

A Nation is Born
Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston, NC
Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.
September 6, 2020

Diaspora XXV – The Church Scattered, Twenty-fifth Sunday

Text: Genesis 25 to 39

Purpose: The story of how God brought about the birth of the Nation of Israel covers a large portion of Genesis. To give a good overview of the entire story, it will be done in a “library” setting as the story is told.

One of my favorite times in elementary school, especially in the first and second grades, was when we used to go to the library. About once a week, our class would have a time to spend with the librarian. We didn't have an “accelerated reader” program. We didn't have computers to give us tests and give us points like students have now. We had old fashioned technology. It was the librarian. She would have a special book selected for us and she would read them with such enthusiasm and interest that we would become very engaged in the story.

Today, I wanted to do something very different. I wanted you to come to the library and hear a story about a man named Isaac. But the story doesn't end with Isaac. Isaac married a beautiful woman by the name of Rebecca. And they gave birth to twin boys – Esau and Jacob. But I am getting ahead of myself today. I want you come forward for the story of how “A Nation was Born.”

- The remainder of the Old Testament tells of God's wonderful story of love and forgiveness while on the other hand, we find the people of God continually reject God, ignore his laws, reject his guidelines. The pattern of being punished for rebellion and forgiveness when they repented repeated over and over.

What I have learned from today's "library" visit is that God is calling each of us to enter into a personal relationship with Him. God initiated His plan with the people of Israel, but it doesn't end there. Jesus Christ came as the fulfillment of the promised redeemer and Messiah. He came through the family line of Judah. Jesus Christ came to give us life and give it more abundantly.

Today, we are challenged to tell others of a sovereign God that loves us and forgives us. He is still active in our lives if we yield our stubborn will to His better plan and perfect peace.

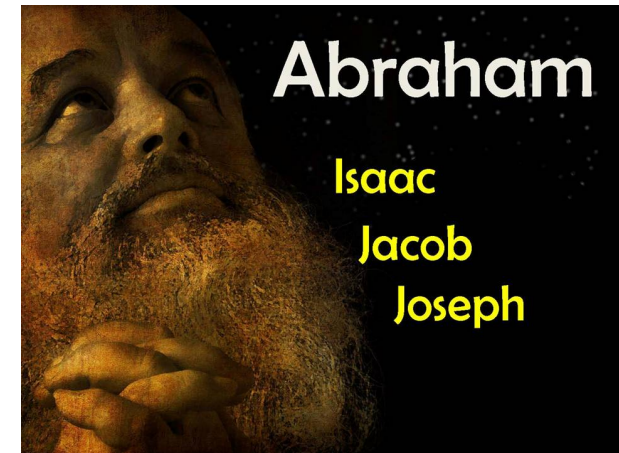
Who are you in today's story? Who do you identify with most in this story?

Are you like Isaac? Rebekah? Jacob? Esau? Laban?

Wherever you are today, God is waiting to turn your situation around.

LET US PRAY

A Nation is Born



The story of fulfillment of
God's Promise to Abraham.

The Life of Isaac, Jacob and
the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

Abraham Offers Isaac

Last week we gathered and examined the story of Abraham offering his son, Isaac, on an altar. It was there that God tested Abraham. God honored the faithfulness of Abraham and gave him a ram in the place of Isaac.



The Death of Sarah

The bible doesn't tell us how old Isaac was when his father took him up to Mt. Moriah. But we could assume he was a young child. When Isaac was 37 years old, his mother Sarah died. Everyone in the house was sad and grieved because of her death. Abraham went and purchased a place for Sarah to be buried in. Today this place is called Hebron. Many years later when Abraham, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah died, they too were buried in this same place.



**Tomb of the Patriarchs,
Hebron, Israel
(Cave of Machpelah)**



**Tomb of Abraham,
Hebron Israel**



**Tomb of Sarah, Hebron
Israel**

God, but refused to worship God. I cannot find any mention of Esau worshipping God.

Lastly, the sovereignty of God was never thwarted by the hand of evil men. Through it all, God was working out His plan to rise up a Godly nation - A nation of people that would be wholly dedicated to worshipping Him. The rest of God's story with this chosen people is recorded in the bible.

- At the end of the Book of Genesis, we see that 70 people were saved and preserved in Egypt during the coming famine.
- In Exodus we see the wanderings in the desert, the receiving of the Ten Commandments.
- In Leviticus we learn of God's dietary and social laws laid down for the benefit of the people.
- In Joshua we see the people of Israel coming back into the "Promised Land."
- In Judges we see the people taking possession of the land given to them by God.
- In Samuel and in Kings, we see the elevation of the Saul as King over Israel and David becoming their second king. We read of Solomon, David's son, building a temple there in Jerusalem as a place to worship God.

