

How To Maintain A Stable Family (Genesis 27:34-41)

I. Introduction

A. *This Week in Clear Living*

1. Handling one's children
2. The Right of the Firstborn (Deuteronomy 21:15-17)
3. A Serious Problem between Jacob and Esau (Genesis 27:34-41)
4. Judah's Wayward Behavior (Genesis 38:12-26)
5. Judah's Sacrificial Behavior (Genesis 44:18-34)
6. Variations to the Firstborn Rule

Question: What was the Jewish rule concerning an inheritance for the firstborn son? What kind of parents were Isaac and Rebekah? Why did Jacob and Esau become enemies?

B. The first born Jewish son received a double inheritance from his father.

1. Deuteronomy 21:15-17 says, "If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated: Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn: ***But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.***"
2. A father's strength was supposed to have been carried to the firstborn son. Therefore, he was to have a double portion of the father's inheritance because he would be able to make best use of it.
3. The firstborn son was also significant to the Egyptians. When Pharaoh refused to free the Jews, God killed their firstborn.

C. Isaac and Rebekah were not ideal parents.

1. Genesis 25:28 says, "And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob."
2. Isaac and Rebekah used the boys in ways that made them compete against each other in unhealthy ways.
 - a. Esau had the right of the firstborn, but Jacob took it from him.
 - b. ***Esau had the wrong attitude, but Jacob was divisive.***
 - c. In His sovereign plan, God was still able to accomplish His will, but it is highly unlikely that He willed Jacob and Esau to treat each other as they did.
 - 1) Jacob could have generously given his hungry brother something to eat without imposing such a high penalty.
 - 2) Esau could have retained the right of the firstborn, and Jacob could have still been the father of twelve sons on the nation Israel.

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4. Esau's wives.
 - a. Genesis 26:34 says, "And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beerli the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite:"
 - b. Genesis 28:9 says, "Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife."
 - c. Genesis 36:2-3 says, "Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan; Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; And Bashemath Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth."
 - d. Some questions about these wives.
 - 1) *Was Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite also Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite?*
 - 2) *Was Nebajoth's sister and Ishmael's daughter named Mahalath or Bashemath?*
 - 3) *Did Esau marry one Hittite and one Hivite or two Hittites?*
5. Esau and Jacob made peace with each other in Genesis 33:4-16, but another ungodly line was begun.
 - a. The line of Ham was ungodly.
 - b. The line of Esau would be ungodly.
 - c. At this point, the path to Jesus began with Adam to Seth to Noah to Shem to Abraham to Isaac and now to Jacob and Judah.
 - d. ***Bad parenting sometimes got in the way, but it has never stopped the Lord.***
 - e. ***Bad theology got in the way for over one thousand years, but that has not stopped the building of the Lord's church.***

Question: What do Malachi 1:2-3 and Romans 9:13 mean when they say that God loved Israel and hated Esau?

- II. Jacob and Esau became enemies because of Jacob's trickery, greed, and deception.
 - A. The Bible seems to imply that God intentionally showed favoritism for and a liking to Jacob over Esau. Do you agree or disagree?
 1. Malachi 1:2-3 says, "I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet ***I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau***, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness."
 2. Romans 9:13 says, "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

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- B. Other Scriptures make this question a hermeneutical issue. Are the following verses TRUE or FALSE?
1. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." ***Was Esau part of the world?***
 2. II Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." ***Was the Lord not longsuffering for Esau and content to let him perish?***
- C. How we can know that God did not hate Esau.
1. Romans 9:6-8 says, "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. ***For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:*** Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."
 2. The first use of "Israel" refers to saved Jews (spiritual).
 3. The second use of "Israel" refers to Jews by birth (natural)
 4. In Romans, chapters 9, 10, and 11, the Apostle Paul is sad that not all natural-born Jews are saved.
 5. Romans 11:25 says, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that ***blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.***"
 6. **SOME CONCLUSIONS**
 - a. The promised people and line to Jesus came through Jacob, not Esau.
 - b. In Romans 9:6, the first use of "Israel" is a type, just like Isaac, Joseph, and others are sometimes types of Christ in the Old Testament.
 - c. Similarly, in Malachi 1:2-3, Jacob is a type of those that follow the godly path, and Esau is a type of those that do not follow the godly path.
 - 1) God loved Cain, but Cain had a hard heart and refused to obey. ***His descendants became the ungodly line from Adam until they were destroyed in the flood.***
 - 2) God loved Ham, but Ham had a perverted heart and refused to choose the godly way. ***His descendants became the first ungodly line from Noah after the flood.***
 - 3) God loved Ishmael, but his descendents became another ungodly line after the flood.
 - 4) God loved Esau, but Esau did not love or respect his birthright until it was too late. ***His descendents became another ungodly line.***
 - 5) God loved Lot, but he chose to become involved with the people of Sodom. ***His descendents became another ungodly line.***

