

The Father of Many Nations

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Preacher: Jeff Jackson

[0:00] Beloved Genesis chapter 25. I told Pastor Greg earlier that I meant to look over how many sermons I've preached in these 25 chapters.

! I don't know. We've been in it a while, but four months of that I was out of pocket. But it's been a little while.

I'm going to stop here in Genesis 25 and we're going to turn to a different book of the Bible, which will be announced soon. And it has been a joy for me to see once again, God reassure me, remind me how applicable and relevant the Scripture, the Scriptures are to our lives.

If we'll just read the Scripture and interpret the Bible by what it says, it means what it says. That's the meaning. And if we'll do that, there's nothing in the Bible that we can read that isn't in some way relevant to us understanding our God, His ways, and then living as repenters before Him.

And this chapter is no exception. Now, it was a challenge for me as I read through this, the genealogies and dealt with the names and then tried to figure out what it was about Isaac having these twin boys that was supposed to be relevant to the genealogies and figuring.

[1:32] But that's part of the joy is the challenge of Bible study, of digging in and understanding. It's very interesting in our congregation right now that both our men's Bible study and our women's Bible studies are zeroing in on helping our congregation better understand how to approach the Bible and deal with any particular verse or verses or chapter within its context and understand God's meaning by what the Bible says.

Not what you think it says or what you read into what it says, but what it says. So we're trying to factor us out of it as much as possible as we try to come to the original meaning that the Holy Spirit intended when He wrote the Scriptures.

The women's Bible study is doing that as Maribi takes you through and teaches you how to look at a passage of Scripture and begin to take it apart in a very responsible way using hermeneutical principles.

That is the science of interpretation. We use that science not to just interpret the Bible, but any work of literature. Where we want to understand what the author means by what he says.

We're doing that in our men's study on Tuesday, and I want to thank the men. Ladies, you need to know how proud your pastors are of our brothers in Christ. When we showed up Tuesday, we had several men who have pledged to be a part of the study who couldn't be there Tuesday.

[3:02] But with everybody, Greg, was it like 18, 17? Not including me and Greg. So about not yet. This middle area was full of men with their laptops up or their phones out walking through all of this.

And they're going to go through this course with us on how to study the Bible. It's just a beautiful thing. It is the difference between you growing in Christ over the course of your life in significant ways, responsible ways, or not.

You need to know how to feed yourself. And so a lot of what you see Pastor Greg and I do as Matt comes to preach on occasion, what you see us do in unpacking the text and preaching from the text is something that we have learned to do by learning how to study the Bible.

I was telling the gentleman back here on the soundboard earlier this morning. When I pray, and I have many things I pray when I study the scriptures to help me understand.

One of the things I ask God to do is help me to stay text tight. Tight to the text. I want to be tied to the text. If you see me step away and do this, it's just me trying to elucidate the text, alright?

[4:22] I'm still trying to stay in the Bible. Alright, well with all that said, let me offer you the, if I haven't already, the title of my message. The Father of Many Nations from Genesis 25.

And this will be the conclusion of our time in Genesis for now. There may be a time when I come back and pick up in 26 and finish the whole book at that point. We'll see. And as we start this

morning to think about this and walk into what we're dealing with, I want to share some things that Jesus has said that are relevant to you as believers.

Worshippers of the Father. The Lord God Almighty. The God of Abraham. The God who sent us Jesus on the cross. The first thing I want to share is this. Jesus said, He who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me.

Alright, so Jesus has told us, how to love him. He has not left that ambiguous. This is agape love. This is the love of sacrifice. This is the love of faithful commitment.

This is the love that says no to self. And does what is best for the other person. He who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me.

[5:34] So this isn't lip service. This is heart service to God. Now in contrast, He then says this just a few verses later. He who does not love me does not keep my words.

Now folks, can you see why the Bible is so important to the Christian life? Studying the Bible, knowing the Scriptures, memorizing the Scriptures, taking God's Word into your heart, praying God's Word, singing God's Word, living God's Word, ministering God's Word to others.

Those are ways that you show love to God. Now you have to ask yourself, please be careful.

Please be careful not to be one of these folks who claims by your mouth to be a Christian and shows little if any love to God because you don't love His Word.

It is a both and proposition. To love Jesus is to love His Word and to take His Word into your heart and to keep it. To live by His Word, His truth.

Jesus says if you love me, you'll keep my Word. But if you don't love me, you will not keep my Word. Now it's that plain and simple. Now why is this so important to us?

[6:55] Well listen, if you are making a genuine effort, a sincere effort, to obey the Lord in love to Him, your desire then is to live out Jesus' priorities in your life.

You can't help it. The Word is going to bring you into conviction by the power of the Holy Spirit to live out the truth of God in your life. You're going to want to please Jesus from a life that is Word, Word driven, Word founded, Word grounded.

That truth is going to have to make its way out. That's exactly the way we're called to live. You love Jesus, so you want to please Him in all that you think, say, and do.

You love Jesus, so you desire with all your heart to please Him in all that you think, say, and do.

You'd rather have your arms cut off than sin against the Lord.

