

THE PENTATEUCH I: GENESIS

WEEK 6

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OUTLINE

THE EIGHTH TOLEDOT: ISAAC

Textual Matters

Theological Matters

THE NINTH TOLEDOT: ESAU

Textual Matters

Theological Matters

THE TENTH TOLEDOT: JACOB

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ESAU AND JACOB

	Esau	Jacob
Parental Favor	Isaac	Rebekah
Temperament	Active	Passive
	Oblivious	Opportunistic
	Murderous	Mendacious
	Short-sighted	Shrewd
	Forgiving	Fearful
Values	Food (Cf. Isaac)	Birthright
	Women	Blessing
View of God	Hittite Wives	Pragmatic
	⇒ Idolatry	Teachable

POETIC JUSTICE

Before making these observations, I don't think Moses invented these, but drew attention to their natural occurrence.

- ▶ Isaac lies to Abimelech; Jacob lies to Isaac
- ▶ Jacob, the great liar is deceived by an even greater liar: Laban
- ▶ The Ten trick Jacob re: Joseph; Joseph tricks Sons

We witness deceit all around, contrasting with God's promises:

- ▶ Abraham and Isaac to Abimelech(s), Pharaoh
- ▶ Rebekah and Jacob to Isaac
- ▶ Jacob and Laban to one another
- ▶ Brothers to Shechemites

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SPIRITUAL TRAINING AND PARENTHOOD

Isaac's Passivity and Sensuousness:

- ▶ “Now Isaac loved Esau, because he had a taste for game [Lit. game was in his mouth]”
- ▶ Gets Hittite Wives for Esau
- ▶ No indication of deep teaching, very ignorant sons
- ▶ Remarkable silence on Isaac overall (Cf. 8 or so Abrahamic Theophanies vs. one for Isaac)

Later in the Pentateuch:

Deut 11:18,19- You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 19 You shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up

REVELATION AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

God patiently helps Jacob progress from total ignorance to appreciation of the God of History:

28:12-22 Incongruity of Jacob's Vow after God's promise

30:37; 31:12 Jacob's Magic, Manipulation vs. God's Promise

32:9-12 Jacob prays and cites God's revelation to him
(finally!)

32:22-32 Wrestles with God (Cf. Abraham's before S & G)

33:20 Jacob sets up an altar in Shechem

35:9-15 Jacob called to return to Bethel, Promise
Confirmed

REVELATION AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

God patiently helps Jacob progress from total ignorance to appreciation of the God of History:

- 37:11 His father kept the [dreams] in mind
- 42:36 “All these things are against me”
- 45:27 The spirt of their father Jacob revived.
- 48:3 “God Almighty appeared to me at Luz . . .”
- 48:15,6 “The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, The angel who has redeemed me from all evil,”
- 49:24,5 [Joseph’s] arms were agile, From the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel), From the God of your father who helps you,

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TEXTUAL PUZZLES

Within Genesis there is disagreement on Esau's wives:

Eighth Toledot		
Judith	Basemath	Mahalath
Beeri	Elon	Ishmael
(Hittite)	(Hittite)	(sister of Nebaioth)
Ninth Toledot		
Adah	Oholibamah	Basemath
Elon	Anah	Ishmael
(Hittite)	(Hivite)	(sister of Nebaioth)

There are theories about the distinct names, but peculiar commonalities are so striking as to suggest textual corruption.

AN EDITORIAL UPDATE?

Genesis 36:31 is claimed to be evidence of some kind of editorial updating (redaction):

Now these are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the sons of Israel.

How could Moses know there would be a king? How about the following references to Israelite kings:

- ▶ Gen 17:16-... kings of peoples will come from [Sarah] ...
- ▶ Gen 35:11-... And kings shall come forth from you [Jacob].
- ▶ Gen 49:10-The scepter shall not depart from Judah ...
- ▶ Numbers 24:7,17-his [Israel's] king shall be higher than Agag ... A scepter shall rise from Israel
- ▶ Deut 17:18-Now it shall come about when [the king] sits on the throne of his kingdom...

BROADER CAUTION ON COMMENTARY

Regarding Esau's genealogies:

*In all likelihood, the narrator has contribed this list in order to have twelve "grandsons" . . . counted as such by excluding Amalek the son of a concubine and by including the sons of Oholibamah.
(Waltke, 484)*

Reasons for Caution:

- ▶ The text really does not support this arrangement: if Moses wanted to use pattern, he could have not listed Amalek.
- ▶ Moses does use numerical devices for framing at times; Waltke strikes every number as a nail because he has a hammer.
- ▶ Generally, advanced knowledge can be useful but it can also confuse. Commentaries are not themselves Scripture.

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ABRAHAM'S DESCENDANTS

A peculiar theme running throughout Genesis is that even those who aren't elect are nevertheless formed into nations:

ISHMAEL Gen 17:20- "As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation."

ISHMAEL Gen 21:13- "And of the son of the maid I will make a nation also, because he is your seed."

VIA KETURAH "And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, Leummim"

ESAU Gen 25:23- [To Rebekah] The Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb . . ."

Implication: God forms nations and provides land for Abraham's children far beyond the children of promise.

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JUDAH AND TAMAR

Some claim that this episode is a late addition, presumably because it breaks Joseph's narrative.

Reasons why this break actually fits:

- ▶ These are semi-chronological. It's the most natural place to put the narrative, since it's during the interim between Judah giving up Joseph and his arrival in Egypt.
- ▶ Rough pattern of godly sons being discussed later and longer
- ▶ 38:1- "Judah departed from his brothers," indicates a deliberate contrast with Joseph's forceful exile.
- ▶ The break could be for establishing a literary sense of exile. It heightens the tension to have a digression before seeing how God redeemed the situation.

JOSEPH'S LIFE OF WAITING

- GEN 37:2 Age: 17-Received Dreams
- GEN 37:36 Age: 17(ish)- Sold into Slavery (Pejorative “Dreamer!”)
- GEN 39:2 Age: Early-20s?- Potiphar’s Chief Servant
- GEN 39:20 Age: Mid-20s?-Thrown in Jail
- GEN 41:1 Age: 28- Stuck in Jail, Interprets Dreams for Cupbearer, Baker
- GEN 41:46 Age: 30-Interprets Pharoah’s Dreams, Appointed Chief Administrator
- GEN 45:6 Age: 37-Brothers Appear in Egypt
- GEN 45:6 Age: 39-Reveals himself
- GEN 47:9, 28 Age: 56-Jacob Dies, Brothers Fear Joseph
- GEN 50:24 Age: 110- Dies, Requests Burial in Canaan

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FULFILLMENT OF PROMISE

Let's review God's work through Abraham's descendants so far:

1. In Genesis 11, Abraham was in Ur with no children.
2. At age 100, Abraham has one child (no nation, no property in Canaan).
3. Threat to Promise: Jacob in exile, in danger of murder
4. Gen 33:18, Jacob returns to Canaan safely, worships God.
5. Threat to Promise: Joseph in exile, Simeon captured by tyrant, Benjamin caught in theft! Plus, there's famine in Canaan!
6. The whole family settles in Egypt, granted most fertile land for national development.
7. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are all buried in Canaan, the promise land. (50:14)

What should we take from this?

FULFILLMENT OF PROMISE

What should we take from this?

1. When God makes a promise, he means it.
2. God is still working even amidst apparent total chaos.
3. We know from our standpoint that Israel becomes a nation, receives the land and Abraham's seed comes 2000 years later! God will not allow his word to fall to the ground.

*Matthew 24:35-Heaven and earth will pass away, but
My words will not pass away.*