

Bible Essentials

Scripture Passage: Genesis 27:1-40

Think about your past week. How has God answered prayer or worked in your life? What prayer requests do you have? Write them here. Then take time to pray about your requests and ask him to open your heart for today's study.

Read today's passage. Jot down your initial impressions of the passage.

Here is some context for Genesis 27:1-40.

After Isaac and Rebekah had their two sons Jacob and Esau, a famine hit the land, and God instructed Isaac to not go down to Egypt to avoid the famine. God confirmed the promise he made to Abraham, passing that promise along to Isaac. So instead of going to Egypt, Isaac sought solace in the land of the Philistines. While he was there, he made the same mistake Abraham did (twice!)—he told everyone that his wife was his sister in order to keep the people from harming him. Once the king of the Philistines, Abimelek, found out the truth, he was angry with Isaac but still gave orders to his people not to harm Isaac or Rebekah. (Abraham also pulled this trick on Abimelek in Genesis 20, but it was likely a different Abimelek—perhaps the father of the one mentioned in Genesis 26. Abimelek was a title for the Philistine ruler, similar to Pharaoh in Egypt.)

While Isaac lived with the Philistines, he became rich. His crops produced bountifully, and he had many flocks and servants. The Philistines became jealous of him, so Abimelek asked Isaac to move away from them. Isaac did so, and every time he found a well and opened it (the Philistines had stopped up all the wells that Abraham had dug), someone quarreled with him over it. So he kept moving on until he found a well that no one disputed. He settled there.

After he had settled, God again confirmed his blessing on Isaac, and Isaac worshipped God. Shortly after that, Abimelek came to Isaac and asked Isaac to make a treaty with the Philistines that they would always treat each other peacefully. They celebrated together and made the treaty.

At this point, the story shifts back to Jacob and Esau. The last time we looked at Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25), Esau had come in from the field famished, and he sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew. Esau eventually married some Hittite women, who were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah. Now, Isaac is old and ready to pass on the Lord's blessing to his children.

What are your thoughts about the context? Write some key points here.

Read the passage again. Use a different Bible version if you have one available. Then summarize the passage in your own words.

Look closely at the passage and answer the following questions.

What does the passage say about God?

What does the passage say about people?

What does the passage say about God's plan?

What else strikes you about this passage?

Understanding how a passage fits into the overarching story of the Bible is important.

In Genesis 12, God first gave his promise to Abraham that he would make Abraham into a great nation and bless him. God also promised Abraham a son through whom this promise and blessing would be carried on. That son was Isaac. At Abraham's death, the promise that God had with Abraham got passed on to Isaac—not Ishmael, Abraham's true firstborn, but Isaac, the promised son that Abraham had with Sarah. Now, at Isaac's death, it's time for that blessing to be passed on again. And God has determined that the blessing will not flow to Esau, the firstborn, but to Jacob, the younger twin.

In Genesis 28, God confirms his covenant with Jacob through a dream. He promises that Jacob's descendants will inherit the land he is on and that all peoples will be blessed through him. God promised to be with Jacob and watch over him wherever he goes. We will see through the rest of Genesis and the Old Testament that God keeps this promise. Jacob eventually has 12 sons that become the 12 tribes of Israel (although it's a little more complicated than that), and God does bring them back into the land as he promised. The Israelites do a pretty poor job of following God consistently, and Israel's enemies continually try to conquer them. At times, God gets so fed up with their disobedience and pursuing other false gods that he allows them to be defeated, and they eventually get carried off into captivity.

But through all this, God is faithful. God remembers his promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that he will bless all nations through them. So he preserves a remnant, specifically of the tribe of Judah, and he sends a Messiah through the line of Judah. This isn't just any Messiah. This is God himself, sent to earth as a man, sent to live a perfect life and to die for our sins. This is the true blessing that was passed down from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob. God cared for and preserved this family line so that Jesus could come to earth to be the Savior of the world.

What are your thoughts on how this passage fits into the overarching story of the Bible? Write your thoughts here. If you have any questions, write those as well. You may find answers in future lessons, or you may want to find another Christian that you can ask.

Use the following questions to apply today's Scripture passage to your own life.

How does this passage affect how you view God?

How does this passage affect how you view yourself?

How does this passage affect how you will live your life?

Close in prayer, asking God to help you apply what you learned today.