And when you sin against the Lord, when you do, and I do, when we sin against the Lord, we're quick to rush to the throne where Jesus sits interceding for us and seek the grace and wisdom and forgiveness that only He can give us.

[8:08] This is our walk with God. Now let me put this up on the screen so that you can see it written out. You love Jesus. He lives in you, so you consider the impact of your contact with everyone you encounter in this life.

You consider the impact of your contact with everyone you encounter in life. The grocery store person, the person on the road, the people that whatever, as you come and go.

Being loved by Jesus and loving Jesus defines you. Or does it? You see, He first loved you is why you loved Him. Now hold on to that.

God first loved me so that I can love Him and others. What are the two greatest commandments? That's right.

To love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength and to love others as you love yourself. Love. Here we go again. Being loved by Jesus and loving Jesus defines you.

[9:21] And then I'll put this up on the screen for you to see in word form. Your relationship with Jesus is your way of life. Your relationship with Him is the greatest truth of your life.

Your relationship with Jesus is your life. Now if you look what's emphasized there, He is the way, the truth, and the life. And that's what that means.

He is the way, the truth, and the life. And then I would like to lead you in your mind as I'm just giving you steps of thought that connect to each other.

And this next thought, please think carefully about this for your personal life, alright? The bottom of the screen. It matters why you believe you are here.

It matters why you believe God made you. It matters why you believe God saved you. And it matters how you are living right now as God lives in you.

[10 : 29] It matters why your life matters to God. Why did He save you? Why are you still breathing? It matters why you believe you're here.

If you believe you're here to make money and get as much as you can out of your money, then that's the priority of why you work and why you do what you do.

And people will see that about you. And it will matter that you believe that. Your life will look like that. But if why you believe you are here has everything to do with loving Jesus, what do you suppose your life will look like if that's your highest priority?

It will look like that's your highest priority. It is your highest priority to love Jesus. What does it look like for you to do that? Well, you know it starts with His Word.

So what does God's Word mean to you? How much of God's Word are you taking into your heart in terms of allowing it to change you? Allowing it to arrange your priorities. Does God's Word arrange your priorities?

[11 : 46] These questions are as challenging to me and to Pastor Greg as they are to you. We're human. We live in a fallen world and we have to fight self. And we have to fight sin and we have to fight Satan just like you do.

We don't get a pass because we're pastors. In fact, I would say the heat's higher. It's turned up a little more. Because you love Jesus, your legacy in the Lord that you leave behind you matters to God.

Like Abraham, it matters to you as a believer that you are living your life to help ready the next generation in service to Jesus.

Are you? How much of your life is being lived to ready the next generation coming behind you to live for Christ? I don't mean just your children. This has everything to do with the way we spend our money, His money, how we use the time that God's given us, the various priorities that we give ourselves to day in and day out and how we go about living out those priorities.

So as we conclude our time in Genesis, we come to the end of Abraham's time on earth. And we take a hard look at his legacy. Abraham is laser focused on doing everything he can to invest in the next generation of God-fearers and fellow servants of the Lord.

[13 : 24] And I want you to see that. For some time now, for decades, this man, not knowing the day of his death, has been really working diligently, disciplinedly, to invest in the next generation because he knows the promise of God.

Abraham, through you, you will be the father of many nations, not just the Jewish nation, many peoples. And many people of different tongues, tribes, and nations will come to believe as you have believed and follow in the same faith that you've lived in.

And we're thankful for that because we're some of those people. Now, what I want to do is use this chapter to focus our attention on the spiritual work of God's electing grace in Abraham's life.

It's one of the most beautiful, if not the most beautiful, doctrines in all of Scripture. God's electing grace. Now, you might say, well, Jeff, what does that mean?

What is electing grace? Let me put it up here for you very simply. Electing grace is God's saving favor on whom he chooses. Saving favor on whom he chooses.

[14 : 38] All people who've ever been born and currently are living and who will ever be born live under the grace of God. But not everyone lives under his saving grace. Some he chooses to save.

And that is electing. I elect you. I choose you. That is what we're dealing with.

This grace of God made the difference in Abraham's life as a God-fearer. We wouldn't be able to read any of the things we've read about Abraham if God had not elected him or shown him saving favor.

and brought him out of what he was in in the way of an unbeliever. He was a man who was highly esteemed because he worshipped the one true God.

He had a high and holy reverence for God, the Lord God Almighty. Now what we need to remember is this. We need to remember that God's saving favor is based in God's loving promise to bless Abraham and to bless a mighty host of people.

[15 : 49] Too numerous to count. I mean, he said, compare them to the sands of the sea, compare them to the stars of the sky. They'll be too numerous. That's the point. There'll be so many of them you could never count them, Abraham, that are going to come behind you in saving faith because I've chosen them.

Boy, this is the favor of God's saving love. So keeping this promise that God's made to Abraham begins with his immediate family.

So let me read the passage and then we'll look into different aspects of this electing grace that we see here. Now, Abraham took another wife whose name was Keturah.

Now, she bore to him and here's the list of names that we want to go by as we see this new family after Sarah's death being raised up in Abraham's life.

She, that is Keturah, his next wife, bore to him Zimron. Zimron. And then we have Yokshan and Midan and Midian and Ishbak and Shua.

