



Jacob

It is interesting that Issac became Israel, yet it is also interesting that his son Jacob is the father of the nation. It is his son's that become the twelve tribes of Israel. The building of a nation is not done in a fairytale fashion. Moses is not the father of a nation. Neither is David or Joseph. Instead, the Bible leaves this distinction to a nomad that lived a deceiving life. To be fair, the line to Jesus is plagued with sin. It is though, (my contention) that Jacob is the father of the nation.

Paul says that Jacob and Issac (by faith) lived like Abraham. Hebrews 11:9 *“By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise.”* Esau (Jacob's brother) was a hunter but Jacob was dwelling in a tent. Paul (the writer of Hebrews) was a tent maker. I think he related to Jacob, Issac, and Abraham. It may have been a badge of honor. In so many ways Paul became a nomad (like his ancestors). Paul took lands for Christ Jesus.

By faith Jacob blessed Josephs sons as Issac had blessed Esau and Jacob. It is (again) interesting that Paul chose to mention the blessing. Hebrews 11:20 *“By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.”* Yet, Jacob blessed the younger as did Issac. That is not how it should have gone. Some people talk about the theory presented by Darwin called the survival of the fittest. In some ways that is the line of Abraham. Issac had to survive. Jacob had to

survive. Even Jacobs son, Joseph had to survive Egypt. Yet, by faith, I feel that Jacob was the greatest survivor.

Genesis 25 is a really big chapter. Abraham dies. He leaves his estate to Issac. Yet, it is what happened after this that intrigues me. Jacob is born second while holding on to the heel of his brother. It is like right from the start Jacob wanted the household throne. He wasn't going to let go of it. Throughout his life he used deception to gain birthrights, wealth, and the rights to a nation. Did Jacob's stealing of Esau's birth rite, supplant or usurp his brother? God told Rebekah that the younger would rule the older. I think Jacob wanted it more. The inheritance meant more to him. For whatever reason God picked the younger to supplant the older twice. Is it possible that God knew that Jacob, in particular, had more faith in the Lord.

How bad do you want it? To gain the inheritance from God means you need a family line. Jacob wanted and needed Rachel to do it. Interestingly, he had to go through the older Daughter to get what he wanted. The younger girl! God then let's this soap opera play out to fulfill his promise to Abraham. This is the short version of how this goes down. Jacob deceives Esau of his birth rite. In fear, Jacob is driven away to his uncle Laban (another deceiver). Laban promises Jacob his daughter Rachel if he works for him for seven years first. Then Laban deceives Jacob by giving him Leah as his wife first. Another seven years pass and he finally gets Rachel. Then the two girls deceive each other to have twelve sons. Are you following?

All of this was done to gain the inheritance. Why does Paul mention Jacob by faith in Hebrews? It is because, by faith, Jacob wanted the full blessings of God. He was willing to beg, steal, and borrow to get it. Imagine waiting 14 years to get the spouse of your dreams? 14 years! Jacob even goes further by deceiving Laban of his flocks just to escape and create a nation.

Laban could have killed him, yet Jacob was willing to chance it. The inheritance of God is too great.

As the soap opera dust settles, we are left with the twelve boys of Israel. I do not put a ton of stock into each boy. They all had their short comings. In-fact they didn't move on to greatness for the most part except the second youngest named Joseph. The inheritance promised by God was not fulfilled by the children of Abraham. Paul mentions in Hebrews that they believed in the kingdom. That the Lord would prevail. Yet, Jacob took it to the next level by living a crazy life bent on winning the kingdom.

How much did Jacob have faith in God? That the kingdom would reign? In the last chapter of Genesis, two events happen. The first is Jacob dying. Joseph promised his father to return his bones to the land God had given them: Canaan. Secondly, when Joseph died his sons did the same for him. Why? By faith they believed God. That there would be a day when their bones would be restored. Ezekiel 37 talks about the valley of dry bones. There is a belief in Israel that God will restore the land and his people. By faith they believe this as Jacob, Joseph, Abraham, and Paul did.

The story of Jacob is really a faith story. Yes, deception plays a massive role. Yet, by faith Jacob was willing to chance it all to gain the inheritance. They were all willing to chance that God would restore their bones. The inheritance of God is a really big deal. We should take heed of this as Christians today. By faith we believe in the invisible God. That Jesus died and rose again. Why? That God will accept the blood of our saviour and restore us to the kingdom at the end of times. By faith we are saved, baptised, and give of our time and money. We should believe as Jacob believed. My church has a motto: A life saved is worth everything. Like Jacob what are we willing to do and endure for the inheritance of God?