

Introduction

In the fall of 1998 I attended a Pastor's Conference in Orlando, Florida. While there, I met a pastor who did not have any children. He and his wife had been trying for ten years to have children, and she had not been able to conceive. I asked him if I could pray for him and his wife, and he readily agreed. So, I laid hands on him and prayed for God to open up her womb. A few weeks later I was in my office studying and I received a phone call from this pastor. He was ecstatic because his wife was pregnant. He thanked me for praying for him, and he had called to let me know the results of my prayers for him. God opened her womb, not me. The only thing that I did was entreat the Lord to open her womb.

In our text today, Rebekah was barren, and her husband prayed for God to open up her womb and allow her to bear children. Husbands should pray for their wives. They should pray over the things that concern their wives. I like to know Karen's schedule because I pray for her every day. This week she went to the Pumpkin Patch with Sarah and the grandchildren. I prayed for their time there. The next day they went to the Balloon Fiesta. I prayed for their time at the Balloon Fiesta. There are memories being formed. Friday, Karen went on a hike with another lady, and I prayed over their time together. I daily pray for God to give opportunities for Karen to minister to others. Husbands, we should be praying for our wives, just as Isaac did.

God answered Isaac's prayers and Rebekah conceived. After conceiving, she felt like a boxing match was taking place in her womb. About the fourth round of the boxing match she prayed to God. She asked God for understanding about what was going on in her womb. Sometimes we pray for healing or for God to DO SOMETHING. Sometimes we need to pray to God for UNDERSTANDING or WISDOM. No matter what the need is in our lives, we should entreat the Lord in prayer.

In 1 Peter 5:7, we are exhorted to cast all our cares upon Him, because He cares for us. Some versions say cast all our anxieties upon Him, because He cares for us. That is what Isaac did, He prayed on behalf of his wife. That is what Rebekah did. She was anxious about what was going on and she cast her cares on the Lord. God answered Rebekah and gave her a prophetic word about the twins she was carrying. He told her that there were two nations in her womb. She said that the two would be separated and that the older would serve the younger.

In the second and third parts of the text today, we see the answers to the prayers and the beginning of the fulfillment of the prophetic word that God gave Rebekah. She gives birth to the twins, and the younger son, Jacob, was born holding onto the heel of his slightly older brother, Esau. Their growing up years went quickly. They went from birth to manhood in a single verse. Esau became a hunter and outdoorsmen, while Jacob was a homebody, and a good cook. And one day Esau came home from hunting, weary and hungry, and he sold his birthright to Jacob for some of the stew that he had prepared. Through the birthright, the older was going to serve the younger, just as God had spoken to Rebekah when she had inquired of the Lord about the boxing match that was taking place inside of her.

Birth of Esau and Jacob

1. **Rebekah Conceives** (Gen 25:19-23)
2. **Birth of Esau and Jacob** (Gen 25:24-26)
3. **Esau Sell His Birthright** (Gen 25:27-34)

1. **Rebekah Conceives** (Gen 25:19-23)

(Gen 25:19-23) “Now these are the records of the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham became the father of Isaac; {20} and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife. {21} Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived. {22} But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If it is so, why then am I this way?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. {23} The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb; and two peoples will be separated from your body; and one people shall be stronger than the other; and the older shall serve the younger.”

Last week we looked at the records of the generations of Abraham through his concubines. We saw that Ishmael had twelve sons who were princes. We saw that Keturah has six sons and ten grandsons. This week we are looking at the records of the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son who God's covenant would be carried on through. Isaac was the promised son, and God had promised to give the land to Isaac and his descendants. The text says the records of the generations of Isaac. Our text today has three generations: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Abraham was seventy-five when God promised to give him and his descendants the Promised Land. He promised Abraham that all the nations of the earth would be blessed by him. He was one hundred when Isaac was born, and it was a supernatural pregnancy, because Sarah's womb was dead. But God promised Abraham that at this time next year Sarah will have a son. God supernaturally gave Sarah the ability to conceive and give birth to Isaac.

Isaac was forty when he married Rebekah, and he was sixty when she conceived and gave birth to Esau and Jacob. They had been trying to have children for twenty years, and I am sure that he felt similar to his mother and father. He may even have wondered if he would be one hundred before his wife would conceive. Isaac did not wait around. He prayed! Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife. He asked God to allow his barren wife to conceive. Isaac knew his own life was a miracle from God. He knew that God could open the womb of anyone, and he asked God to allow Rebekah to conceive.

In Genesis 29:31 God saw that Jacob's wife, Leah, was unloved and He opened up her womb. In Genesis 30:22, God remembered Rachel and gave heed to her and opened her womb. By giving heed to her, I believe that she had asked the Lord to open up her womb. In 1 Samuel 1:5-6, we find that God had closed the womb of Hannah. Hannah wept and poured out her soul to the Lord and He opened up her womb. So, we see very explicitly that God opened and closed wombs. Isaac did not have the Scriptures that we have, but he had the example of his own life. God had supernaturally opened up the womb of Sarah at the age of ninety and allowed her to conceive and give birth to Isaac.