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- d. **God did not stack the deck against these people. They and their descendents became what they did by their own choice. Some notable exceptions are Rahab (line of Ham) and Ruth (line of Lot).**

Question: What kind of parent was Jacob? What did he do to turn his sons against Joseph? What did Judah do to try to make things right for his father?

III. Jacob was not a good father.

- A. He had twelve sons, but he clearly showed that Joseph and Benjamin were his favorites.
1. Genesis 37:3 says, "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours."
 2. Genesis 42:4 says, "But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him."
- B. Jacob's first four of twelve sons were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah. Given the rule of the firstborn, why was Jesus incarnated from Judah's line rather than Reuben's?
1. In Genesis 49:3-4, Reuben betrayed his father.
 2. In Genesis 34:25-26, Simeon and Levi murdered Shechem's people over their sister, Dinah.
 - a. Their attempt to defend their sister's honor was evil.
 - b. They killed all the men of Hamor because of the deeds of one.
 - c. They used the same kind of trickery that their father had used when he was younger.
 3. In Genesis 35:23, Judah was the son of Leah.
 - a. In Genesis 37:26, he convinced his brothers to not kill Joseph.
 - b. In Genesis 44:33, he offered himself to the Egyptians in exchange for his youngest brother, Benjamin.
 - c. In Genesis 46:28, Judah in effect was the head of his household.

Question: How did Rebekah break the rule of the firstborn? How did Jacob break the rule of the firstborn on his sons? How did he break the rule of the firstborn on Joseph's sons? What was the Lord's decision?

IV. The rule of the firstborn was not always honored.

- A. Genesis 27:6-10 says, "And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command

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- thee. Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth: And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death."
- B. Genesis 49:10 says, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."
- C. Genesis 48:17-19 says, "And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head. And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations."
- D. God made Joseph the firstborn by giving land to both Ephraim and Manasseh.
1. I Chronicles 5:1-2 says, "Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's:)"
 2. God gave Joseph the birthright and Judah the line to Jesus.
 3. God's ways are not always our ways, and we cannot always know or understand why He does as He does (Isaiah 55:8).

Question: How can parents keep harmony within their families and among their children? How can parents be good parents?

- V. Good parenting is achieved when parents do some of the following:
- A. When they love their children equally regardless of their distinctive differences.
 - B. When they treat their children equally in matters of reward and punishment.
 - C. When they try to be the right kind of spouses to each other as they live their lives before their children.
 - D. When their lives lead their children to the Lord rather than away from Him.
 - E. What else?

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Next week's lesson: "Joseph Saved his People" (Genesis 37:1-36 and Genesis 45:1-7)

Five Day Recommended Reading:

Monday:	Genesis 37:1-12
Tuesday:	Genesis 37:13-24
Wednesday:	Genesis 37:25-36
Thursday:	Genesis 45:1-7
Friday:	Esther 7:1-10

Study questions:

1. Why did Jacob show so much favoritism to Joseph?
2. Was Jacob a good father? Had he been a good brother to Esau?
3. Why did the Lord choose to use Jacob and Joseph when they both had so many obvious character flaws? How did the Lord humble Joseph?
4. In examining Jacob and his sons, how did the Lord deal with them as a Father rather than as a super Cop?
5. How did the Lord use Esther to save His people?
6. When he was given the opportunity, what important economic principle did Joseph use to ensure that the known world would not be wiped out by the approaching famine? What can we learn from that?