

There’s Something Sinister in the Air...

Deep Problems in the Chosen Family of God

A Good Start, A Terrible Finish

Verse 21 – Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife

Verse 28 – Isaac loved Esau because he ate his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob

Sinclair Ferguson: Isaac and Rebekah forgot that Jacob and Esau, were first of all, the Lord’s. If Isaac and Rebekah don’t act as though Jacob and Esau are the Lord’s, how are Jacob and Esau going to know that they are the Lord’s? The children breathe in the spiritual atmosphere that the parents breathe out. Children pick up atmospheres before they pick up words.

Sinclair Ferguson: “When there is that kind of formalism, as long as there are social pressures to conform, that social pressure will last to the next generation. But then the children begin to breathe in that atmosphere of formalism and they see that there was nothing in it for the parents. And there WAS very little in it for the parents. There was very little effort to glorify God and enjoy him forever...”

What’s the Purpose of Your Children?

Verse 23 – “two nations are in your womb”

We should always raise our children as though they were going to be leaders of nations.

We should think not only about their well-being, but also think about their ultimate effect on others. Don’t ask, “Will they have a good life?” Ask, “What legacy am I preparing them to leave behind?”

The Problems Extend to the Next Generation

Jacob Trades Stew for Esau’s Birthright

What is a birthright?

1. The oldest son would receive numerous benefits, called “primogeniture.”
2. For example, double the inheritance (Dt. 21:17)
3. Position of prestige and power in the family.

A cold, calculated, premeditated, ruthless ploy

Literally Jacob says, “Sell at once your birthright to me”
In verse 34, he says literally “Swear to me at once”

A “red stew” or a “lentil stew”?

Is Esau Any Better?

A ridiculous claim, “I am about to die”

Verse 32 – Gordon Wenham (the best Genesis scholar ever to live) explains it like this: “Esau prattles on, showing he is far from being on the point of death and exhibiting a careless indifference to a privilege that the ancient world held dear.”

Our Problems, and a Hope That Comes by Faith

Verse 34 – An explicit denouncement of Esau’s actions

Compare to Heb 12:16 (on screen)

What’s the difference between Jacob and Esau?

The presence of faith in the promise, even if it is a twisted faith

No heroes in this story. But we look to the true elder brother who would not grasp his birthright:

Philippians 2:6-7 “⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.”

Questions for Personal Study

1. How would you describe the atmosphere of your home? Is it an atmosphere with God at the center?
2. Is there anything you can change or any way to put God at the center?
3. Why is it important to understand that God’s chosen family was deeply broken and sinful?
4. Is your life characterized by hoping in the promise? Why or why not?