[17:06] And then Yokshan in verse 3 became the father of Shiva and Dedan. The sons of Dedan were Ashurim and Letushim and Leumin.

The sons of Midian or Midian were Aifa and Ifer and Hanach and Avidah and Eldah.

All these were the sons of Keturah. Now, Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. It's very interesting. After listing all those new sons, Abraham gives everything to Isaac.

But to the sons of his concubines, this would include his new wife Keturah, Abraham gave gifts while he was still living. Then he did this.

He sent them away, all of them, from his son Isaac eastward to the land of the east, that is, east of Canaan, east of what would be Israel. These are all the years of Abraham's life that he lived, 175 years old before he died.

[18:15] Wow! Abraham breathed his last and died in a ripe old age, an old man satisfied with life, and he was gathered to his people. Then his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar, the Hittite, facing Mamre, the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth.

There Abraham was buried with Sarah, his wife. It came about after the death of Abraham that God blessed his son Isaac, and Isaac lived by Bilal Roy.

Now, these are the records of the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar, the Egyptian, Sarah's maid, bore to Abraham, and these are the names of the sons of Ishmael by their names in the order of their birth.

The first one is Nevaot, the firstborn of Ishmael, and Kedar, and Adbil, and Mibsam, and Mishma, and Duma, and Masa, Hadad, Teima, Yetur, Nafish, and Kedma.

These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names by their villages, by their camps, twelve princes, according to their tribes. These are the years of the life of Ishmael, 137 years, and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.

[19:55] They settled from Havilah to Shur, which is east of Egypt as one goes toward Assyria. He settled in defiance of all his relatives.

If the translation you're using has a different set of words for the end of verse 18, hold on, don't worry, we'll get to that in just a little while.

Now, verse 19, these are the records of the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham became the father of Isaac, and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, the Aramean of Paddan Aram, the sister of Laban, the Aramean to be his wife.

Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife because she was barren, and the Lord answered him, and Rebekah, his wife, conceived. But the children struggled together within her.

And she said, if it is so, then why am I this way? So she went to inquire of the Lord. The Lord said to her, two nations are in your womb, two peoples will be separated from your body, and one people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger.

[21:15] When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. Now the first came forth red all over like a hairy garment, and they named him Esau.

Afterward, his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel. So his name was called Jacob. And Isaac was 60 years old when she gave birth to him.

When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob or Jacob was a peaceful man living in tents. Now Isaac loved Esau because he had a taste for gain, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

When Jacob had cooked stew, Esau came in from the field and he was famished. And Esau said to Jacob, please let me have a swallow of that red stuff there, I'm famished. Therefore, his name was called Edom, which means red.

But Jacob said, first sell me your birthright. Esau said, behold, I'm about to die. So of what use is my birthright to me? And Jacob said, first swear to me.

[22:23] So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew and he ate and drank and rose and went on his way. And thus, Esau despised his birthright.

Well, that's a lot of interesting stuff and a lot going on. Here's how we'll start this morning. We're talking about God's electing grace, his saving favor in choosing whom he will.

And that is an electing grace promised. And Abraham is the immediate recipient. God chooses Abraham. If you look back with me at Genesis 11, we'll set the tone for the context that we're dealing with in this chapter.

Genesis chapter 11 and we'll begin in verse 26. Here is a genealogy and we start with Terah. Terah lived 70 years and became the father of Abram. So, that's his daddy. Nahor and Haran. So, we have Abram, Nahor, and Haran as brothers of Terah.

[23:36] Now, these are the records of the generations of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran and Haran became the father of Lot. Well, Haran died in the presence of his father, Terah, in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans.

Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah.

Sarai was barren. She had no child. Isn't it interesting that Sarah was barren and Rebekah is barren and we're going to see more barrenness in the line.

And all of that is designed to show that this is all about me fulfilling my promise and I don't need human help. When I'm ready, it'll happen. This is the sovereignty of God in His choosing.

So Sarai was barren. She had no child. Verse 31, Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai, his daughter-in-law, his son, Abram's wife, and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan.

[24:48] And they went as far as Haran and settled there. The days of Terah were 205 years and Terah died in Haran. Now that's very interesting. Abraham, his father, Terah, and his entire family as moon worshipers in Ur.

Now the family moves to Haran, which was another place of moon worship, kind of a central hub for that. It was in the northern regions of upper Canaan, way up north of there.

So we have no record of Terah being necessarily a believer in the one true God. But he is in the line of promise, which is interesting.

Now if you'll look at chapter 12, and let me read verses 1 through 4. Again, we're applying contextual emphases here for what we're going to see in 25.

verse 1 through 5. Now the Lord said to Abram, Go forth from your country and from your relatives and from your father's house to the land which I will show you and I will make you a great nation.

[25:53] I will bless you and make your name great and so you shall be a blessing and I will bless those who bless you and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.

That's because through Abraham's line, the line of promise, the bloodline of promise will come Jesus. So Abram went forth as the Lord had spoken to him and Lot went with him.

Now Abram was 75 years old when he departed from Haran. Now how old was he when he died? 175. How long did he sojourn in the land of Canaan?

