

BAND of BROTHERS

SPRING SERIES 2023 – WEEK 1

Genesis 26:6-28:5: God's Will Done Man's Way

You can make many plans, but the LORD's purpose will prevail.

– Proverbs 19:21 NLT

- **Back to the beginning**

- There is a recurring theme in the book of Genesis
- "Be fruitful and multiply"

"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." – Genesis 1:28 ESV

And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." – Genesis 9:1 ESV

"For God made human beings in his own image. Now be fruitful and multiply, and repopulate the earth." – Genesis 9:6-7 ESV

The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation." – Genesis 12:1-2 ESV

"I will give you so many descendants that, like the dust of the earth, they cannot be counted!" – Genesis 13:16 ESV

"...you shall be the father of a multitude of nations." – Genesis 17:14 ESV

"I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore." – Genesis 22:17 ESV

*“And the Lord appeared to him [Isaac] and said....**I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven...**” – Genesis 26:2, 4 ESV*

- **God’s way versus man’s way**

- Adam and Eve had successfully multiplied
- But they had filled earth with “bad fruit”

*When man began to multiply on the face of the land...The Lord saw that **the wickedness of man was great in the earth**, and that every intention of **the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually**. – Genesis 6:1, 5 ESV*

- The royal reboot (Genesis 6-8)
 - God destroyed all mankind in the flood
 - So, He started over with one righteous man
 - And mankind “multiplied and filled” again

*These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and **from these the nations spread abroad on the earth** after the flood. – Genesis 10:32 ESV*

- There are two groups of people on earth
 - The nation (*gôy*)
“I will make of you a great nation.” (12:2)
 - The nations (*gôyim*)
*“...through your descendants all the **nations** of the earth will be blessed,” (22:2)*
- Abraham: the father of the nation
 - God chose this childless Chaldean from Ur
 - He promised to make of him a great nation
 - But he died at the age of 175 with only 2 sons

These are the days of the years of Abraham's life, 175 years. Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, east of Mamre, the field that Abraham purchased from the Hittites. There Abraham was buried, with Sarah his wife. After the death of Abraham, God blessed Isaac his son. And Isaac settled at Beer-lahai-roi. – Genesis 25:7-11 ESV

- A new generation
 - Abraham has died
 - Isaac is next in line
 - His story begins much like his father’s

Now **there was a famine in the land**, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. – Genesis 26:1 ESV

Abraham (Genesis 12)

- Confronted by a famine
- Decides to go to Egypt
- “Say you are my sister”
- Pharaoh takes sister
- God afflicts Pharaoh
- Sarai is rescued

Isaac (Genesis 26)

- Confronted by a famine
- Forbidden to go to Egypt
- Settles in Gerar
- “Say you are my sister”
- Abimelech discovers the truth
- Abimelech confronts Isaac
- Rebekah is protected

- And both men end up blessed by God

So Abram went up from Egypt...**Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.** –Genesis 13:1, 2 ESV

And Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. The Lord blessed him, and **the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy.** – Genesis 26:12-13 ESV

- **Isaac: An abbreviated biography**

- Abraham’s life covers 14 chapters
- The long-awaited child of the promise gets just 7
- Isaac was to be a **conduit**, not the **climax**
- Chapter 27 functions as a transition point in the book
- Aptly summed up by 1 John 2:16

...all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. – 1 John 2:16 NLT

- It all began at home

Isaac loved Esau because he enjoyed eating the wild game Esau brought home, but **Rebekah loved Jacob.** – Genesis 25:28 NLT

- **Driven by appetites**

*“Behold, I am old; I do not know the day of my death. Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me, and **prepare for me delicious food, such as I love**, and bring it to me so that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die.”* – Genesis 27:2-4 ESV

- Isaac **craves** a meal
- Esau **covets** the blessing of the firstborn

- Rebekah **desires** her favorite son's advancement
- Jacob **hungers** for significance

*Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game and bring it, Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "**I heard your father speak to your brother Esau...**"* – Genesis 27:5-6 ESV

- Where there's a **will**, there's a **way**
 - o Rebekah means "ensnarer" or "rope with a noose"
 - o She is out to see that God's will gets done

*"The sons in your womb will become two nations. From the very beginning, the two nations will be rivals. One nation will be stronger than the other; and **your older son will serve your younger son.**"* – Genesis 25:23 NLT

- o Isaac also knew God's will concerning his sons
- o But he was trying to do a workaround
- o He wanted to bless his favorite son

*"I will pronounce the blessing **that belongs to you, my firstborn son**, before I die."* – Genesis 25:23 NLT

- **A highly dysfunctional family**

- Isaac was old, nearly blind, and pig-headed
- Rebekah was deceitful and manipulative
- Esau was impulsive and lacked self-control
- Jacob was a scheming opportunist

Genesis 25:29-34

- o Esau traded his birthright for a bowl of soup
- o Jacob took advantage of Esau's weakness
- o Now he attempts to steal Esau's blessing
- o But none of this was necessary

- **God's will always wins out**

*So he went in to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" Jacob said to his father, "**I am Esau your firstborn.**"* – Genesis 27:18-19 ESV

*But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" He answered, "**Because the LORD your God granted me success.**"* – Genesis 27:20 ESV

