

Womb Wars

Introduction

Divine Mentor Series

So far in this series we have looked at the incredible faith steps of two of our Divine Mentors...Abraham and Isaac. They were ordinary and flawed men who had incredible moments of brilliance through actions based on faith.

God was able to work through them because they believed His promises without hesitation. They knew that a promise of God, no matter how outlandish or unbelievable would happen because of who the promise giver was.

We have learned that a promise is only as good as the character, integrity, and honesty of the one who gives it. We spent a good part of last week looking at the promises of God...ok...small font...I heard. We will correct that today....I promise.

So today, we turn to another situation in the Bible where the promises of God are still being fulfilled in our lifetime. It is good to know that God never changes and He is working in our world just as He worked in theirs.

I watch the news.... Sometimes I must admit that I watch what is happening in our world and I pray, "God you still got this right? This stuff you planned? It working out the way you said it would right? Because God If I didn't know you were in control, I would be pretty freaked out right now

This tension in the middle east....your plan right? So many Arab nations all seem poised to strike Israel They have been fighting it seems since the beginning of time When we visited Israel eight years ago, you could feel the tension....it is cultural, it is personal and it is increasing. Now post Covid, post the current war...It seems like a powder keg that is just waiting for the right spark... and somehow you just know that spark is coming..

So when I see ISIS or Al Quieda, or Jihad terrorists....When I see Palestinians...the current war...the protestors in the streets....Anti Semitism exploding it seems everywhere...and amazingly here in the US. I see our nation losing its support for Israel...Russia, China, North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Turkey....

it seems the entire world is turning against this small Jewish country that God has promised to protect...It is hard to believe...but then so are all the promises of God...I have to remind myself that God is still in control....that His promises are true...and that He is sovereign. And most importantly that His word never fails.

Jesus encouraged us in this type of moment....

John 16:33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Mark 13:7–8 (ESV). 7 And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. 8 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains.

I believe to the core of my being that Jesus has overcome the world and that everything that is taking place...must be taking place...because God is completely, totally, and unwaveringly sovereign.

I didn't come to that reality overnight....It took me years to finally surrender to who Jesus is and what He promised...but to surrender to every word of the Bible as God's sovereign truth even if I didn't understand it or understand how it could be true.

Why do I have such faith, such confidence? Because I have read the book... This book is God's instruction manual for us. He described exactly what would happen in our world today through the story of Abraham and his family. Unwavering faith in the promises of God come from abiding in His word...spending time exploring and examining what God reveals in these ancient manuscripts.

Studying Abraham, Isaac, Joseph and so many others allows us to study ourselves as we examine their lives. Our faith is built moment to moment as we see that God has always been faithful in every promise yet revealed.

It is true in every relationship. Think about the person in this world other than Jesus that you trust the most. Why do you have that trust? You trust in them and their promises is based upon your relationship with them... If you have seen them faithful over and over...it becomes easier to believe that character trait will continue.

Many people have not built their faith in God because they are not spending time with Him. They come to church, they say they believe, they sing worship songs, they are moved by sermons and the prayers of others....but when it comes to their personal time abiding in Christ on their own...crickets. And then when their world becomes scary they discover they have no foundation...they can't trust the big promises of God because they never spent time invested in the little promises that come from a real relationship with Him.

Every single word in this book is straight from God's heart to our soul. It is explained to us and revealed by the Holy Spirit in us (as believers) and it is the basis for every decision, every thought and every action that we are to take. This is the only book ever that self proclaimed holiness....this book claims to have literally been breathed out by God to us....It is God's truth. It is the Gospel.

I have said repeatedly that every story in the Old Testament foretells the future of the Messiah. And every story in the New Testament foretells the future of Jesus as Messiah.

We have been looking at Abraham...but today I want to look at two of his grandsons. Specifically I want to look at two sons of Isaac.

Remember that God has promised that Abrahams descendants would outnumber the stars and a great morning Star...the Messiah...Jesus would come from his family. His family and He in particular would be a blessing for the entire world. Additionally, God told Abraham that the blessing would come through Isaac and not Ishmael.

Ishmael

Abraham With Hagar has a son named Ishmael (Fam Tree Slide 1) Ishmael....who we studied earlier....was not the offspring that God had promised....The promised blessings of Abram's offspring would not be through Ishmael. Although God did make some promises about Ishmael and his descendants. And importantly these promises were also without conditions.

Genesis 17:19–20 (ESV) — 19 God said, “No, but Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. 20 As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation.

A few chapters later...

Genesis 21:13 (ESV) — 13 And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring.”

Genesis 21:17–18 (ESV) — 17 And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. 18 Up! Lift up the boy, and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make him into a great nation.”

But what kind of nation would He be?