A century. 100 years of service to God. And the most important thing about these verses is what it says at the beginning of verse 1 and the beginning of verse 4.

Now the Lord said to Abram as the Lord had spoken to him in verse 4. God is speaking truth and saving favor into this man's life and choosing him out of the context of idol worship false worship and unbelief and bringing him to know the one true God who now promises to bless him and to bless all of the families of the earth through his life.

[27:22] When Abraham then was 75 years old God revealed himself to Abraham and brought him to saving faith and then led him to Haran to sojourn then from there into the land of Canaan.

In chapter 12 verse 8 Then Abram proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east and there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord.

To call upon the name of the Lord means to worship him. So we see Abraham as a new believer worshipping the God who had called him from worshipping idols and saved him from spiritual darkness and death.

In verse 9 Abram journeyed on continuing toward the Negev. Now remember the Negev is a large desert area in the southern most regions of Israel in just a little while I'll put a couple of maps up and I'll try to remember to show that to you we've done that before the point of verse 9 is telling us am I fading in and out again no good the point of verse 9 is simply telling us Abram is being faithful as a new believer to what God said God didn't tell him to go and just settle right away told him to sojourn he wants him to move through the entire breadth and length of Canaan and so he does that he's eventually going to settle for a short time in the heart of the land of Canaan then he's going to move south and he's going to move back up and he'll be in different places moving about he was obeying the Lord he would cover in excess roughly depending on the route he took about 500 miles from what became

Nahor or Haran down into central Israel so this guy's covering a lot of ground maybe camels using camels whatever else donkeys but a lot of it I imagine on foot immediately this new believer is confronted with a test of his faith in God you remember what that was and what God promised to him a famine drives Abraham to Egypt where Abraham lies to and deceives who Pharaoh right allowing Pharaoh to believe that Abraham and Sarah were not married he told him a half truth if there is such a thing she is my sister and she was in a distant way nevertheless he lies to Pharaoh and leads him to believe deceives him into thinking they're not a married couple and he made a right mess for everyone involved so that we see that Abraham is a man with the feet of clay right away right away in his walk with

[30 : 16] God he messes up royally what did God just tell him I will bless those who bless you I will curse those who curse you I have got your back I will protect you I will safeguard!

you these promises will be fulfilled in your life I will use you in these ways and beyond and what does he do he goes right away and starts manipulating the situation in his life because he doesn't trust God well we're going to have to do something about that because years down the road when the promise is fulfilled God is going to tell him to kill his son and put him in a fire what's he going to do about that God's always getting us ready for the next thing he's a good father he doesn't just let you run around in the middle of the!

having told you don't play in the street and then looks out the window and sees you in the street and says well maybe they'll learn that wouldn't be a good daddy would it so there are lessons to learn he's a man who will need the love and the power of God to mold this clay into an instrument useful to his master that is exactly what God is doing!

in your life beloved if you belong to him he's molding you he's refining you he's teaching you if you buck that don't claim to love the Lord if you deliberately buck the wisdom and truth and love of God working in your life be careful that's not a good sign throughout Abraham's life the Lord is going to greatly bless and use him but listen God will shape use and bless!

that the Lord God Almighty is the difference in Abraham's life listen folks let me just pause here and give you a caution friends I don't know of any person I've ever met talked to had any discussion with that didn't say to me in some fashion or another on the topic of what I'm about to say to you that they did not want to have a comfortable!

[32 : 23] who doesn't? who wants to have a life of strife nobody God will use trials the realities turmoils difficulties hardships of life to refine you he will create those things in your life and he will move you through those things in your life getting you ready for the next thing that is what God Almighty does in his own wisdom by his timing and his choice and so while all of us want to live a comfortable life here's what I'd say to you if your life is really comfortable right now you might want to be a little concerned it's hard to ask God to shake it up but just trust me walk with him and you won't have to pray shake it up it'll shake up him and love him it'll hate you too walk with the

Lord friends again I say God will shape you and bless Abraham in a way that it is obvious to anyone looking in that the Lord God Almighty is the difference in his life what did the pagans around him know about him you are a prince of the Lord here they are unbelieving idol worshippers in the worst of ways but they recognize this man serves a true God he's loyal to his God it was obvious now back in 25 25 1 through 10 what are we seeing going on here in this issue with Abraham listen now closely Abraham has come to God's end this is God's end for Abraham's life on the earth God had told Abraham some hundred years or so before his death we just read this remember as for you I'm

going to put it up here on the screen from chapter 15 as for you you shall go to your fathers in peace you will be buried at a good old age has

God kept his promise yeah I would think 175 years old is a plenty that's usually double the lifetime we see now for most people and then in 25 7 through 8 these are all the years of Abraham's life that he lived 175 breathed his last died at a ripe old age an old man satisfied with life what more can you ask than this and then he was gathered to his people folks this is a powerful promise of life Abraham was not left to rot in a dark tomb no he wasn't God's power raised him to new life as he was gathered to his people this is a beautiful statement of belief he was gathered to his people to his fellow believers who had gone before him into heaven this is what you and I have as hope in Jesus that we will be gathered to our people our family of God other people who have been favored by the

