

Discussion Guide

Week of August 17, 2014

Genesis 25

Passage Overview: Genesis 25, especially vv1–11, completes the narrative begun in Genesis 11:27. More is said about Abraham here, particularly information about his death and burial, but this is more for a sense of completion. Starting in v19, a new section on Isaac’s immediate family takes shape, running through Genesis 37:1 and focusing primarily on Jacob. In Genesis 25 readers get a taste of things to come with the account of Jacob and Esau’s birth. Consequently, Genesis 25 serves as a turning point in the story of God’s people as the focus shifts from Abraham to Jacob and his descendants, God’s people.

Understanding the Text—Read Genesis 25.

- Who dies in this chapter? Who is born in this chapter?
- Why is it important to know the genealogy presented here?
- What distinguishes Isaac from the “sons of [Abraham’s] concubines” in v6? Why?
- Read Genesis 17:20. How is this fulfilled in 25:12–18?
- Isaac shares similarities with Abraham, but how is Rebekah like Sarah? (See v21.)
- How is v22 a foreshadowing of things to come?
- How is v23 a shocking reversal of expectation?

Living and Applying God’s Word

- The struggle between Jacob and Esau anticipates coming events but it also harkens back to the past. What other brothers have struggled together already in Genesis? Why is brotherly strife a theme in Genesis? What brought it about? (*Recall the chapters in Genesis when conflict had not yet happened. Where’s the turning point?*) What is the remedy for this? How can you be sure? (Read Heb 2:10–18.)
- Normally, firstborn males received greater privileges than their siblings, but here God clearly reverses that custom. Why do you think he does so? Read Rom 9:7–13 for more on this. Why should this text be an encouragement? In particular, what qualifies a person for God’s grace?
- The very name “Jacob” carries a connotation of deception, which quickly becomes Jacob’s identity. How can sin become our identity? How can you tell if someone puts his or her identity in a particular sin? What do they say? How do they act? Think of the sins you find most difficult to defeat. Do you think of them as part of your identity? How can you divorce your sin from your identity? Read 1 Cor 6:9–11.

Turning to God in Faith and Repentance

- Look back at God’s promises to Abraham in Gen 12:2–3 and 17:1–8. This was Esau’s birthright. What do we learn about Esau’s valuation of it? Read Heb 12:16.
 - Christians also have an inheritance. What is it? Read Rom 8:16–17. How valuable is your inheritance to you? When are you tempted to devalue it or to trade it in?
 - How have you taken your “birthright” for granted? What would repentance look like in this area?
- In particular, one corollary to Esau’s birthright is God’s promise to bless the nations through Abraham’s offspring. Esau considered bread and stew more worthy than God’s mission to bless the nations. Consider your own priorities. What do you value more than God’s mission to reconcile the world to himself? (An easy way to do this is by seeing how you use your money, time and talent.) How can you repent of this?

Prayer: Pray for the needs of your group. Focus especially on how you as a group and as individuals can fight temptation to turn from the Gospel in even small “mundane” moments. Pray for a right view of yourself and others in light of the Gospel and confess sin together. Please also pray for Christians around the world, especially in Iraq, that they would hold fast to the hope of Christ and find grace in times of need.

Announcements

- Starting Pointe (September 12–14; RSVP to robert@insidecrosspointe.com)
- Ladies’ Lunch (August 19 @ noon; RSVP to nicole@insidecrosspointe.com)
- Young Adult Lunch (August 24 after worship; RSVP to will@insidecrosspointe.com)