

Introduction

1. The word “genesis” refers to the beginning or origin of something and that’s why the first book of the Bible is called Genesis:
 - a. It tells us about the beginning of the universe and the earth
 - b. It tells us about the origin of all life, both animal and human
 - c. It tells us about the origin of sin, wickedness, and corruption
 - d. It tells us about the origins of people groups and nations
 - e. And, it tells us about the origin of Israel
2. The entire book of Genesis is historical narrative, describing real past events with real people in real places
3. However, if we stop there, we miss the real point of Genesis which is to tell us about the origin of God’s redemptive plan for mankind:
 - a. We get glimpses of this in the first 11 chapters of Genesis where we see elements of the Gospel revealed (we covered this in our The Gospel in Genesis 1-11 series a couple years ago)
 - b. However, God’s redemptive plan is revealed more directly and vividly in the story of Abraham which we studied before our series on the parables (READ 12:1-3)
 - c. We don’t have time to do a review Abraham’s life but it would be accurate to say that everything God did for Abraham revolved around furthering His will and His purpose to redeem mankind
4. Today we are beginning a new series on the life of Jacob and it’s important to keep the same thing in mind:
 - a. As we study the life of Jacob, we might be tempted to get caught up in the historical details and events
 - b. However, God intends to teach us more than history here
 - c. He intends to reveal more about Himself and His redemptive plan

A. God’s SUPERNATURAL PROVISION to further His redemptive plan (READ 25:19-21)

1. We have three statements here that reveal supernatural acts by God:
 - a. The first statement is found in v. 19(RE-READ):
 - 1) This isn’t just some genealogical statement; it was a supernatural and miraculous event
 - 2) When God called Abraham, promised to make him into a great nation, and specifically promised him a son through Sarah, there was a HUGE problem: Sarah was barren and well past the age of naturally getting pregnant
 - 3) If fact, you might remember that both Abraham and Sarah laughed at the thought that Sarah would become pregnant and give birth to a son

- 4) But, that's exactly what happened because God's promises weren't dependent on Abraham's and Sarah's natural biological abilities but on His supernatural and miraculous abilities
- b. The second statement is found in v. 20 (RE-READ):
 - 1) Like his birth, Isaac's marriage to Rebekah was also a supernatural event and is recorded in Genesis 24
 - 2) Hopefully you remember the story of Abraham sending his most trusted servant back to his home country of Mesopotamia to find Isaac a wife from among his own family rather from among the Canaanites
 - 3) Repeatedly throughout the story we see God's supernatural hand guiding the servant directly to Rebekah and bringing her back to Isaac to be his wife
 - 4) The passage records repeated declarations by Abraham, the servant, and Rebekah's family that all of this was orchestrated by God as part of His will
 - 5) In fact, the servant even indicated that his journey was totally and completely dependent on God
 - c. The third statement is found in v. 21 (RE-READ):
 - 1) We learn here that Rebekah shared something in common with Isaac's mother, Sarah: she was barren
 - 2) Isaac and Rebekah had been married for 20 years but had not been able to have children so Isaac **"entreated Yahweh on behalf of his wife because she was barren"**
 - 3) In the Bible, the term **"barren"** generally implies an inability to have children (not just being childless) and is only resolved when God acts to open the womb and that is what we see here
 - 4) God was moved by Isaac's entry, opened Rebekah's womb, and she conceived
 2. All three of these events reveal God's love, compassion, and supernatural provision for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and Rebekah, but we'd be remiss if we stopped there:
 - a. Each one of these supernatural acts advanced God's redemptive plan
 - b. Back in Genesis 17:19 God told Abraham that He would continue His redemptive plan through Isaac (READ)
 - c. He repeated this in Genesis 21:12 (READ)
 - d. These three supernatural provisions were more than just blessings to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Rebekah; they were supernatural provisions by God with the purpose of furthering His redemptive plan