Lord in his electing grace so Abraham lived for God and he left a legacy of his love for God the many sons from his new wife Keturah what's that all about well I think it displays Abraham's obedience it shows the blessings which God provided for him according to God's promise what did he say I'll make you the father of many nations well here's a bunch more boys that are going to go out and carry the name and a father of many many different peoples not just the Jewish nation many of them will be unbelievers many of them will fight against God's chosen people no doubt about that we're seeing that happen right now in front of our eyes but listen God's plan for mankind goes well beyond one man!

even father in the tomb Abraham had buried his wife Sarah in decades before the Bible says I'll put it on the screen it came about after the death of Abraham that God blessed his son Isaac verse 11 verse 11 in verse 5 we tie that to verse 11 what does it say now Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac now look he had he was a super wealthy guy so he gave wonderful gifts to all of these sons and their families to Keturah all these people got wonderful gifts from him in real time while he was still alive then after his death it was understood that everything in the way of his total estate very very wealthy man would go to Isaac and there was a reason for that he gives his entire future and fortune to the promised son who will carry on the promised blessing the point of the many sons he fathered is just simply that

[37 : 43] Abraham is going to be the father of many nations where does the text then take us next I don't want to do too much with all of that because we've been talking about Abraham now God's electing grace protected now here's Ishmael how in the world is his saving favor protected by someone who was most likely not a believer we don't know for sure it's an intriguing thought that Ishmael might have been a believer I think the evidence is stacked against that idea but I'm not going to die on that hill that's just what I see what I believe!

what are we talking about in all of this well listen some cities today the names that I read off in those verses what 13 14 15 some of the cities today bear the names of these men by God's promise to Hagar I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count you remember that back in chapter 16 I will greatly multiply your descendants Hagar!

many to count as well these are the twelve princes of Ishmael and their sons and their sons moving out the twelve princes of Ishmael they established clans cities nations and they spread across these lands east it says of what would be Israel folks these are the foundations that help us understand the modern day conflicts that we see I mean it is alive and well through our technology today if you want to click on it you can get almost real time footage of things being blown up and all these different clans and peoples clashing in what we call the Middle East today the ancestors of the sons from Hagar and Keturah Ishmael comprise the various tribes cities and countries of the Arabian Peninsula and beyond so here's what we're talking about let me just name some of them for you Bahrain Kuwait Oman Qatar Saudi Arabia the UAE United Arab Emirates Yemen and the southern parts of Iraq and Jordan it is a vast area now look by the promise of the Lord up on the screen a very important prophecy characterizes the relationships these countries have with Israel and its allies is very relevant for today two verses give us this information about Ishmael and his Arab ancestors people who will become the sworn enemies of Israel and everything that you believe and stand for as you follow the Lord Jesus Christ you understand these people are following a demonic lie Islam is a demonic lie following Muhammad is a demonic lie just as much as any other cult or false religion out there whether it's

Mormonism or whatever it is Jehovah's Witness I want to share these two scripture references with you that become these important prophecies that characterize the relationship of these countries

the first one I want to show you is Genesis 16 verse 12 we just talked about this this is the prophecy that God is making about Hagar in the birth of Ishmael who will come soon and he says he will be a wild donkey this is Genesis 16 12 he will be a wild donkey of a man if you have ever tried to harness a wild donkey I have my grandfather used to say everyone knows what to do with a kicking mule except the one that's got him all the guys standing around grab his nose pull his tail you know this is going to be a wild donkey of a man they go crazy donkeys can be crazy crazy wicked animals right he will be a wild donkey of a man his hand will be against whom everyone and everyone's hand will be against him and he will live to the east of all of his brothers now there's the prophecy now

[42 : 32] I want you to couple that with 25 18 what does it say they settled from Havilah to Shur which is east of Egypt as one goes toward Assyria he settled that is Ishmael settled in defiance of all of his relatives and so I'm going to put this up on the screen for you to make your comparison here what I'm trying to tell you in Genesis 16 12 Ishmael is characterized as a pridefully stubborn wild of spirit deeply contentious toward everyone constantly at war with his neighbors and living to the east of all of his people kind of guy does any of that ring true do you think from what you know of today it sounds a lot like today doesn't it now in 2518 we simply have this Ishmael he

Ishmael settled in defiance of all all his relatives now let me ask you show of hands how many of you have a translation that may say something very different in the end of 2518 than he settled in defiance of all of his relatives you have something very different that doesn't suggest defiance what's your translation Jessica okay so over against that's similar thought yours too all right let me let me put this up here I want you to see this because I didn't know if some of you might have this translation so I'm going to just take a moment to clear it up in the New King James version up on the screen it says he died in the presence of all his brethren does that sound anything like what is up there in the way of the New American Standard he settled in defiance no then you look at the CSB that's the Christian Standard Bible he stayed near all of his relatives that doesn't sound anything like he settled in defiance of his relatives does it those are two very different ideas the NIV reads this way and they lived in hostility toward all the tribes related to them you see how it took the plural whereas in the New American Standard it's he settled in the NIV it's they settled or they lived what's going on here why all of the differences well as you can see on the screen it's because of this little phrase *alpene alpene* which translates in the New American Standard in defiance of it can also be understood as against the face which is the literal rendering against the face Jessica I think that was more your translation which you have the ESV okay so the ESV is more the literal against the face it means hostility toward defiance toward this is why the New American Standard translates it the way that it does he lived in defiance of all of his relatives!