Genesis 16:11–12 (ESV) — 11 And the angel of the LORD said to her, “Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has listened to your affliction. 12 He shall be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone’s hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen.”

He shall be wild....they will fight with everyone...everyone will fight against them...they will even fight against themselves.

Genesis 21:20–21 (ESV) — 20 And God was with the boy, and he grew up. He lived in the wilderness and became an expert with the bow. 21 He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

Lived in the Wilderness of Paran....modern day Sinai and Saudi Arabia.... Expert with the bow....expert fighter Wife from Egypt...an ominous sinful place.

Isaac

With Sarah had a son named Isaac He was the promised son. The one God gave the blessing.
(Fam Tree Slide 2)

Genesis 26:3–5 (ESV) — 3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. 4 I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, 5 because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.”

Rather than marry a local Canaanite.....Isaac goes back to Haran to marry one of his relatives....Her name is Rebekah.

Isaac and Rebekah

When Rebekah is pregnant she realizes that something odd is happening inside of her...so she inquires of God.

Genesis 25:22–23 (ESV) —22 The children struggled together within her, and she said, “If it is thus, why is this happening to me?” So she went to inquire of the LORD. 23 And the LORD said to her, “Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger.”

She ends up having twins....The oldest is Esau...the younger is Jacob (Fam Tree Side 3)

Two nations.....the nation of Esau's descendants.....and the nation of Jacob's descendants Two peoples from within you shall be divided. These two nations have been struggling from the womb.

This gets a bit confusing doesn't it? It is easier to think of it this way. God was going to give Abraham one family line...The Jewish Line through Isaac. But Abraham did his own thing and had Ishmael...sort of a mistake nation that does not carry the blessing.

Now it is Isaac's turn...He marries Rebekah and she has twins....these are two twin lines through the promised line of Isaac. The blessing of the future messiah would come through one of them. The oldest twin is Esau and the youngest twin is Jacob.

God tells Rebekah two nations are in her womb...on stronger than the other...the younger older shall serve the younger....

Two nations.....the nation of Esau's descendants.....and the nation of Jacob's descendants Two peoples from within you shall be divided. These two nations have been struggling from the womb. Through some clever manipulations....Isaac ends up blessing Jacob instead of his oldest

Genesis 27:26–29 (ESV) — 26 Then his father Isaac said to him, “Come near and kiss me, my son.” 27 So he came near and kissed him. And Isaac smelled the smell of his garments and blessed him and said, “See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed! 28 May God give you of the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth and plenty of grain and wine. 29 Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may your mother’s sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be everyone who blesses you!”

God give you plenty of grain and wine Peoples serve you.....nations bow down to you
You will Lord over your brother...Esau. Even though he is the oldest and should have been blessed first...he and his offspring will serve you. They will bow down to you.
Curses to those who curse you.....blessings to those who bless you...Then to Esau...

Genesis 27:39–40 (ESV) — 39 Then Isaac his father answered and said to him: “Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be, and away from the dew of heaven on high. 40 By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; but when you grow restless you shall break his yoke from your neck.”

You shall live on hard land....dry land... You shall live by your sword You shall serve your brother Jacob But you will grow restless and break free from him...

So we have Esau and Jacob or now actually Jacob and then Esau. The blessing of Isaac runs through Jacob....Thus God is called the God of Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob...It is time for each of them to find wives....notice where they go.

Esau also decides that he needs a wife....look at where he goes to find his wife...

Genesis 28:8–9 (ESV) — 8 So when Esau saw that the Canaanite women did not please Isaac his father, 9 Esau went to Ishmael and took as his wife, besides the wives he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham’s son, the sister of Nebaioth.

He marries Ishmael's daughter!!!! So the mistake of Abraham that produced the line of Ishmael...has joined family trees with the non-blessed line of Isaac through Esau... The promise God gave to Ishmael will forever more align with the promise that God gave to Esau.

Ishmael's promise? "

12 He shall be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone’s hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen.”

Now combined with Esau's promise...

“Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be, and away from the dew of heaven on high. 40 By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; but when you grow restless you shall break his yoke from your neck.”

A nomadic people...constantly fighting with others and with each other....particularly trying to break the yoke of the blessed Jewish line through Jacob. The mothers of this

lineage are an Egyptian for Ishamael and a Caananite for Esau...not good...two very pagan lands.

So Ishmael and Esau become one family tree if you will Family Tree 4living in modern day Sinai, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. Esau's descendants were called Edomites....Modern day Arabs. They are wanderers....darkly pigmented....expert fighters.... As predicted Esau has 12 sons all of whom live in Arabia east of Egypt toward Assyria. Constantly at war with each other...various religious sects...and with the world...particularly Israel.

Jacob will also have twelve sons, but first he must find a wife...Where does he go?