I am so glad we have come to the library to learn about “The Birth of a Nation.”

But there are some things we can learn from this today.

First, we see that God does keep His promises. God promised Abraham that his descendents would be as numerous as the stars in the sky and as plenteous as the sand on the seashore. Our God is One that goes beyond one generation. He is the God of all of history. He rules and reigns over all His creation.

Secondly, we see that God is interested in the details of life. Like who we should marry, where we should live, or what our vocation should be. In Isaac’s life, we see God working out the details and choosing Rebekah as his wife. In Jacob’s life, we see God allowing him to live and work for Laban. The trickster Jacob had met his match when he agreed to work for Laban for his wife. In both instances, God worked out His plan in His own time. The birth of a nation came about through circumstances that may not seem quite right. But God worked it all out for His own purposes.

Thirdly, we can see playing favorites in the family caused the family of Jacob and Esau to be separated for over 20 years. In the end, they did reunite and “bury the hatchet.” The primary reason Jacob was blessed was because he feared God and worshipped Him.

Esau didn't care about the things of God. He rejected his birthright and eventually lost his blessing. Even then God could have blessed Esau, but instead he rejected his parent’s advice about who he should marry and married into the wrong family. Esau could have been equally blessed by

The Search for a Bride

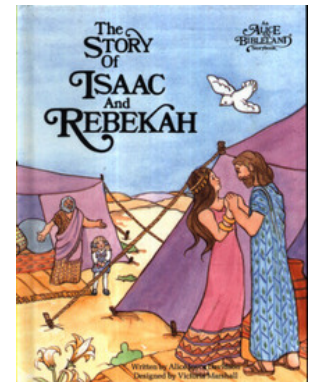
Abraham was getting much older and wanted to make sure his only son, Isaac had a good wife from a good family. He made his servant promise to find a good woman, not a Canaanite, but one from Abraham’s people. The servant swore he would try and find the right girl.



Rebecca watering the Camels

When Isaac was forty years old, the servant went on a journey to the city of Nahor in Mesopotamia. As he arrived, he didn't know what to do. He had traveled a long way with camels and riches to give to the right girl. But which girl would he choose?

He decided to leave that up to God. I think that was a good decision. The servant asked God to let the girl respond in a certain way to prove that she was the right person for Isaac. The servant would ask the young woman to let down her jar so that he may drink. But she was also to offer to draw water for his 10 camels. If you have ever seen camels drink water after a long journey, you would know it would take “a lot” of buckets of water to fill up these thirsty camels.



One woman offered to do this for Abraham's servant. The servant was so happy. He knew he had found the right woman for his master's son. The woman's name was Rebekah. The servant went and met her family. They realized that this was a special thing that had happened and they would let Rebekah decide if she wanted to return and meet the man that would be her new husband. The servant gave gifts to Rebekah and her family as proof of how rich Abraham was.

Rebekah decided to leave with the servant. When she met Isaac, and Isaac met Rebekah, they fell in love, and she became his wife. It truly was a love story where it was "love at first sight."

The Birth of Twins – Esau and Jacob

Isaac and Rebekah had been married twenty years and they still did not have any children. At the age of sixty, Isaac pleaded with the Lord to give them children and finally she became pregnant with twin boys. When they were born the oldest was red and covered in hair. His name was Esau, which means "red." The second boy that was born was holding on to the foot of Esau. His name was Jacob, which means "supplanter." Rebekah knew that the younger son would become the ruler over the older son. God had told her that there were two nations in her womb.



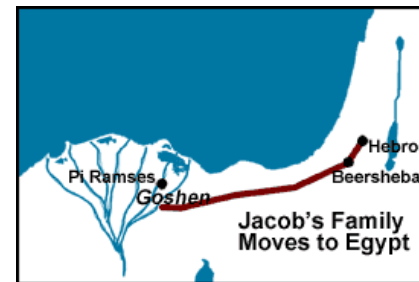
Tomb of Rachel



It was here, in the land of Canaan, in the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and now Jacob, that they lived and raised his family.

Summary of the Rest of the Story

The family lived there until a great famine came into the land. There was no water or food to feed their family. Towards the end of Jacob's life, through the providential hand of God, the family was saved through the youngest son Joseph. You see, Joseph became the second highest ranking person in Egypt and made a way for Jacob and the rest of his family to come and be saved from the famine.



