



Genesis: The Book That Started It All

Weekly Devotionals | November 16, 2025

OPEN with prayer.

Find a quiet place where you can set aside distractions. Ask the Lord to meet you in His Word.

In Genesis 25, the focus of Genesis shifts from Abraham to Isaac and Rebekah and their twin sons, Jacob and Esau. Although Esau is the older of the boys, we will see this week and next week how God chooses Jacob to receive the covenant promises God made to his grandfather, Abraham.

READ Genesis 25:1-18.

After Sarah's death, Abraham remarries and has other sons.

- What does Genesis 25:1-11 reveal about Abraham's relationship to Isaac, to Ishmael (his oldest son, the one born to Hagar), and his other children?
- How does the account of Ishmael's family fulfill the word spoken to Hagar in Genesis 16:9-12?

Genesis 25:1-18 wraps up some narrative details so that our attention can shift to Isaac and his descendants. In Isaac's generation, Isaac, the second-born son of Abraham is the "son of the promise." For Isaac's children, it will again be the second-born, Jacob, who is chosen by God to carry on God's promises.

After reading the brief "account" of the line of Ishmael, we find a much more substantial "account" of the line of Isaac.

Consider reading Genesis 24 to discover how God provided a wife for Isaac.

READ Genesis 25:19-27.

- What challenge do Isaac and Rebekah face that echoes Abraham and Sarah's struggle (see verse 21)?
- When Rebekah feels the babies in her womb jostling within her, what explanation does she receive from God? (As we continue through Genesis, don't forget about Jacob being a wrestler and grabber even in the womb.)
- What might these themes of infertility and older/younger son reversals reveal about God and what He's up to?

READ Genesis 25:27-34.

In the ancient world, the firstborn's "birthright" usually included receiving an extra share of the inheritance. Often, the father's estate would be divided into portions based on how many sons he had; the firstborn would receive two portions instead of one. For example, if a man had three sons, his estate would be divided into four parts, and the firstborn son would receive two of those parts. The rationale was that the firstborn son would be responsible for leading and caring for the family and needed the additional resources in order to do so. When Esau "sells" Jacob his birthright, that's what he's selling—his right to the extra portion of the inheritance (and by implication, his right to lead the family).

This birthright has extra significance in the family of Abraham, since God's covenant promises to Abraham (and through him, to the rest of humanity), are connected to his descendants.

- What motivates Esau to sell his birthright?
- Why might Jacob have put Esau in this position?
- Verse 34 says that Esau "despised" his birthright. In what way?

READ Hebrews 12:14-17.

- What parallels do you see between Esau's choice to sell his birthright for a bowl of food and people who make moral compromises?
- What insight does the writer of Hebrews provide about Esau's feelings about the choice he made?

REFLECT

- Are there areas in your life where you are tempted to seek immediate gratification even when you know it is outside of God's plan for you? That's been a human struggle since Adam and Eve—and it was the struggle for Esau. Take a moment to share *your* struggle with God and invite Him to show you how to choose Him and His promises over your sinful desires.
- Are there areas of your life where you struggle to trust God? Reflect on all the moments in Genesis where human effort has failed to thwart God's sovereign plan. Flip through the pages of Genesis and notice God's power at work. Then mentally "flip" through the pages of your own life and reflect on God's power and sovereignty.
- Read and meditate on Psalm 103. How do the words of this psalm reflect God's power and His love? Pray the words of the psalm to God, reflecting on places you've seen the truth of the words in your own life, and asking for deeper understanding of God's gracious sovereignty.