ideals of virtue and purity are not affected by whether we are Baby Boomers, GenXers, or in Generation Y. God's ways are right, and following them brings blessings. Don't sell this wonderful birthright for a mess of postmodernist pottage.

Wednesday Week 10 Isaac's Sons

Q39 What did God promise to Isaac?

A God promised Isaac what he had promised to Abraham. Gen. 26:1-5

Davy wanted to know that he was a Christian. He saw how God was real to his father and mother. He saw the lives of other Christians that were different than worldly people. But was it for him? He tried to be good and read the Bible and pray. But he also wondered. One night he was in a prayer meeting at a camp in the Pennsylvania woods. As he prayed, he asked God to show him that he could know he was saved. A Bible verse came into his mind. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in..." He opened his heart and sensed something very special. Jesus really did come in! What God had done for his parents and other Godly people was for him, too.

God made promises to Abraham, and he confirmed them to Isaac. God shows that his love continues from generation to generation. What God has done for others, He will do for you. Trust Him.

Thinking Deeper

What does God want to perpetuate through you? If you are a "first generation" Christian, God wants you to "raise up the foundations of many generations." Abraham was the first of many generations who believed God and were therefore counted as righteous. The faith was passed on from one to another. But it had to start somewhere. If you are the first, you can be a great blessing to generations to come.

What of you who are in the line of blessings because one of those in your family tree was righteous? You are to find the faith of your fathers, keep it, and transfer it to the generations to come. "Teach it to your children, and your children's children." Jesus said that if you have been given much, much will be required of you. That means you are to keep the legacy going.

Many of us have been given the heritage of holiness. We believe God has an experience with Jesus for us that produces victory over sin in our daily lives. We believe God wants us to be a happy people because of His grace. We believe God wants us to be a reflection of the Lord Jesus Christ. What a great inheritance! Let's find it, keep it, and pass it on.

Thursday Week 10 Isaac's Sons

Q40 How did Jacob get the blessing from Isaac?

A Jacob deceived his father and got the blessing. Gen. 27:15-23

Nicholas snuck out of his house to play hockey when he was supposed to be studying. His father found out where he was and drove to the hockey rink. He watched his son play, then drove home. When Nicholas got home, his father asked him where he had been. "Over at my friend's house studying," he lied. "But I was at the hockey game and watched you play," said his father. Nicholas tried to trick his father. "Dad, you're not going to believe this, but there's a boy in school that looks just like me!" His dad was not deceived. He gave Nicholas a well-deserved whipping.

Jacob was a great deceiver. He got the blessing from his father because he acted like he was Esau. But there was One who saw through the deception. God did. Don't ever think you can hide from God. He knows everything.

Thinking Deeper

Neither Jacob nor Esau were great examples of virtue when they were young. Esau was willing to sell his birthright for a mess of pottage. Jacob was a deceitful conniver. Why would one of them be used to further God's plan? One thing we know is that God doesn't see what we see.

Raymond was a failure as a husband, as a father, and as a neighbor. He was an alcoholic who couldn't hold a steady job. His health failed and he had no self esteem. Would God use a man like him? God sees the end from the beginning. He saw what Raymond would be. And God called him. One day Raymond came to himself. He confessed that he was lost and needed a savior. He called on the Lord, and the Lord heard him. Raymond was saved that day. He became a new man, a loving husband, a good father, and a minister of the Gospel. Why did God use Raymond? Because he saw what he would become.

God saw what both Esau and Jacob would become. He saw that Esau would marry pagan wives and become the head of a wild nation. He saw that Jacob would eventually become a humble believer. He chose Jacob in spite of Jacob's failures because He knew what Jacob would become.

God knows you and what you will become. If you humble yourself, He will do great things in you.

Friday Week 10 Isaac's Sons

Review the Week's Questions

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The story of Peter Rabbit is about a family of rabbits. Flopsy, Mopsy and Cottontail obey their mother and are rewarded by a nice meal at the end of the day. But Peter disobeys and has a very scary adventure. He goes to Farmer McGregor's garden where he is chased by the farmer. In his escape he loses his nice new clothes and barely escapes with his life. That night, instead of eating the wonderful supper with his family, he is sick in bed. The story reminds us that there are good rewards for obedience and bad rewards for disobedience. But maybe there is more to the story. If Peter goes on like he started in the story, where will he end up? Maybe, like his father, in Farmer McGregor's wife's stew.

Jacob and Esau came from the same family, but ended up a lot different. What was the difference? Jacob finally loved and obeyed God. Esau seems to have forgotten God's ways. It is important to choose to live for God.

Thinking Deeper

Was it Isaac's fault that Esau went after pagan wives? Can we blame him for failing in raising his son? Some point to the proverb which says "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it" as a proof that Isaac failed Esau. In the same way it may be assumed that it is to Isaac's credit that Jacob turned out as a man of faith. Others say that the free will of each son must be considered. Think about what the proverb says. What can a parent do? "Train up a child." Just as dogs can be trained to do specific things, so too children can be trained to do certain things. Train a child how to wash hands and when that child is old, he will wash his hands. He won't depart from that training. The parent can train the child but cannot save the child. Only God can.

Training can give the child an advantage even spiritually because training can dispose a child to accept authority. But that is not what saves. Each child must come to the point of personal faith. That is not an issue of training. So we must reserve judgment on Isaac, just as we must reserve judgment on others who may have a wayward child. We should rather focus on the faith of Isaac who is remembered in Hebrews 11. "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come."

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