Jacob and his 66 family members, along with Joseph's four members, made up the founding 70 members of the "People of Israel." This family grew over the next 400 years into a people numbering over a

million people.

Thus the Nation of Israel was formed.

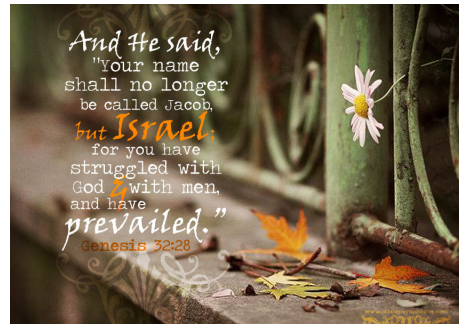
Next Week, we will look at a man called Moses.

THE END

they kept wrestling. Jacob had prayed for a blessing from God, and he knew this man could give him the blessing.

Jacob's New Name is Israel

What Jacob didn't know was that he was wrestling with God! God was pleased that Jacob wanted a blessing badly enough to fight for it. God blessed Jacob by giving him a new name. God called him Israel.



Jacob Meets Esau



The next day Jacob limped along and caught up with his family. It was there that Esau met Jacob and they embraced and shed many tears. Even though Esau didn't trust Jacob very much, he accepted the

gifts offered by Jacob. Jacob moved into the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan. There he purchased land and built an altar to the lord and called the altar, "The God of Israel."

The Death of Rachel

As they traveled onward to see Isaac his father, Rachel's time to give birth to Benjamin had come. It was a difficult delivery and during that she died. Jacob buried the wife he loved so much, there near Bethlehem. She is not buried in the tomb of the Patriarchs.

After the birth of these twins, when Isaac was 75 years old, his father Abraham died. Isaac, and his half-brother Ishmael, went and buried Abraham in the cave beside his wife Sarah in Hebron.

Jacob tricked Esau out of the birthright

As these two boys grew up, Esau became a skilled hunter and a man of the field. Because he was a "man's man" Isaac favored his oldest son, Esau.

The other boy, Jacob, stayed at home more. Some would say he was a Mama's boy. Rebekah favored this son more than Esau.



Esau Trades His Birthright for a bowl of Soup

One day, Esau had been out in the field hunting and came back home starving. He was so hungry that he would do anything for food. Jacob was preparing a bowl of red soup and he asked Esau if he was willing to trade the family birthright for a bowl of soup. Esau didn't care anything about the family name or family tradition. Sure he would trade that worthless thing for a bowl of soup. Jacob tricked Esau, but Esau didn't care.

Jacob tricked Isaac and Received His Father's Blessing

Years later, when Isaac was getting very old, and his eye sight was getting dim, he asked his oldest son to go into the field and bring back an animal so he could eat one of his favorite meals. Isaac didn't know when he would die, so he wanted to pass on his blessing to his oldest child Esau.



Jacob Recives His Father's Blessing

Esau obeys his father and goes out to hunt for food for his father. Rebekah heard the request of her husband, but because she favored Jacob, she wanted the blessing to go to him instead. Rebekah and Jacob worked together quickly to trick Isaac. They prepared a wonderful meal and put the skins of an animal on Jacob to trick his father, because Esau was a very hairy man.

The plan worked and Isaac blessed Jacob. Isaac told Jacob, *"May God give you the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, and let your mother's son's bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you and bless those that bless you!"*

goats. For twenty years Jacob served Laban breeding the animals to insure there would be an abundance of striped and speckled sheep and goats. Fourteen years for two wives and six years for the sheep and goats. Now it was time for Jacob to return home. The place God had given his father as an inheritance.

Map back to Canaan



Jacob slips away with his family and Laban chases after him. Once Laban caught up with him, they made a covenant and departed in peace. As they departed, Laban said, "May the Lord watch between you and me when we are absent one from another."

Jacob Receives a New Name - Israel

It had been a long time since Jacob bought Esau's birthright for a bowl of soup. He hadn't seen his brother, Esau, in over 20 years, since the day he tricked his father, Isaac to give him the blessing instead of Esau.



