

A Faithful God, A Chosen Child

Genesis 25.12-26

Genesis tells the story of creation, then the catastrophic entry of sin into the world. To solve the sin problem and bring blessing to all the earth, God initiates a rescue mission with Abraham. His descendants now take center stage, but one thing remains: A faithful God.

Review: Genesis has ten *tôledôt* sections (a Hebrew word translated ‘these are the generations of’ → ‘this is what happened to’) showing the progress of history. We begin today with the *tôledôt* of Ishmael, then move on to Isaac, the son of promise.

- Isaac prays, God responds: Rebekah conceives (19-21)
Rebekah barren for twenty years – Isaac’s test of faith
Isaac’s prayer of faith: The Lord is our provider
- Tough pregnancy: God chooses the son of promise (22-23)
Rebekah prays...and God answers
Two nations, and the older shall serve the younger
- What’s in a name? Time will tell...
Esau: Red-brown and hairy
Jacob: One who takes by the heel

Lessons on the Journey of Faith

God *tests our faith* in the challenges of life

God invites and honors our *dependence* on Him

God works through *faithful*, not *perfect*, people



1. Genesis 25.12-18 is the *tôledôt* of Ishmael – that is, it gives an account of his life and heritage. What does this section tell us about him? Why is it so short (in contrast, Isaac’s *tôledôt* lasts over ten chapters)? God promised that Ishmael would become a great nation (Gen. 21.18); where does this *tôledôt* tell us they settled? What do we know about the *character* of these people (see v18, and 16.10-12)? In subsequent years, the descendants of Ishmael and Isaac often fought (1 Sam. 15.7). How are their descendants getting along *today*?
2. Genesis 25.19-26 tells us Isaac’s age when he got married, and when his wife Rebekah gave birth to Jacob and Esau. Let’s get a historical perspective in this narrative. How old was Abraham when Isaac was born? When Isaac got married? When Esau and Jacob were born? How old was Abraham when he died (25.7)? How long was Rebekah barren before getting pregnant? What does this timeline suggest about *faith lessons* God was teaching Isaac? Does this remind you of how God taught Abraham?
3. Just as God was very clear *before* the birth of Isaac that he, not Ismael, would be the chosen son, so too God again prefaces the next stage of patriarchal history by announcing the chosen son. Rebekah’s difficult pregnancy (the first line of v22 indicates a violent struggle) leads her to ask God (paraphrasing v22), *Why is this happening to me?!* Consider how Rebekah’s pregnancy, and God’s revelation to her (v23), foreshadows not only Esau and Jacob’s lives, but all subsequent history down to today.
4. A godly heritage is a priceless thing, and it is on display in the earliest account of Isaac and Rebekah’s marriage. Both of them are confronted with a crisis, and both of them respond in prayer to Yahweh. Furthermore, our vantage point shows us that God was providentially superintending events, according to His will. When you face crises in your life, how do you respond? What level of dependence do you have on the Lord?