

10731

ISAAC, WE BRETHERN, AS ISAAC WAS, ARE CHILDREN OF PROMISE

Speaker: Bro. J. Cowie

Study #4: Two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels

Reading: Genesis 25:19-34

Thanks bro. Tim, my dear brethren and sisters and our dear young people.

If I was to asked our young people, what is the greatest gift that their parents have given to them, I guess their answer would be, a knowledge of the truth! That, of course, is quite correct, we might call that our birthright! When I was born, I was born into a Christadelphian family and I guess, perhaps most of us here, amongst the young people at least, are in that situation. I didn't appreciate, I guess, until a long time later just how important a birthright that was! I guess the older one gets, the more you come to appreciate how important it was; but I believe, b&s and young people, there was something perhaps almost equal to that, which I received from my upbringing. I don't know whether or not I'd have it, or not have it, had I not been brought up in a Christadelphian home. I know my parents had it, and most of you can say the same; one of the greatest gifts that my parents gave to me, was a conscience! A conscience, in the New Testament the word 'conscience' is 'suneidesis' (4893) and it means 'a knowing together with' or 'a knowing with one's self', that is, it is like a second mind or a second voice that enters the mind from an external source, and is there as a constant witness. And so that, as the thoughts of flesh arise, even as a very young person, the other voice says 'no, that's not right, mom and dad wouldn't want you to do that'; and, later on, it is the Word of God itself which says, 'no, that's not right; this is the way, walk ye in it'. That's the activity of a conscience, and it is a very complex thing. I guess most of us, don't really or properly understand the way that it works, but we know that it works.

Have you noticed something? Have you noticed that in some families where children receive identical upbringing, they're brought up in the same environment, by the same parents, they attend the same Sunday School, the same educational systems, they attend the same young people's activities, they go to the same ecclesia, and yet one has a lively conscience and really sensitive appreciation of the existence and the reality of God and His principles; and the other, can be absolutely dead from the shoulders up! Have you ever noticed that? Well, it happens twice in the record before us tonight in Genesis 25. We're going to see some remarkable contrasts between two sets of brothers, Ishmael and Isaac, and Jacob and Esau, and standing in the middle of those two little stories that we have here in Genesis 25, we have the account of the conception and the growth of the two boys, Jacob and Esau, in the womb of their

mother, and we shall see in that a microcosm of what ought to happen in the experience of every true servant of God, who constitutes part of the bride of Christ.

You recall, Rebekah, in the allegory of Genesis 24, represents the bride of Christ, and so her part in this little story is very important, because what's going on inside her ought to be going on inside every single constituent member of the bride of Christ, and if it isn't, then we've got a problem. We've got the problem of Ishmael and the problem of Esau; men who had no sensitivity to the reality of God in their lives nor to His principles. And when it came to choosing the course of their behaviour, they simply left God out of the picture which, of course, flesh is very apt to do. But if a conscience has been built in, it's a different story as we shall see!

So if we go back to reflect on the statement that in the same family you can have one with a conscience and another with none, or virtually none, or simply not as efficient as it ought to be, is that the fault of the parents? or is it part of the constitution of the person? Jacob found as he assessed his sons, as we've seen this week, as our younger brethren have brought before us, some very interesting details concerning Judah and Simeon and Levi in the prophecy of Jacob. Jacob found as he looked at his oldest boy, Reuben, unstable as water! Oh, if only it could have been different, but look at him, unstable as water; and Simeon and Levi deceitful and cruel and spiteful. As he went down those boys, each one of them had their own particular characteristics. Where did they come from? Well, of course, all his boys, like all of us here in this room, have human nature, and human nature is the source of all evil, isn't it? The diabolos within, the workings of the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, when they are unharnessed bring the evil that we see in Jacob's sons. And we'll see, of course, in the life of Esau, well, b&s and young people, if it's not the fault of the parents, if it has something to do with peculiarities of characteristics in the individual, then surely it comes down to this, it comes down to if the individual chooses to allow God to work in their lives, to overcome their particular problems! To be sure, some people seem to go through life without a great deal of struggle, I know some young people, in fact, I have a brother-in-law like this; as a 14 year old, he had his head in his bible, and it was very hard to extract it from the bible, he's now in his 40's, he still has his head in his bible, and he's a virtual walking encyclopedia, he's also a very fine brother to boot! And he, of course, was a cause of shame to some of us other younger people who were more interested in sports, and I might add young ladies. He doesn't appear to have gone through the same disasters as others have to go through to learn the lessons of life, perhaps the hard way, so there are some like that!

