

Small Group Notes – 6 Jan 2019

Welcome – What would you like to see God accomplish in and through your life in 2019?

Word – Jacob's beginning – Genesis 25:19-27

- **A distinguished family – verse 19**

Abraham and Sarah were his grandparents. He would have heard all the stories and been aware of all the promises from God concerning his family.

- **A delayed family – verse 21**

Isaac and Rebekah went through the same painful experience as his parents as Rebekah was barren. Isaac's response was to pray! It was a tough time. Twenty years passed before Rebekah finally conceives. God proved himself faithful once again, he not only took Isaac and Rebekah's shame away, God also fulfilled his promise to Abraham and to Isaac. So Jacob's birth was a special one, another miracle.

Why the delay? It is often a mystery, but God is always at work, and his timing is perfect. During the whole process, God was developing their faith, teaching patience and reminding them that he is faithful to his promises.

- **A divided family – verse 22**

Pregnancy was a struggle for Rebekah. The babies were constantly jostling one another in the womb! Feeling the struggle within Rebekah asks the Lord why is this happening to me?

Summing up God's response. Two nations are in your womb, two peoples within you will be separated. One will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger. This is our introduction to the twins, Esau and Jacob. Before they were born, the Lord had predicted what would happen in their lives.

This is not to be interpreted with the kind of fatalism which says "there you are! God has it planned before we are even born so there is nothing we can do about anything". How can God hold anyone responsible for his or her life when he has already planned it and decided what is going to happen? The parallel truth of human responsibility must always be alongside any teaching on divine sovereignty. Having said that we will see that God indeed chooses Jacob over Esau and his blessing continues through Jacob's family line and not Esau's.

What had Esau done? Nothing, he hadn't even been born. The decision wasn't based on Jacob being good or Esau being bad it was simply God choosing Jacob to carry the blessing as Paul in Romans 9:10-12 states.

The day arrives, and the twins are born. Esau comes out first, and he is described as like a red woolly jumper! And Jacob not far behind with his hand firmly gripping Esau's heel! They gave him the name Jacob, which means heel grabber or later to be described as supplanter, cheater or deceiver.

Questions

- How important is our family heritage regarding our start in life? Positives and negatives.
- What things can we learn from Isaac about his response to Rebekah's barrenness?
- Think about a time when God promised you something, but you had to wait a while for it to happen. How did you feel while you waited? How did you feel once it did arrive?
- What are the benefits of having to wait before we can have something we desire?
- Are you waiting for anything at this moment in time?
- Why do you think persistence in prayer is essential?
- Why did God choose Jacob over Esau? What do you think about that?
- In the Bible names and their meanings often carry great significance. What do you think of the meaning of Jacob?
- Do you believe God has a plan for your life?
- What do we learn about God from Jacob's beginning?

Prayers & Reminders

- For relationships in families, Church family, neighbours and local community.
- UK and government with Brexit negotiations over the next few months.
- Continue to pray for God's guidance and vision for MMCC & NMBC and ministry.