Jacob Wrestles with the Angel of the Lord

As Jacob and his family were traveling home one night, they came to a river. Jacob sent his family across while he stayed on the other side. A man came to Jacob that night and started wrestling with him. The two men wrestled until the next morning. The man touched Jacob's hip and injured it, but

The Children of Jacob Become the Twelve Tribes of Israel

Jacob's 1st wife – Leah (died in Canaan)

- 1 Reuben (means “a son”)
- 2 Simeon (means “heard”)
- 3 – Levi (means “attached”)
- 4 – Judah (means “praise”)
- 9 – Issachar (means “wages”)
- 10 – Zebulun (means “dwelling”)

Leah's handmaid – Zilpah

- 7 – Gad (means “troop” or “fortune”)
- 8 – Asher (means “happy”)

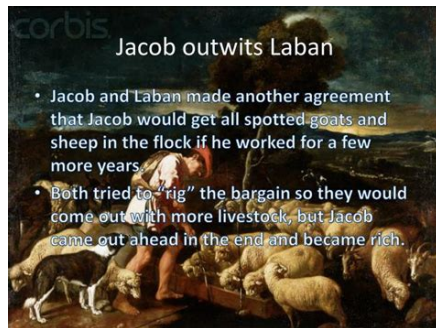
Jacob's 2nd wife – Rachel

- 11 – Joseph (means “He will add”)
 - 12 – Benjamin (means “son of my sorrow”)
- Rachel died during childbirth

Rachel's handmaid – Bilhah

- 5 – Dan (means “judge”)
- 6 – Naphtali (means “my wrestling”)

Jacob leaves Laban



Jacob outwits Laban

- Jacob and Laban made another agreement that Jacob would get all spotted goats and sheep in the flock if he worked for a few more years.
- Both tried to “rig” the bargain so they would come out with more livestock, but Jacob came out ahead in the end and became rich.

After some time, Jacob's family was so large that it was time for Jacob to separate from Laban's household. Because Jacob knew so much about how to raise sheep and goats, Jacob tricked Laban out of most of the animals they

had raised over the years. His wages for working for Laban was to be able to keep the striped and speckled sheep and

Comparative Blessings of . . .

JACOB

- May God give you the dew of heaven, fatness of the earth, and an abundance of grain and new wine
- May people serve you and nations bow down to you
- May you be master of your brothers and may your mother's sons bow down to you

ESAU

- Away from the dew of heaven from above and fertility of the earth
- You shall live by your sword
- You shall serve your brother

Just after Isaac finished blessing Jacob, his brother Esau came in the house. Esau was angry and asked if there was still a blessing for him. Isaac understood he had been fooled into blessing the wrong person. But God intended that the younger child receive the blessing instead of the older.

Isaac did have a word for Esau *“Behold your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above. By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother, and it shall come to pass, when you become restless, that you shall break his yoke from your neck.”*

Jacob knew that Esau would seek to kill him now that he had received the first and best blessing from their father. Rebekah knew that Jacob would be safe with her brother Laban, so she sent Jacob away for his safety.

Before he left, his father Isaac told Jacob to take a wife from the daughters of Laban. He blessed him again and passed on God's promise to Abraham, down to Jacob.

Jacob meets Laban

On the way to stay with Laban, Jacob spends the night in the desert and has a dream. In the dream, God met with Jacob.



Jacob's Ladder with Angels ascending and descending

During that dream, God told him, *"I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac, the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Your descendants will be as numerous as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and to the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth will be blessed."*

The promise of God that was first given to Abraham, then Isaac, and now was being passed down to Jacob.



Jacob arrives at Padan Aram to stay with his mother's family. Jacob stops at the well where the sheep gather for water, and Jacob meets the woman of his dreams. Her name is Rachel. Jacob fell in love with her and knew this was the woman he was supposed to marry. He later finds out she belongs to Laban's family and he is welcomed and accepted into the family.



Jacob at the Well – meets Rachel

Jacob and Laban come to an agreement that if Jacob will work for Laban for seven years, then he could marry Rachel. At the end of seven years, Jacob was ready to get married. At the wedding ceremony, Laban tricked Jacob and when the wedding was finished, he found out that he was married to the wrong woman. He had married Leah, Laban's oldest daughter.

Laban insisted he could not marry off his younger daughter first. He must marry Leah first. It seems as if Jacob who had tricked his brother and his father, had now been tricked.



Jacob confronts Laban about the Deception

Jacob confronted Laban and they agreed if he would work seven more years, he could have Rachel as his wife also. During that time, it was an accepted practice to have more than one wife.

While Jacob was with Laban, he worked tending sheep and goats. He learned a lot about crossbreeding animals. Now that Jacob was married, his wives and their handmaids began to give birth to children.

Over a period of time he had twelve sons with two wives and two handmaids.