There are others on the opposite end of the scale, but NOBODY that has a birthright has to be like Esau! You choose to be like Esau, you choose to be like Ishmael, you might not have it quite so easy as other people, there may be something, I don't know, there may be something in your background or in your life, that may be stabilizing to you in some way, but you choose to be like those young people that we're going to read about tonight. It can be different if you want it to be different, and if you are prepared to work with your God. As we said in our first study, there is nothing too hard for Him Let no one think as they go through the difficult years of teenage life, and no one in their

right mind would want to go back to those years, as Ecclesiastes says, 'they are truly years where the teenager bursts into a new era of life', and there's all those horizons out there, some good and some not quite so good, and choices need to be made, and if you make the right choices, it can be a wonderful time of life, but if you make the wrong choices, it can be otherwise. We live in a world that is offering all sorts of choices which are very difficult for our young people to resist; make no mistake about that, some do make the wrong choices, tangle their life up in all sorts of things from which it is very difficult to extract yourself once you're in. So choices need to be made, and if you've struggled through teenage life as many of you perhaps have, you wouldn't want to go back to that experience. So it has its good parts to it, and its bad parts; but it all comes down to this, it comes down to what choice you want to make, and whether or not you're prepared to work with your parents and with your brethren and sisters, and most importantly, with your God, to build a conscience and a sensitivity and to arrive where we're suppose to arrive, as Paul says in Hebrews 11 verse 6, 'he that cometh to God must believe that He exists!' (to use the literal Greek. He must believe that He exists), and he has to add to that equation, a most important factor; 'and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him'. And you do find that out, young people, you do find out by experience that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, but He can't do anything with those who won't!

And Esau wouldn't! and Ishmael wouldn't ! so, we come to Genesis 25. It's a very interesting chapter, it records, of course, in the first 4 verses, the family of Abraham via Keturah. We won't go into the details of that, but you'll notice in verse 2 that there are 6 sons born to Abraham via Keturah. Her name means 'perfumed' (6989) from the root word that means 'fumigation' (6999), 'fumigation in a close place thus driving out the inhabitants'. It seems to me as if we're being told something, and when you come down to verse 5, 'Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac; but unto the sons of the concubines, including Keturah which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and (notice the words) sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country'. So he put a division in his family, the time came in the life of Abraham when he said, 'Listen, I can see that Isaac is the one through whom (needless he knew this a long time before, that) Yahweh will work to produce my family, His family; my other children don't have any part here, so he sent them away from Isaac. Why did he send them away? We're going to explore that reason, and you'll notice that it says in verse 6, 'he did this while he yet lived', but then in verses 7 to 10, we have the record of the death of Abraham and his burial. He's buried by Isaac and Ishmael in verse 9, and that's very interesting when you look carefully at this chapter, because the fact of the matter is this, that Abraham did not die until Jacob and Esau were 15 years of age. But their birth is recorded in the balance of this chapter from verse 19 onwards. So you need to remember that fact, that as we read from verse 19 onwards, Abraham is still very much alive and kicking, (maybe not kicking, but he's alive) he's there as large as life, and so is Ishmael. But in verses 12 to 18 you read of the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian bare unto him. Then the 12 sons of Ishmael are listed off for us in verses 13 to 16, and it says 'they were 12 princes according to their nations' (and your margin will tell you that, in fact, it is a fulfilment of Genesis 17 verse 20). Yes, when Abraham pleaded for Ishmael, God said to him, 'I will remember Ishmael and give him

12 princes; God fulfilled that as God fulfills all His promises; but it wasn't because of Ishmael's virtues that he received that divine blessing, as we shall see!