Isaac tells Jacob to find a wife from the wife pool back home in Haran. So that the blessing can flow through their family. Isaac takes off to find a wife...a Jewish wife...notice the importance of keeping the Jewish line for the Messiah clear.

But Jacob is messed up too...at least his circumstances are less than ideal...He goes to find his wife...and through a bizarre switcharoo process ends up with two wives...Leah and Rachel. It was a kind of two for one deal. Unfortunately, he loved one and not the other. He also ends up with two slave women....Family Tree Slide 5....and overall with 13 children...one daughter and 12 Sons of Jacob...

Seven kids through Leah Family Tree Slide 6...6 men and 1 daughter....

Two male children through Rachael...and two male children through each of his concubines Bilah and Zilpah.

12 Sons of Jacob..through 4 different women...Jacob ends up wrestling with God and God changes his name to Israel..

Jacob's birth name, Jacob, means "supplanter, deceiver"; it was given to him because, when Jacob was born as the second of a set of twins, "his hand [was] grasping [his twin's] heel" (Genesis 25:26). True to his name, Jacob grew up as a conniver, deceiver, and cheat, and he eventually supplanted his brother's position as heir to the birthright.

After Jacob's struggle with the Lord at Peniel, the Lord gave Jacob a new name: Israel. And God gave the reason: "Because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome"

Thus the "heel-catcher" became "one who struggles with God." Later, God appears to Jacob/Israel again in Bethel, reaffirms the name change, and gives him the same covenant that Abraham had received

So..Abraham to Isaac...Isaac to Jacob and Jacob now Israel has 12 male children through 4 women. These become the 12 tribes of Israel.

These 12 male carry God's promise and blessing Their offspring will become the 12 tribes of Israel. Reuben is the oldest.....Then Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher and the two favorites..... Born from Rachel- the one Isaac Loved...Joseph and Benjamin.

The Dysfunctional Family of Jacob....

The key to having a dysfunctional family is to have parents who favor one child over the other...

Reuben....the oldest and from Leah....not favored Joseph...way down the line....but Rachel's firstborn....highly favored....bright coat kind of favored.... Joseph the favored son of Israel....is betrayed by his brothers....robe taken from him....falsely accused....thrown in a pit....sold for silver.....proclaimed to be dead but actually alive....

12 Tribes of Messed up people, but who carry the promises of God...They are the grandkids of Abraham and Sarah. Sarah eventually dies and Abraham remarries and has 6 more sons through his new wife Katurah Family Tree 7 . None of them are in the promised line but they become the Midianites and settle to the east of the Jordan river in Caanan.

Later on Moses will travel to Midian and find a wife there.

When Moses fled the wrath of Pharaoh, he traveled to Midian. There, Moses met and married his wife, Zipporah, and served his father-in-law, Jethro, as a shepherd for forty years. At the end of Moses' time in Midian, God appeared to Moses—still in Midian—and commissioned him to lead the Israelites out of slavery. The Midianites served God and Moses partnered with them during the exodus...but they soon turned against God and if you remember, Gidian destroyed them with 300 men. Everything is this family tree is orchestrated and completed by God.

Ok so let's dive back into our text today....and look at one of the twelve tribe leaders...a son of Rachel the one Jacob loved....Joseph. We pick him up at age of seventeen as a shepherd with his brothers.

Genesis 37:1–3 (ESV) — 1 Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan. 2 These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father.

Thus begins one the remarkable life stories of the Bible and all literature. "He was loved and hated, favored and abused, tempted and trusted, exalted and abased. Yet at no point in the one-hundred-and-ten-year life of Joseph did he ever seem to get his eyes off God or cease to trust him.

Adversity did not harden his character. Prosperity did not ruin him. He was the same in private as in public. He was a truly great man.

This family is messed up. 4 Moms. Leah and Rachel and then each of their maidens had 2 children each with Jacob. Of the 4 women....Jacob only really loved one- Rachael And as a result he favored his children with her- Joseph and Benjamin

Genesis 37:3–4 (ESV) — 3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors. 4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.

Dysfunctional family.....Father loved Joseph more than any other.... tunic of many colors. This signified a position of favor, princely standing, and birthright. It was a dramatic way of saying he was the son to receive the birthright.

The real idea behind the ancient Hebrew phrase for tunic of many colors is that it was a tunic extending all the way down to the wrists and ankles, as opposed to a shorter one. This was not what a workingman wore. It was a garment of privilege and status.

Genesis 37:5–8 (ESV) — 5 Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. 6 He said to them, “Hear this dream that I have dreamed: 7 Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf.” 8 His brothers said to him, “Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?” So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

Note that the dream involved sheaths....His rule over them would involve food.