After getting pregnant, Rebekah knew some things were going on in our womb. It says the children struggled together within her. The Hebrew word is *rawtsats'* (Strong's H7533). It means to crack in pieces, break, bruise, crush, discourage, oppress, or struggle together. These two little guys were not just struggling, they were beating and bruising up one another in her womb. When she inquired of the Lord about what was going on, He told her, *“Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the*

other; And the older shall serve the younger.” God knows the past, present, and future. He is the alpha and omega. He knows us before we are formed in the womb.

Physically, life begins at conception. Theologically, life begins before conception. Psalm 139 says that God forms our inward parts and weaves us in our mother’s wombs. He sees our unformed substance, and He wrote in His book all the days ordained for us when there was not one. God opens and closes wombs.

(Psa 139:13-16) “For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb. {14} I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well. {15} My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; {16} Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.”

In Jeremiah 1:5, God told Jeremiah, “*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.*” God knows all about our lives before He forms us. He knows everything about our lives. A few weeks ago in Genesis 17:16-21, God told Abraham about Isaac before Sarah was even pregnant. God had plans for little Isaac that started well before conception. Children, you are not an accident. God has plans for your life. He had plans for your life before you were conceived, and before you were born. Children are not a mistake. They are not an accident.

(Gen 17:16-21) “I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her....and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant...”

As with many things in life, there are two parts: Man’s part and God’s part. Sometimes our actions are in conflict with God’s part. Men may get a vasectomy and women may get their tubes tied. They have taken specific action to block the work of God. Society calls that getting fixed, but I call it getting it broken. In other areas of life we see this also. God may have appointed a number of days for our lives, but we may not live out all the days that He ordained for us. Ephesians 6:1-3 tells us to obey and honor our parents so that things will go well for us and we may live long on the earth. That implies that if we dishonor our parents things will not go well and we will not live long on earth. God may have ordained more days than we live. Another example is in Psalm 55:23. David wrote, “*But You, O God, will bring them down to the pit of destruction; men of bloodshed and deceit will not live out half their days. But I will trust in You.*” Violent men may not live out half their days; that is half of the days that God ordained for them when He formed them.

Another example may be in the area of taking care of our temples, our bodies. My primary care physician is Dr. Russell Schultz, who is getting ready to retire this year. He has a saying that whatever your problem is, diet and exercise are part of the solution. Many health problems that we have are related to our diet and exercise. God may have ordained a certain number of days for us, but if we eat the wrong amount of the wrong foods and do not exercise, we will probably have health problems like diabetes, high blood pressure, etc.

One of my coworkers has lost both of his brothers, and they died in their fifties. They did not live out all their days. They were both alcoholics and their livers were fried, and they had a host of other problems. Both God and men have a responsibility. Even when we don't live out all of our days, God knew it in advance. He knows all of the future and all of the past.

God knew that Jacob would come out second. He knew that Jacob would prevail and that Esau would serve the younger. God knew everything about the lives of these two men before they were even conceived or born. He is omniscient, meaning He knows all things, past, present and future. He knows everything about my life and your life. There is nothing that we can hide from Him. God is omnipotent, all powerful, and nothing is impossible for Him. God is omniscient, all knowing, and He can give understanding and revelation about all things.

2. Birth of Esau and Jacob (Gen 25:24-26)

(Gen 25:24-26) “When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. {25} Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau. {26} Afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob; and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them.”

When Rebekah's days of pregnancy were fulfilled, she gave birth to twins, exactly as God had spoken to her. Esau was the first to come out, and he was red all over like a hairy garment. Esau was hairy at birth, and he was hairy as an adult. This detail will become more important later on when Jacob takes Esau's blessing from Isaac.

Afterward, Jacob came out with his hand holding on to Esau's heel. Jacob means a heel-catcher or supplanter. It has come to mean one who plays tricks, but the proper meaning is one who supplants. The dictionary defines **supplanter as one who takes the place of another, as through force, scheming, strategy, or the like**. This is exactly what Jacob did. God knew all of this in advance and knew that Jacob would supplant Esau. He would take his birthright, and he would also take Esau's blessing.

Isaac was sixty when Rebekah gave birth to Esau and Jacob. He got married at forty, so it took twenty years and prayer for Rebekah to have children. Sometimes we have to patiently wait and persevere for answers to prayer. Sometimes we have to patiently wait for God's timing. Many of us give up before twenty years, or try to take matters into our own hands, which is what Sarah did. The result was Ishmael. Isaac and Rebekah prayed and waited upon the Lord.