But remember this, when it says in verse 17, 'that these are the years of the life of Ishmael, 137 years and he gave up the spirit and died, and was gathered unto his people', that in fact, Ishmael was around a long time after the birth of Jacob and Esau, which is the next event recorded. In fact, Ishmael was 74 at the birth of Jacob, and Jacob was 63 when Ishmael died. So what do you think the scripture is doing here? It's sort of giving us a little bit of a picture here and saying, 'here's a snapshot!'; there's Abraham, there's Keturah, the sons that came from her, and Abraham says, 'hey, you lot, out!' Then it tells us that Abraham is dead and buried, and then it tells us about Ishmael who came from Abraham and says, 'well ,he died in the presence of his brethren', in verse 18. He died in the presence of his brethren and then we get the record of the conception and the birth of Jacob and Esau. Why do you think it's like that? ever thought about that? Well there's a reason as there is for all scripture, and the reason is this, that Yahweh wants us to see that, in the family of Abraham, there were two distinct types of people who both had the same heritage and went different directions. There was one who had no conscience, no sensitivity to the reality of God, and went his own way, and was perfectly content with the presence of his brethren. And there was another, who like his father, Abraham, had developed a great sensitivity to the reality of God and God worked in his life, and He blessed him! See what it says in verse 11, 'And it came to pass after the death of Abraham', (this is after Abraham has turned away all his other family as verse 6 told us, after he's sent them away and sent them to the east country and Isaac is alone. By this time, when we get to verse 11 when it says), 'That after the death of Abraham', (Jacob and Esau have been born, and they are in fact, 15 years of age) 'that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahai-roi'.

Now I wonder why it says that? Well, it could be just a little detail, an interesting detail. Like I might say to you, 'well, I just happen to live in Whiteside, in Queensland', so what? big deal! The scripture doesn't use little statements like that for the sake of just adding in historical detail. Why does it tell us that he dwelt by the well Lahai-roi? and he had been there for a long time, because in fact, when you go back to chapter 24 and verse 62, when Rebekah was brought to Isaac, he was living by the well Lahai-roi. And when you come over to chapter 25 and verse 20, you read that 'Isaac was 40 years old when he took Rebekah to wife', but then they had to wait 20 years before she could conceive (we find that out from elsewhere). Abraham died 15 years after the birth of Jacob and Esau, so Isaac has been dwelling here by the well Lahai-roi for at least 35 years. And the scripture wants us to know that, so what's important about that?

Well, we need to go back and explore how this well was named! How did it get it's name and why? And we're told that in the record of Genesis chapter 16. In the record of Genesis 16 we read in verse 7, that when Hagar fled from the face of Sarai, (who, of course, was trying to force Hagar into submission, and rightly so because Yahweh actually verifies that Sarah's actions were legitimate in verse 9, He instructs Hagar to return to her mistress and to be subject unto her. But verse 7 of Genesis 16 says), 'The

angel of Yahweh found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur'. Shur happens to mean 'a wall' (7793), as 'going about', and the root word has the idea of actually travelling about as a harlot or a merchant. (It's interesting when we come back to its use again as we shall in a moment in Genesis 25.) To travel about as a harlot or a merchant, and so, of course, the narrative goes on to say in verse 8, the angel asks why she's fleeing, and instructs her in verse 9 to return. Then the promise comes in verse 10, 'I will multiply thy seed exceedingly that it shall not be numbered for multitude; and the angel of Yahweh said unto her, behold, thou art with child and shall bear a son and shall call his name Ishmael (which means 'El will hear') because Yahweh has heard thine affliction'. The only problem was that Ishmael never heard Yahweh at any time in his life, he never heard Yahweh, yet Yahweh heard the voice of his mother and answered!