But then you go on and it could also be used in different contexts to mean idea how do you know which is more likely the answer begins with a C context which is more likely context rules Genesis 25 18 is a fulfillment of the prophecy at least in part of 16 12 that Ishmael and his relatives would always be in contention strife hostility defiance with themselves and their neighbors Ishmael's people hate other people other people hate Ishmael's people do you know the history of the Middle East enough to know that the Arabs hate each other the only time they get along and fight is when they have another enemy coming in and threatening them then all of sudden they're family right I can mess with you and

I can call you names but don't I know you know this too well bro so they fight and they've been fighting ever since and they're going to fight until Jesus comes back that's just the way that God's word defines the problem I'm not making that up I'm just showing you what's going on now let's ask this final question here before we move on why does it matter why do we take time to talk about this and move it through alright Ishmael's relatives settled south and east of Canaan Ishmael moved far from his neighboring people as he settled further east and this can mean a couple of different things and that's again not a hill for me to die on I'm just showing you the possibilities this can mean that he went as far as he could until he ended up at the ocean that would be in the southeastern most regions of Arabia below modern day

[47 : 40] Saudi Arabia that would be Yemen where we have the Houthis at least in part let me show you a couple of slides that bear this out here it is over on the left you see in red sure and then far over on the right when that arc that red arc there is Havilah and you see where it is right where modern day Kuwait is the area that you see between Shur and Havilah down to where you see Medina and Mecca all of that area I'll do it on both of them all of this area right here that would be

where Ishmael's people began to settle you see that did y'all see that all of this right here is where they began to settle from Shur here's I told you I would show you this here's modern day

Israel and here is much of what we would call the Negev right there in that this is the Sinai Peninsula and this is the Arabian Peninsula modern day Saudi Arabia and so a lot of Ishmael's people settled here took up that area what what did it say that Ishmael did because he can't stand his people he hates everybody everybody hates him and his people all that kind of thing what did he do he went east let me show you another map that brings it more into perspective this is more modern day and you see these are the contested areas on either side of the Arabian Peninsula Saudi modern day Saudi Arabia on either side those waterways are what we see in the news right now being greatly contested and down in this area I don't remember for sure

Matt you can help me this is Houthiland right that all of that okay see he's making my point it just depends right who's befriending whom so what we have here in the map situation if you think about Ishmael going east well which way is east on the map right or left right so if Ishmael is going to move east of all of his people that are settling from here over to there in the Sinai Peninsula all of that if he's going to move east he's got if he's in this land mass he's got one choice he can go this way and then hit water right away he can go more of a southeasterly route and move down into Houthi what is now Houthi land or he can go east where does he end up what's this country Iran huh isn't that fascinating all those people hate

Israel all those people are Israel's enemies there are two nations in your womb that's where we go next and I'll wrap it up this is fascinating fascinating stuff one more word on that before point three concerning Ishmael and his twelve sons and their respective tribes and ancestors the material point for the Israelites is that God protected his promises to Abraham and Isaac by sending away all Isaac's competitors from the land of promise Abraham knew to send them away so he did they left the points of what would be modern day Israel the land of promise and moved them out and sent them all east south and east all right now what do we have in number three the third characteristic I want to bring out about God's electing grace in this chapter God's electing grace protracted protracted here has to do with Isaac's life and it just simply means continued extended or enduring so the saving favor of God is continued in this bloodline of promise through Isaac God didn't save Abraham and some of his people and then sit back and say okay I'm done everybody else is on their own he is still moving his promise forward now there are two major lessons in these verses from 19 verse 19 to 34 the end of the chapter for God fears who seek to walk with the Lord in faith the first concerns Isaac's prayers for Rebekah I gotta go there first the second deals with God's choice of Jacob over Esau both provide us with valuable insights for our own understanding of God and his ways so in verses 19 through 21 these are the records of the generations of [52 : 53] Isaac Abraham's son Abraham became the father of Isaac and Isaac was 40 years old when he took Rebekah the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan Aram the sister of Laban the Aramean to be his wife Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife Rebekah why because she was barren she could not have children and the Lord answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived so what can we say about all of this all right in these verses if you look then at 26 we get some important information to help us understand it afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel so his name was called Jacob and Isaac was 60 years old when Rebekah gave birth to these twins so from 40 to 60 so it's been 20 years in this condition 20 years like this they tell us that 19 years have gone by since

Isaac and Rebekah married they haven't had any children because Rebekah is barren her womb is closed but Isaac knows full well that God's covenant pledge is to use him to further the bloodline of promise so he's living like Abraham for 19 years with this promise ringing in his head and no kids because my wife is barren there's nothing she can do it's not her fault there's nothing he can do it's not his fault it's God's timing and God's choice he's sovereign he gets to choose elect in all of these ways when these events will take place now like anybody else like you and me he can only live by the details God's given him he doesn't know when are we going to have kids is that ever going to happen God says it's going to happen Lord it's been 19 years I think it's very very interesting in what happens next