*He said, "Are you really my son Esau?" He answered, "**I am.**"* – Genesis 27:24 ESV

*So he came near and kissed him. And Isaac smelled the smell of his garments and **blessed him**... – Genesis 27:27 ESV*

- Isaac thought he was blessing Esau
- Rebekah thought she had pulled a fast one
- Esau thought he had earned a blessing
- Jacob thought he deserved an Oscar

“What nobody in this story seems to recognize is the hand of God working behind the scenes to accomplish His divine will. They seemed to believe that they were operating as fully autonomous free agents without any responsibility to answer to God for their actions. At no point does anyone seek God’s input or approval for their decisions. Driven by their emotions and depending upon their own wisdom, each decision they make only seems to make matter worse. This soap-opera-like story is actually an illustration of how God’s sovereignty and man’s autonomy interact in daily life.” – Ken Miller, *Devotionary™ on Genesis*

- **When men play God**

Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and directed him, “You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women. Arise, go to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel your mother's father, and take as your wife from there one of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. May he give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your offspring with you, that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings that God gave to Abraham!” Thus Isaac sent Jacob away. – Genesis 28:1-5 ESV

- Isaac gets used
- Esau gets cheated
- Rebekah gets disappointed
- Jacob gets sent away
- And the entire family gets imploded

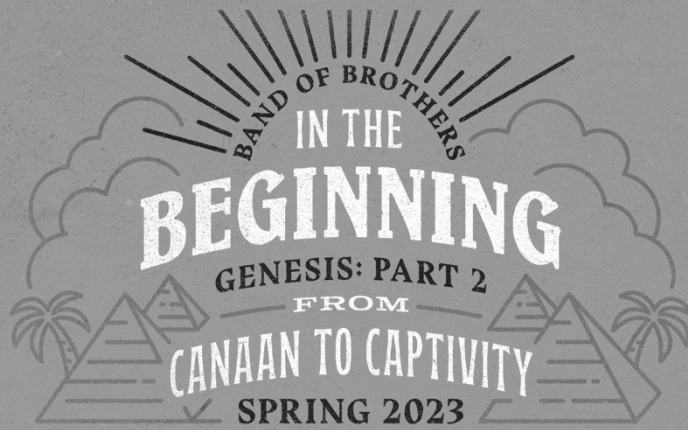
“But God was working behind the scenes and He had great plans for Jacob. The days ahead would be difficult. The next two decades would be filled with pain and sorrow. And Jacob, the deceiver, would find himself getting an unexpected and unpleasant dose of his own medicine – all for his own good and God’s glory.” – Ken Miller, *Devotionary™ on Genesis*

- **Discussion questions**

What has trying to play God looked like in your life and how has it turned out?

God’s will would be done, but at what price? What did their efforts end up producing?

Look up and discuss Proverbs 16:9 and 19:21.



BAND of BROTHERS

SPRING SERIES 2023 – WEEK 2 HOMEWORK

WEEK 2 – Genesis 28:6-30:43: Gone but Not Forgotten

This lesson will cover Jacob’s forced exile to Haran, in order to escape the wrath of his brother. Jacob will end up spending the next 20 years of his life in this distant land, being manipulated by his uncle and forced to serve as little more than his indentured servant. On his way to Haran, God will appear to Jacob in a dream, assuring the somewhat impulsive young man of His ongoing presence and promise to return to the land of Canaan at the right time. Despite Jacob’s dishonest treatment of his brother and his deception of his own aging father, he receives a divine commitment to eventually bless and multiply him.

- Read Genesis 28:6-30:43. Write down any thoughts that jump out at you from these verses.
- Now read pages 31-56 of Ken’s Devotionalary™ on Genesis Part II.
- What do you make of Esau’s actions recorded in verses 6-9? What do you think his motivation was in doing what he did?

What impact have the events of chapters 26-27 had on Esau? How would you describe his state of mind?

- Read verses 10-22, then consider the following quote from Ken’s Devotionalary™.

“The symbolism contained in this dream is powerful and significant. As Jacob lay in the darkness, separated from his family and facing an uncertain future, a host of angelic beings were moving back and forth between heaven and earth. These messengers of God represent His divine oversight and influence over all that happens on earth. Their movement between the two realms was meant to symbolize His sovereign control over the affairs of this world.

They were His celestial agents, carrying out His wishes and accomplishing His divine will among men.”

How would this vision compare with all the human efforts recorded in chapter 27? What is God trying to teach Jacob?

What does God promise Jacob in verses 14-15? Consider the fact that Jacob is headed out of the country and will be gone for 20 years. Why is this significant?

- Go back and read through Genesis 24, then read Genesis 29:1-30. Records any similarities and differences you see.

What do you make of Laban’s treatment of Jacob? When you consider how Jacob deceived his own father, is there some sense of justice in this passage?

- Genesis 28:31-30:24 records the children born to Jacob through his various wives and concubines. Use the space below to draw Jacob’s family tree.

How would you describe the relational dynamic in Jacob’s family?

- Read Genesis 30:25-43. Describe what you think is doing on in this bizarre story. What is the purpose behind Jacob’s proposal and how does it turn out?