3. Esau Sell His Birthright (Gen 25:27-34)

(Gen 25:27-34) “When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob was a peaceful man, living in tents. {28} Now Isaac loved Esau, because he had a taste for game, but Rebekah loved Jacob. {29} When Jacob had cooked stew, Esau came in from the field and he was famished; {30} and Esau said to Jacob, "Please let me have a swallow of that red stuff there, for I am famished." Therefore his name was called Edom. {31} But Jacob said, "First sell me your birthright." {32} Esau said, "Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?" {33} And Jacob said, "First swear to me"; so he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. {34} Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.”

We move from birth to being grown-ups in one sentence. Esau became a skillful hunter and a man of the field. He would have subscribed to *Field & Stream*, and *Sportsman* magazine and one of his big bucks would probably be featured on the cover.

On the other hand, Jacob was a peaceful man, living in tents. He did not go on the game hunts with Esau and live in the field. He stayed close to home, and he learned some domestic skills, like how to cook a delicious stew. He would have subscribed to *Good Housekeeping* ~~Tentkeeping~~ magazine.

It says that Isaac loved Esau because he had a taste for game. Isaac loved the barbecues that Esau held after he came back from his hunts. He loved the company and he love the barbecued game. But Rebekah loved Jacob. In Parenting 101 you learn that you have to love all your children. Choosing favorites and treating one or the other with special consideration causes division and strife in the home. Jacob did not learn the lesson because he showed favoritism towards Joseph, and it caused lots of problems between the siblings. It does not work in God's household either. In the book of James, we learn that when we show favoritism, we dishonor the other person, and we sin and violate the royal law of love (James 2:1-9).



All of this is background information to set up what happened next. Esau, who loved to hunt, came in from hunting, and he was famished. The King James Version says that he was faint. The Hebrew word is ayep (Strong's H5889) and means faint, weary, or thirsty. Jacob, the supplanter, the one who will takes the place of another through force, scheming, or strategy, knew that his brother would come in weary and faint. And, he was ready for Esau when he came in. He had some delicious stew prepared, and the aroma of that stew was too much for Esau. He had to have some of it. He told Jacob, "Please let me have a swallow of that red stuff there." Because it was a red stew, Esau became known as Edom, which means red. It comes from Adam, which means red or ruddy. Jacob had set the bait for the hunter and the hunter took the bait. Now, Jacob springs the trap on him. He said, "First sell me your birthright." There was purpose in what Jacob had schemed and planned. He wanted the birthright. The birthright went to the oldest son, so the birthright belonged to Esau.

The birthright was significant. The oldest son would get twice the inheritance (Deut 21:15-17). Abraham was a very wealthy man and had left everything to Isaac. God had blessed Isaac and he was even wealthier. This huge estate was going to be passed down and the estate would be divided into three portions. Esau was going to get two portions and Jacob was going to get one portion. In addition to the inheritance, there were judicial or legal rights given to the firstborn son (2 Chronicles 21:3). There were also special honors given to the oldest son. The oldest son would get to sit at the place of honor. In Genesis 43:32-33, Joseph's brothers came to buy wheat and Joseph had them come over for a meal. They were seated before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth. When Karen and I were traveling, we drew lots each month for seats in our fifteen passenger van. Nobody wanted the back bench, so we drew lots. We also drew lots for seats at the dining room table. The lot put an end to strife (Proverbs 18:18) and so we applied that Scripture to end strife and contention. But, in the Old Testament, seating arrangement was often done by birthright and the oldest got the best seat.

At this time the Bible and the Levitical laws had not been given. In it we find that the firstborn of every animal and every man belongs to the Lord. They were to sacrifice the firstborn of the animals, but God redeemed the firstborn of men for Himself. (See Ex 13:1-2, 11-15.) Later on, God set aside the Levites for Himself instead of every firstborn. The Levites belonged to God. They did not get the inheritance that the other tribes got, but they received the tithes. The tithes of the first of all of the crops and herds was to go to take care of the Levites and Priests. The tithes belong to God and they went to support the men who belonged to God. The same principle is true today. The tithes are primarily to support the men and women who serve the church. (See Malachi 3:8-10, 1 Corinthians 3:3-14, and 1 Timothy 5:17-18.)

(Ex 13:1-2) “Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, {2} ‘Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me.’”

(Num 3:11-13) “Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, {12} ‘Now, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the sons of Israel instead of every firstborn, the first issue of the womb among the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall be Mine. {13} For all the firstborn are Mine; on the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, from man to beast. They shall be Mine; I am the LORD.’”

Recently, someone gave a very generous tithe to our church. Before I deposited the check into our bank account, I wrote the person and asked if this is really what the person wanted to do. I said the tithe is to go to the pastors that feed, protect, and care for you. I suggested that they give the tithe to their local church. The person wrote back and said they are in between churches and they read my sermons that I send them every week and they wanted to give that tithe to us. They said to cash the check and make sure you pay the pastor. We did cash the check, but we have been sowing everything back into the church, not taking any pay. It takes a lot of money to plant a church, and Karen and I are sowing into the kingdom of God.