<p>B. God's DIVINE ELECTION to further his redemptive plan (READ 25:22-23)</p>

1. God blessed Rebekah with twins, but from their conception they **"struggled together within her"**:

- a. The word that's used here means to abuse or crush, and is often associated with oppression; the NET translators suggested it implies a violent struggle that was out of the ordinary
 - b. It must have been intense and unbearable because it sounds as if Rebekah was in despair when she reaches out to the Lord in prayer: **"If it is so, why then am I this way?"** (22)
 - c. She was apparently unaware that she was having twins, because the Lord reveals this to her along with some additional details:
 - 1) Each child would ultimately become a different nation
 - 2) One child/nation would be stronger than the other
 - 3) And, the older child/nation would ultimately serve the younger child/nation
2. What we see here is both a bit of FORESHADOWING as well as an act of DIVINE ELECTION:
- a. The struggle between the twins inside the womb FORESHADOWED not only their relationship outside the womb, but the relationship between the nations that would arise out of them:
 - 1) V. 25 says that Esau was the twin born first so he was the **"older"** one and the nation that arose out of him was Edom
 - 2) Jacob followed Esau so he was the **"younger"** and his 12 sons and their descendants would ultimately become Israel
 - 3) Just as they had struggled with one another inside the womb, Esau and Jacob continued to have a tumultuous relationship outside the womb, even to the point where Esau wanted to kill Jacob which caused Jacob to flee from his home
 - 4) Likewise, throughout their history, Edom and Israel were constantly in tension with one another, and often at war
 - b. We also see in these verses an act of DIVINE ELECTION:
 - 1) In v. 23, God told Rebekah that one nation would be stronger than another, and that the older nation would serve the younger
 - 2) While this involves foreshadowing, it is more specifically an act of divine election in that it describes God's deliberate choice of Jacob over Esau:
 - a) Psalm 135:4: **"For the LORD has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel for His own possession"**
 - b) Malachi 1:1-5 (READ)
 - c) Paul reveals that God's DIVINE ELECTION—His choosing—of Jacob over Esau, while they were still in the womb, was all part of His redemptive plan (READ Romans 9:10-13)

<p>3. God's SOVEREIGN WILL to further his redemptive plan (READ 25:24-26)</p>

1. God's sovereign will refers to that which He orders and determines to happen, and because He is all powerful it always happens exactly as He planned:
 - a. Psalm 115:3 says it bluntly: **"Our God is in heaven; He does whatever pleases Him"**

- b. Job said, “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted” (Job 42:2)
 - c. In Isaiah 46:10 God declares, “...My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.”
2. Jacob’s and Esau’s births were an act of God’s sovereign to further His redemptive plan:
- a. God not only opened Rebekah’s womb to bear children, but ordained that she would have twins and according to Romans 9:10-13 even ordained the order in which they would be born (READ)
 - b. I would even go as far as to say that God ordained Jacob’s grasping of Esau’s heel because it was a foreshadowing of him ultimately acquiring Esau’s birthright and blessing:
 - 1) V. 26 tells that Jacob was given his name, which is a word play on the Hebrew word for heal, because he was grasping Esau’s heel
 - 2) One of the meanings of the verb form of this word means to follow closely (e.g. he was on his heels), but figuratively it was used to refer to overtaking or supplanting someone or something, even cheating them
 - 3) We see this figurative meaning used by Esau when he complained to Isaac about Jacob stealing his birthright and blessing (READ Genesis 27:36)

Takeaways

- 1. This passage isn’t just about Jacob’s birth, but about how God furthered His redemptive plan through SUPERNATURAL PROVISION, DIVINE ELECTION, and His SOVEREIGN WILL
- 2. We see the same thing today with the salvation we have in Jesus:
 - a. Our salvation is a result of God’s SUPERNATURAL PROVISION:
 - 1) Just as God furthered His redemptive plan through barren women like Sarah and Rebekah, a virgin named Mary conceived Jesus through the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit
 - 2) And, it’s because of God’s supernatural work in raising Jesus from the dead that we too will be raised from the dead (READ Romans 8:11)
 - b. Our salvation is a result of God’s DIVINE ELECTION; He chose us!
 - 1) Ephesians 1:3-4 says that God chose us before the foundation of the world
 - 2) Colossians 3:12: “**So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience**”
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 2:13 says, “**God has chosen [us] from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth**”
 - 4) This same theme of being chosen is repeated in Romans, Titus, 1 Peter, 2 John and Revelation
 - c. Our Salvation is a result of God’s SOVEREIGN WILL:
 - 1) Ephesians 1:5, 9, & 11 (READ)

- 2) 2 Timothy 1:9 says, He **“has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity”**