

ISAAC

(Genesis 21:1—35:29)

The story of Isaac begins with his remarkable birth in his parents' old age. He was the son of promise and was destined to receive similar promises to the ones God made to Abraham. Abraham's descendants would also be Isaac's descendants.

Genesis 24 records the selection of a wife for Isaac, an interesting series of events through which Rebekah, great-niece of Abraham, was chosen. Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebekah.

Rebekah had twin sons, Esau and Jacob. Esau was an outdoorsman, a skillful hunter, while Jacob was a quiet man who stayed more around the tents.

It was the custom at that time that the oldest son should receive the "birthright", which gave him a double portion of the inheritance, plus other special blessings which Isaac was able to bestow. As first born, Esau was entitled to the birthright. But he really did not value it very much, and was willing to trade it to Jacob for a bowl of stew on a day when Esau came in from the fields very hungry.

Genesis 26 records the amazing story of Isaac making the same mistake that Abraham had made---lying about Rebekah being his wife. Again, God allowed it to be straightened out.

Genesis 27 relates how an aged and blind Isaac was shamefully deceived by Jacob, aided by his mother. Through an elaborate scheme they deceived Isaac into thinking that Jacob was Esau. As a result, Isaac gave to Jacob the blessings which went along with the birthright and should have belonged to Esau. Later, when Isaac learned what had happened, he was greatly distressed, sorry that he could not give to Esau what rightfully should have been his---had he not so carelessly given it up.

As a result of these events Esau became very angry at Jacob. Rebekah, fearful that Esau might kill Jacob, persuaded Isaac to send Jacob back to the land of their family in order to find a wife---but really it was to protect Jacob that she made the request.

Genesis 35:28-29 records the death of Isaac at the age of 180 years. He was buried by his sons, Jacob and Esau (who had by this time patched up their differences).