And it says in verse 12, 'And he will be a wild (6501) man', this is why he didn't hear. Now if you look up the various translations, and the more literal translations, they say things like this: The Interlinear Bible says, 'he will be a wild ass of a man', and if you don't think that's good enough, the New International Version says, 'he will be a wild donkey of a man'; the word for 'ass' is definitely in there! And interesting to note that the 'ass' is a symbol of Israel, and you'll remember that we pointed out that Ishmael in the allegory is a symbol or type of natural Israel, the natural seed of Abraham, circumcised in flesh but not in heart. He'll be a wild ass of a man, but more than that, 'his hand will be against every man and every man's hand against him' (he will be an antagonist) 'and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren' (we'll come back to that phrase in a moment). I want you to notice that it says at the end of verse 12, 'he shall dwell in the face (pene) of all his brethren. And she called the name of Yahweh that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after Him that seeth me?' This for Hagar, b&s and young people, was a most unusual experience; there were very few occasions in her life when she was conscious of the fact that God was looking at her, that He could see her, that He could read her thoughts, that He, in fact, knew exactly why she was there, that He knew the motivation of her heart. He knew the pride therefore, and He was now intervening for His purpose' sake; but it was a most unusual experience for this woman to suddenly realize, AH, THERE'S AN ALMIGHTY GOD WHO SEETH ME! and it was in the consciousness of that reality, for a brief moment in her life (and there weren't too many more of them) that she named this well.

Verse 14, 'Wherefore the well was called Beer, which means, of course, 'well' (875), lahai-roi (2416)'. Lahai-roi as our transparency shows, 'the living One, my Beholder', comes from the words 'lahai' which is from the word 'chay' which means life or alive or living, and the word 'roi' which is 'a seer' (7203), someone who actually sees with their eyes, a beholder, from the root word 'raah' (7200) meaning 'to see'. So here is a name that's very important, isn't it? because it memorializes that one time in the life of this person where they were conscious of the reality of a seeing God who could read minds and motives, the living One, my Beholder. Isn't that interesting? because she was to have a son who would be precisely like her, but of who it is never recorded at any time in his life, that he ever had an experience anything like his mother! And it did her no

good because she was not inclined to follow it up, and in fact, b&s and young people, if you look hard enough at that record and think long enough about it, you will see, in fact, that there is almost a sense of resentment in the words of Hagar. It is almost as if she is there to represent the people of Israel later on, who when the Lord Jesus Christ came and looked straight through them, were resentful; as He looked at the Pharisees and saw that they were covetous, they derided Him and said, we've got to get rid of this man! They hated the fact that He could see straight through them, that He could read every motive of their heart, and here is Hagar who represents that class of people, and she's almost resentful saying, 'well, why don't you just leave me alone!' But the reality was there, that God was real, His ambassador was standing in front of her, he was clearly an immortal being, he had clearly read her thoughts; that's how that well got its name!

Is it any wonder then, when you come back to Genesis 24 and 25, and you find that Isaac has been by the well Lahai-roi for 35 years, beginning his experience there, going out night after night, meditating sorrowfully over his mother who had departed from him 3 years earlier, now still going out night after night to entreat Yahweh for whatever it was that was important to the fulfilment of His purpose, and there was, of course, a very real problem! and the problem was that Rebekah was unable to have children. But that's what verse 11 is about, isn't it, of Genesis 25? because now Rebekah has had children, and the boys are 15 years old; just emerging into that time of life when you can begin to see manifested whether or not individuals have a conscience. Now, that's not to say that children don't have a conscience earlier than that; as I said the other night, it's one of the glorious things of parenthood, to see children, very young children, have some kind of conscience about what's right and wrong. And sometimes a little voice can come from the back of the car when you're going somewhere, 'daddy, I thought we never listened to that kind of music?' 'Daddy, isn't it right that we should pay for everything we get?' It's wonderful to hear that, and sometimes our conscience, b&s, can be the voice of our children. There's a simplicity about children that is sometimes lost later on in many cases; it's that kind of simplicity that the Lord spake of, 'expect ye be like little children ye shall not enter the kingdom of God'. It's wonderful to see that, but I think you know what I mean when I say, when you get about 14, 15 or 16, in that age range where the reins of the parents that they've got on them are beginning to get longer and longer and sometimes they're not attached to anything; and, they've got a key in their hand which starts up a car, and their life revolves around a steering wheel, you know! and away they go!