Occasionally birthrights were given to other sons. For example, Jacob’s oldest son was Reuben, but he defiled his father’s bed, so his birthright was given to Joseph (1 Chron 5:1-3). David’s oldest son was Amnon (2 Sam 3:2). Absalom killed Amnon and the birthright and kingdom should have gone to Adonijah. Instead, David gave it to Solomon, according to the word of the Lord given in 1 Chronicles 22:9-13. (Also, see 1 King 1:30.) David himself was chosen by the Lord to be the king, and he was the youngest, not the firstborn in his family.

The birthright was a big deal, and Jacob wanted the birthright. He did not accept Esau’s casual remark about not needing the birthright because he was about to die. Esau was not going to die. That was just how he felt at the minute. It was a careless comment. Careless comments can be costly. In Matthew 12:36, Jesus said, “*But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.*” We are going to have to give account for our careless words. We need to be quick to listen and slow to speak (James 1:19). Esau’s careless words cost him his birthright. Esau’s words also showed that he did not respect or value his birthright. He was willing to sell his birthright over a bowl of stew. Jacob closed the deal and made Jacob swear to give him his birthright before he would give him any of his stew.

Conclusion

As we come to a close this morning, I want to look at one more birthright. In Luke 2:7, Mary gave birth to her firstborn son. Jesus was the oldest and had the birthright.

(Luke 2:7) “And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

A few verses later in Luke 2:22-24, his Joseph and Mary brought Him to the temple in Jerusalem and presented Him to God. They were following the law of the Lord given in Exodus 13:2 and 13:12, which said that “every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.” They also presented their offering to the Lord. Jesus was the holy firstborn and belonged to God the Father.

(Luke 2:22-24) “And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord {23} (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “*every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord*”), {24} and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, “*a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.*”

In Romans 8, Paul is writing about us and how we are predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, Jesus. He said that Jesus was the firstborn among many brethren. In Hebrews 12, we are called the general assembly and church of the firstborn. In Revelation 1:5, John wrote that Jesus Christ was the firstborn from the dead. We are the church of the firstborn from the dead. As Jesus was resurrected from the dead, so too, we shall be resurrected from the dead.

(Rom 8:29) “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;”

(Heb 12:23) “to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,”

(Rev 1:5) “and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood.”

The firstborn has the double portion of the inheritance. We have a wonderful inheritance because we are the church of the firstborn. The firstborn had all judicial authority. Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth. As the church of the firstborn, He has also given us all authority to carry out His work here on earth. As the firstborn, Jesus had the blessing of the father. As the church of the firstborn, we have been given every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. (See Ephesians 1:3.)

How do we become part of the church of the firstborn? We must believe that Jesus is the Christ and that God raised Him from the dead. In other words, you must believe Revelations 1:5 that Jesus is the firstborn of the dead. When you believe and then confess Him to be your Lord, you will be saved. Paul wrote in Romans 10:9-10 that this confession is how we are saved. This morning, if you have never received Christ into your life, I invite you to confess Him as your Lord. I made this decision in 1974 and my life has been forever changed.

In our message today, we are encouraged to go to God for all of our needs. God is omnipotent, all powerful, and nothing is impossible for Him. We are encouraged in our passage to seek God for wisdom and understanding. God is omniscient, all knowing, and He can give understanding and revelation about all things. This morning if you have a need in your life, we want to take a few minutes to pray for those needs. If you will raise up your hand, others will gather and pray for you. If you would like for me, as the pastor of the church, to pray for you, I would be happy to pray for you. I will pray for any that come up for prayer.

Introduction (1 Pet 5:7)

1. **Rebekah Conceive** (Gen 25:19-23, Gen 29:31, 30:22, 1 Sam 1:5-6, Psa 139:13-16, Jer1:5, Gen 17:16-21, Psa 55:23)

2. **Birth of Esau and Jacob** (Gen 25:24-26)

3. **Esau Sell His Birthright** (Gen 25:27-34, James 2:1-9, Deut 21:15-17, 2 Chron 21:3, Gen 43:32-33, Pr 18:18, Ex 13:1-2, 11-15, Mal 3:8-10, 1 Cor 3:3-14, 1 Tim 5:17-18, Num 3:11-13, 1 Chron 5:1-3, 2 Sam 3:2, 1 Chron 22:9-13, 1 King 1:30, Matt 12:36, James 1:19)

Conclusion and Applications (Luke 2:7, 2:22-24, Ex 13:2, 13:12, Rev 1:5, Rom 8:29, Heb 12:23, Eph 1:3, Rom 10:9-10)