Isaac could have repeated his father's Abraham's sinful lack of faith by securing another wife who would give him an heir remember when Abraham did that with Hagar and how that turned out but instead here's what we see Isaac doing he prayed to the Lord on behalf what does the text say he prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife isn't that beautiful guys do you pray for your wife do you

pray for your wife men faithfully and regularly do you bring her strengths and weaknesses and needs to the Lord and what did God do the Lord answered him and Rebecca his wife conceived now the text makes it sound like they got married he prayed she had a baby but we know now that's not true you see this is why Marievi and Pastor Greg and myself this is why we're taking time to help you study the Bible and dig this stuff out for yourself use the tools that will help help you pull these issues together if you just read the text carefully the text will give you the answers that you need to understand the context of what's going on and so now we see that this man has been praying for many years for his wife and those prayers have gone unanswered in terms of what he's asking please make her pregnant please help her conceive finally so what can we say look here's what up on the screen friends God is sovereign

God oversees the womb ladies as you minister to women who are having trouble getting pregnant as you minister to women who've miscarried as you minister to women who've aborted their baby or are dealing with issues of their little infants struggling and suffering I've told you before my first funeral right out of seminary wet behind the ears the first funeral I ever did by myself was a three day old infant that died and she's laying there in a pink dress in the coffin and the family wants me to come in and I had never done a funeral before in my life so I'm winging it they bring me in and we're all standing around this little bitty coffin with this beautiful little baby in that coffin dad and we're holding hands and they want me to pray for them folks what in the world do you say what prayer do you make I don't remember what I said I'm sure the Lord led me it's very tough ministering to these ladies who've had these issues some issue with their wound they're having a hard time getting pregnant whatever it is there's so many different things that women face and their husbands with them

I don't mean to leave the men out look this is a great truth ladies God oversees the womb this would be a great place to take them you could take them to the place where Sarah was dealing with the shame for decade after decade after decade and then God gave her a child you can do this in the life of Rebecca each child is God's creation see did you see where we get this each child is God's creation for the blessing of the parents the child is meant as a blessing and so often we put all of the parameters of what means blessing do they have ten fingers and ten toes well what if they don't are they less a blessing in the eyes of the Lord we do that each child is a human life meant to be lived by the purposes of God and we don't have any right to take those lives another thing we see here look

[58:45] God is sovereign God wants us to prayerfully depend on him and Isaac's prayer offers us a powerful lesson of trusting God with hard things and leaning hard into God's promises promises what people like this need from us as we minister to them are the promises that God makes to us that we can stand on see they want to gravitate to what they don't know they want to gravitate to the dark what if what if what if then you need to tell them look that's not a good place to be you can't live by the what ifs let's go back over here and live by what God has said what he's promised ground yourself there that's love it's loving to do that do it in grace with great patience and kindness and mercy so he prayed for his wife and he waited on God for 19 years and when he was 60 years old 60 years old

Rebecca had twins now I hope God gave them energy commensurate with whatever the age thing was then you know they're living these long lives I can't imagine having twins at 60 years old I can't imagine that but they did now there's an issue then that comes about as Rebecca carries these boys in her in her womb and verse 22 bears it out the children struggled together within her do you see that I don't know what your translation says but here's the idea of struggle listen to this ladies for all of you who have carried a child or hope to carry one one day listen to this struggle here has a literal rendering of to smash together to shatter to crush together the Hebrew here is saying this woman is suffering she has this is so fascinating to me she has two infants two little bitty tiny human beings growing from peas side you know growing humans and as soon as they're able they're fighting inside of her they're fighting the word literally means to smash together they're butting heads they're duking it out you picture it that's the word it's so bad that she comes to the Lord and says look thank you for making me pregnant however what does this mean

I mean look at this have you ever watched have you seen that where they do their elbows and it goes you know I love it I loved every second of it Suzanne you know wouldn't you she would say to me Jeff will you come over here and speak to this child because we're laying there in the bed and I'm you know and she's because it's so I would get right up did you do this and I would do a real low