Sometimes it's a little bit like that; I mean, I've been through that, don't think that I'm standing up here as some paragon of virtue. Fortunately I had good parents. My father threatened to take my wheels off once, and he would have done it, I'll tell you that! my car would have been on blocks, but you see, we get into that period of life where the reins are extended; and if parents here have young people, you will know how difficult it is! It's like one of those fellows who drives those big cars with about 14 draft horses in front of him, he's got all these reins, and how they control them I don't know! and sometimes I don't know how to control young people! That's when it's important to have a conscience, that's when it's critical that young people can decide for themselves

what's right and wrong; and when they've got influences brought to bear upon them, whether they are from within or without, that say, 'listen, why don't we go here?' a little voice says, 'hang on, hang on', 'oh no, no! that's not good for us'. It's in that period of life, young people, that the issues of your future are decided because if you dent your conscience, if you begin to sear it with a hot iron when you're a young person, you're going to have a devilishly difficult time when you're older. So you see, it's very important that the conscience is developed while we're still young; and that, when young people get to be about 15, they look at mom and dad and say, 'boy, they've done a good job for me, but now it's time for me to do a good job for them!' And when you become parents, young people, you'll feel as powerless as we do, because it's in your hands! Do you have a conscience? Have you? Well, I'll tell you something, most of you have got a conscience; in some cases it's strong and in other cases it's weak, but that's one of the benefits you've been given by your upbringing. That's part of your birthright, don't despise it like Esau despised his; he trod all over it. The day will come, young people, when you'll stand at the judgment seat of Christ just as I will; I thought that would come when I was in my teenage years and look at me now, but it might come in your teenage years, it's a whole lot more likely to come in your teenage years than mine; and when you stand there with me at the judgment seat of Christ, you will be there with your parents and your grandparents maybe in many cases. I'll be there with my children, and if things go long enough, maybe grandchildren, and then the issues are going to be perfectly clear; then the young people who have despised their birthright are going to be jumping around biting their tongue off like Esau and weeping bitterly and saying, 'can't you give me a blessing, please dad, give me a blessing, please dad!' 'No, my son, I can't, because I gave it to you and you trampled all over it!'

That's the issues that we've got before us! They're pretty simple, but they boil down to this, they boil down to living for eternity in circumstances that our mind cannot begin to appreciate for their beauty, grandeur and happiness; or, pushing up daisies forever! That's how serious it is! Ishmael will push up daisies forever, Esau will do the same! Isaac and Jacob will live forever picking daisies! That's how simple it is and there's a lot of young people here for whom the decision as to which sort of person they're going to be, an Ishmael or an Esau, or in contrast to that, an Isaac or a Jacob. That decision is entirely in your hands, but you are not alone, you've got parents who are standing behind there with the hands on the reins, but the reins are sometimes so long that they feel powerless to control, but they're standing there saying, 'young boy or girl, please, please, recognize the value of your birthright!' Do you think that Isaac and Rebekah didn't feel like that towards Esau as well as Jacob? do you think that Abraham didn't feel like that towards Ishmael as well as Isaac? He wanted Ishmael to be in the kingdom, he would have worked hard, he would have worked his fingers to the bone; in the end God says, 'Abraham, it's no good, he's 19, he's made his choice, he doesn't recognize my reality, he's got no conscience, get rid of him!'

And he did! See what it says about him in Genesis 25 verse 18, 'And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur', Havilah means 'circular' (2341), and this man's life went in a full circle, and when it ended he was at Shur, 'that is before Egypt (pretty close to home, isn't it? he was an Egyptian or half-Egyptian) as it goest toward Assyria'. Shur means,

as we pointed out earlier, 'a wall as going about', the idea of travelling, to travel as a harlot or a merchant. And who did he travel with on this journey that went nowhere? 137 years and it went nowhere! Well, it says in verse 18, 'and he died' (or as the margin says, 'he fell') in the presence of all his brethren'. Ishmael, El will hear, the type of natural Israel, as you'll see from this transparency (what I'm going to suggest to you is that the idea which we sometimes read of in the expositions of Genesis chapter 16 is that this prophecy, that he'd dwell in the presence of all his brethren is, in fact, about Ishmael's future; that is, the Arab peoples, that the day will come that they will dwell in the presence of Israel their brethren, and all their other brethren. And of course, that's true, the day will come, but I ask you to think hard about what it means in chapter 25 verse 18?)

