

God's Plan of Redemption Advances...
Genesis 25:12-34
May 19, 2021

The Book of Genesis has shown that God's plan of redemption is a progressively unfolding plan which began with God's promise of a redeemer in Gen. 3:15.

"These are the generations of" – the Hebrew word, toledot, can also be rendered "This is what happened to" and can be seen as superscription that marks key points of transition in the narrative.

God's plan of redemption advances...

I. ...By God's Faithfulness to His Promise (12-21)

Verse 12 - note how Ishmael is identified. He's identified as:

- "Abraham's son"
- "whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's servant, bore to Abraham"

In verses 13-15 Ishmael's offspring are listed and, in that list, we see the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. Gen. 17:20.

Verse 18 - "He settled over against all his kinsmen" which are the words God pronounced to Hagar about Ishmael in Gen. 16:12. (NASB - "he settled in defiance of all his relatives", NIV - "and they lived in hostility toward all the tribes related to them.")

Verse 17

- he lived 137 years, he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.
- Note the difference between the description of Ishmael's death and Abraham's death in 25:8.
- Ishmael's being gathered to his people should not be noted as an indication that he was gathered to the same people as Abraham's people in 25:8 but instead it is a reminder that he did not cease to exist when he died.

Note Isaac's response to Rebekah's barrenness in verse 21a, in what ways are Isaac's response an example for us to follow?

Gal. 4:21-5:1 contrasts Ishmael and Isaac and their mothers, Hagar and Sarah, to apply this narrative to us as Christians.

Why did Paul write of this contrast in his letter to the Galatians? **Gal. 5:2-6.**

Just as circumcision and adherence to the law through human effort is not able to produce the righteousness needed to save one's soul, neither would human effort accomplish the continued unfolding of God's plan of redemption through Abraham and his descendants.

II. ...By God's Exercise of His Sovereign Will (22-26)

Verse 22 - the babies are said to have "struggled together" (other meanings of the Hebrew word are to "crush" or "oppress").

Verse 23 - we are not given the means by which God's message is delivered to Rebekah, but the message was clear, there were not only two children but two nations.

While Rebekah likely did not fully understand that the nation of the younger would be the nation from which the redeemer would come she definitely did not understand the underlying spiritual truth that this event displayed. **Rom. 9:6-12.**

What is the similarity between God's indication that Jacob would be stronger than Esau in Gen. 25:23 and what we read in Rom. 9:6-12?

Verses 24-26 - in one of the first of what will be many contrasts of the brothers we're told that because of his hairy body the first son is named Esau. And this difference will be important later on in Genesis because we will learn in **Gen. 27:11** that Jacob is smooth.

In describing Jacob's very first act out of the womb we are given a glimpse of what would be a major aspect of his character for a large portion of his life.

III. ...By God's Lavishing His Marvelous Grace on the Undeserving (27-34)

Verses 27-28 quickly detail additional differences between the two boys. What is problematic is the family dynamic shown in verse 28 where we're told each parent favored one of the sons. **Jam. 2:8-9.**

Verses 29-34:

- The birthright or the right of the firstborn carried much more weight in Near Eastern culture than being the firstborn typically does today. **Deut. 21:15-17, 1 Chron. 5:1-2.**

In what ways are the sinfulness of Jacob and Esau displayed in verses 29-34? How might we as Christians behave in similarly sinful ways as either one or both of them?

Application

May we thank and praise God for His faithfulness to His promise to redeem a people for Himself, for His exercising His sovereign will by choosing us despite our being His enemies and our not seeking or wanting Him and for His lavishing His marvelous grace upon us, the most undeserving!