voice and I'd push right up against alright you in there calm down your mom wants to go to sleep and it would be like isn't it wonderful God is amazing life is amazing the gift of life well Rebecca she goes and she prays why is this proving so difficult Lord she goes to the Lord and asks what should I do and in verse 23 wonderful the Lord said to her two nations are in your womb two peoples will be separated from your body see they're already fighting two nations that are going to hate each other one people will be stronger than the other and the older shall serve the younger folks there it is it's as plain as it can be this is more of the fulfillment of God's promise to make Abraham the father of many nations to give his descendants the land of Canaan and so Esau will produce many ancestors Jacob will carry on the godly line he will have many ancestors how do we then sum it up how do we understand the details up here on the screen of verses 27 through the end of the! chapter Well we understand them the way they were meant for Israel to understand and interpret them alright obviously Esau and Jacob were two very different people even though they were blood brothers very different people you see this in your kids the more important issue though isn't about personality and it isn't about lifestyle choices the fact that Esau was a hunter and liked to be out in the field and in the wilderness and Jacob was more at home and a home body and that kind of thing no it's not about personality or lifestyle listen it's about the two nations these men will father and represent currently reading this you might think Esau a manly man and Jacob a mama's boy but that's not entirely true there may be some truth in that but it's not entirely true alright just remember this the favoritism each parent showed simply underscores the issue of the divisiveness and the contention these two men will express toward each other this is the effect these nations will have on other people some people will gravitate toward one nation and be loyal to them other people will gravitate toward the other nation and be loyal to them to the point of being stupid moronic oh sorry got more uh not smart about it because you look at it and you think are you are you blind [64:39] Suzanne told me the story of a person at a was it a Yankees game recently that ran out on the field Yankees Mets and a person ran out on the field with a Palestinian flag during 9-11 now how moronic do you have to be to do that it's it's insane and this is exactly what the bible is explaining to us you're going to have two nations born of you and they're going to hate each other the strife that you feel in your belly is just the beginning it's going to get a lot worse and there won't be any cure for it apart from Jesus isn't it beautiful to know that people who worship Allah people who worship false gods of any kind can know the salvation and forgiveness of God in Jesus

Christ and it doesn't matter where they come from amen so we need to pray for them and share the gospel with them Esau is the world I'll put this up here Esau is the world at war with itself he is selfish Esau is proud he's hard he's distracted and listen to this he lives for the raw pleasures of life for life itself rather than tend his father's stock work to help the family he disappears into the wilderness and hear this he disappears into the wilderness to do the unnecessary what do you mean hunt well they don't need the game they're rich beyond belief they slaughter anything they want to he hunts to get out of dodge he doesn't want to be part of the family he doesn't want to contribute he doesn't want to help mama so he goes out and he kills and he comes back and he gets somebody to fix it and he gives it to dad and say look what I did dad and because Abraham liked wild game he preferred Esau well I want to ask him this who do you think cooked it Jacob Esau didn't cook it give me some of that red stuff I'm famished he was a man who lived in the moment for the moment and that was the end of it I know we're tempted to think boy Jacob was such a mama's boy Esau was defined by what is temporary what is temporary ruled his heart and his spirit Jacob is steady calm focused devoted he does what's necessary he was a peaceful man you see that in the text he was a peaceful man peaceful listen peaceful can also mean listen to these complete perfect healthy well behaved civilized guiltless upright without sin honest blameless strong you get the idea context rules into how they're used but the idea behind these definitions of being a peaceful man is that

Jacob was characterized by a calm mature steady resolute and well reasoned nature at the same time his name means he grasps the heel his name is close in sound and spelling to the Hebrew word deceiver it's a play on words Jacob is very similar to the Hebrew word for deceiver and that's what he was one commentator explained it this way I'm almost done that the child Jacob attacks the heel conveys the ideas of deception betrayal and opportunism in the Hebrew mind so it wasn't any favor they named him Jacob if you look at chapter 27 verse 36 so this is when Jacob once again not only steals the birthright from Esau but also manipulates him into stealing his blessing of the firstborn and he got

Abraham to put his hands on him and bless him listen to what he says this is how he characterizes his brother in verse 35 and he said your brother came deceitfully and has taken away your blessing then he said is he not rightly named Jacob for he has supplanted Jacob can mean supplanter or deceiver two times he's done this to me he took away my birthright and behold now he's taken away my blessing and he said have you not reserved a blessing for me and he said no too late too bad it's already done we understand what he's saying sweet little Jacob is a stinker in Hebrews 11 mentions both Jacob and Esau in the chapter but here's interesting only Jacob is mentioned as a man of faith who blessed his sons in the ways of the Lord and worshiped the Lord Esau is not mentioned that way at all Romans 9 sums up

[69 : 59] God's electing grace and choosing Jacob over Esau I don't have time to read it I have to close but it's Romans 9 6-13 Jacob I have loved Esau I have hated it just simply means I chose Jacob I did not choose Esau Esau became representative of all the nations that hate God and hate the ways of God and hate anybody who follows God that's what we're seeing folks this is real life in the lives of these people we cannot know all the reasons God uses us in the way that he does but we can know that he loves us he chose us and he promises to do good to us and bring us to heaven so the last two things I'll tell you are up here on the screen living in the now of this daily earthly life we falter in faithfulness to God I get that but as God's chosen child you live forever in his heavenly saving favor you stand and you live in a long line of those who God the father promised to

Abraham as the father of many nations you're in that line you're among those people you're part of the chosen it matters why you believe you are here and where you understand you come from well there is Genesis 1 through 25 my dear friends it is a wonderful and powerful description of who God is and how he works and how he saves let's pray together well father we are truly humbled and amazed at your word and its relevance we can take things that happened thousands of years ago and read about the way you deal with human beings and we see you dealing with us in very similar ways because you are the God of gods you are the one true Lord God almighty there is no shifting shadow with you you are a God who is steady you are a God who keeps his promises and so we thank you for making us your worshipers help us now to carefully consider the claim that we make to be Christians believers followers of almighty God and let our lives showcase that it is obvious that you are living in us we want you to receive all of the honor and the glory and we pray this in Jesus precious name amen