Genesis 37:9–11 (ESV) — 9 Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, “Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” 10 But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, “What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?” 11 And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

Genesis 37:12–15 (ESV) — 12 Now his brothers went to pasture their father’s flock near Shechem. 13 And Israel said to Joseph, “Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.” And he said to him, “Here I am.” 14 So he said to him, “Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock, and bring me word.” So he sent him from the Valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. 15 And a man found him wandering in the fields. And the man asked him, “What are you seeking?”

The Father sent his favored Son to find his family. But they were not where he expected them to be.

Genesis 37:16–17 (ESV) — 16 “I am seeking my brothers,” he said. “Tell me, please, where they are pasturing the flock.” 17 And the man said, “They have gone away, for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’ ” So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.

MAP 12 Miles north of Samaria

Genesis 37:18–20 (ESV) — 18 They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. 19 They said to one another, “Here comes this dreamer. 20 Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams.”

Which son do you think should have hated Joseph the most? Reuben the first born. He was to be the blessed one. He was to receive the first portion from his father. Yet Jacob loved Joseph more.

Genesis 37:21–22 (ESV) — 21 But when Reuben heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, “Let us not take his life.” 22 And Reuben said to them, “Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him”—that he might rescue him out of their hand to restore him to his father.

Reuben planned to throw Joseph into a pit and then be the hero and rescue him later...along with blaming his other brothers....They were all dysfunctional....Reuben thought that by saving his brother and turning in the others, that he would be restored as the first born favored Son.

Genesis 37:23–24 (ESV) — 23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore. 24 And they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

Joseph is now betrayed by his brothers, falsely accused out of jealousy, and thrown into a pit

Genesis 37:25–29 (ESV) — 25 Then they sat down to eat. And looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. 26 Then Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? 27 Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.” And his brothers listened to him. 28 Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt.

Favored son...rejected and hated by brothers....betrayed to others....for pieces of silver.....thrown into a pit? All stories point to Jesus...Just saying.

Genesis 37:29–30 (ESV) — 29 When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes 30 and returned to his brothers and said, “The boy is gone, and I, where shall I go?”

Tearing your clothes was a sign of grief and anguish. It often signals not being responsible for what just happened. Reuben had his own deceptive plans but unlike the other brothers, it was not to ultimately harm Joseph. However, now he goes along with the crowd...

Genesis 37:31–33 (ESV) — 31 Then they took Joseph’s robe and slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. 32 And they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, “This we have found; please identify whether it is your son’s robe or not.” 33 And he identified it and said, “It is my son’s robe. A fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces.”

Genesis 37:34–35 (ESV) — 34 Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. 35 All his sons and all his daughters rose up to

comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

Genesis 37:36 (ESV) — 36 Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.

There are the Midianites again...and sold to Egypt...into royal places.

Can I remind you.... That these are the patriarchs of the 12 tribes of Israel

Ordinary people....messed up people.....who do stupid things.....and yet God still blesses them. Abraham's family has been dysfunctional almost from the beginning. But as the Bible promised us...that dysfunction would not only occur during Abraham's life, but would extend even to our world today.

These events early in Genesis shape our world.....define our news stories....and foretell our future. Let me see if I can show you....how we got where we are today in the Middle East.

The Arab Nations Family tree 8

Through this family....we begin to see our world....Two nations....struggling with one another.... The Arab nation....descendants of Ishmael and Esau and the Sons of Keturah

Dark....wanderers....not settling in cities...expert fighters....oppressed by the other nation....violently breaking free from that bondage.... living east of the Promised Land They shall be wild....they will fight with everyone...everyone will fight against them...they will even fight against themselves.

The Jewish Nations

The Jewish Nation....descendants of Abraham...Isaac....and Jacob City dwellers....possess the blessing of God....with serve over the other nation....constantly being blessed by God...living in the promised land...producing the Messiah... These two nations....from Abraham's family...dominate our news today....Just as God said it would happen.

Arab/Jewish Map 1

The outcome has already been decided....God has made His choice. Joseph was Israel's favorite son....

So when you turn on the news...or pick up the paper....and you begin to get uneasy about the events unfolding in our world Just remember that this is the longest standing family feud in the world. World Map

God ordained it....predicted it....promised it....and is in control of it. In the first book of the Bible God unveils the story of human history. He unveils the story of our history. We build our faith....because He is never wrong.

When people ask me what I think of what is going on in the Middle East, my answer is usually the same...God is working out His plan. What we are watching is one of the greatest examples of God as a faithful promise keeper. He has kept the promise that He gave to Abraham for over 2000 years. If God says something is going to happen, it is going to happen.

The events of the middle east should bring us comfort and reassurance. Not fear and anxiety. God is in control. God is sovereign. God made a promise. God promises are always rock solid. He said do not fear as these things MUST take place. So I don't.....I have learned to replace my fear with faith. Not in the promise...but rather the promise giver. Let's Pray.