'And he died in the presence of all his brethren', don't you think that's an obvious reference back to chapter 16 verse 12? When we go back and examine chapter 16 verse 12, what does it say about him, just prior to the phrase, 'and he dwelt in the presence of all his brethren'? Well, it says he will be pugnacious, antagonistic, he will argue with everyone, he simply won't get on with anyone because he's got his own agenda, his own way, and that's the way he's going to go, regardless of anybody else who will just be content with being in the presence of his own brethren. And that's where he fell, he died in the presence of his own brethren; and in the same chapter, verse 11 tells us that Isaac dwelt by the well Lahai-roi, and he spent the last 35 years dwelling in the presence of Yahweh. That's why he went to the well Lahai-roi, it was 'the well of the living One my Beholder', and Isaac went out every night to be in the presence of the living One my Beholder! He wanted to bask in the sunshine of the reality of God; and Ishmael wanted to hide away with his brethren that agreed with him, and that meant there weren't too many! but the ones that agreed with him, the ones that said like Ishmael, 'you lead the way, into the dark corners and the dark alleys and we'll follow you; come on, let's go boys and we'll get away from the presence of God'!

Two kinds of people, one with a conscience that doesn't mind being in the presence of God, he's got no diffidence to stand before his Maker. He's not perfect as we shall find out, God willing, tomorrow night, but when he's imperfect he knows the answer is not to run away from God, but to get back into His presence and to seek His favour, to seek the forgiveness of sins, and to bask in the wonder, and it is, b&s and young people, it's a wonder that we can actually have access to the Creator of the heavens and the earth by faith, and to stand in His presence; because sitting there at His right hand is the Son of His love, whom He gave for us! There is something about that which is absolutely beyond description, you've got to experience it! You'll never experience it holed up somewhere in some filthy place where men's minds are filled with all sorts of garbage and corruption, where you couldn't get any farther away from God if you tried. You only experience it when you open up this book, day by day, breathing the thoughts of Almighty God; and come to the appreciation that He's real, and He wants you to come near to Him! He's appealing to us to do that, to do what Isaac did for 35 years of his life; he tried to teach his boys that!

We come down to verse 19, 'And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son:



Abraham begat Isaac. And Isaac was 40 years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-aram, the sister to Laban the Syrian'. Ever wonder why it says twice, the Syrian? It would be sufficient to say, wouldn't it, that if you were the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian, then your brother would also be a Syrian? but you wouldn't need to state it a second time? Why does it say it twice, Bethuel the Syrian, his name means 'destroyed of God' (1328), Laban means 'white' (3837), not the whiteness of righteousness, but the whiteness of leprosy! The Syrian, I wonder why? (we'll just come back to that in a moment). 'And Isaac entreated Yahweh for his wife, because she was barren: and Yahweh was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived', after 20 years there was an answer. 'And the children struggled together within her', now here is the bride of Christ in the allegory, and the children are struggling together within her and she's told in a moment that there were two manner of people in her womb; this is the reason I believe that 'the Syrian' is used twice in verse 20.

Now, it's a singular fact that the translators had some difficulty distinguishing between two words in the Hebrew, two names in fact, the names Syria and Edom. When you examine the two words they look very much the same, Syria (758 - aram), Edom (128 - adamah). If you read from the right to the left you will see that they look very much the same. In the original text of the scripture there were no vowel pointings, they were added later; see the dot above the central consonant and the line beneath the central consonant in the word Syria, they weren't there! Now how would you determine the difference quite apart from my handwriting; how would you determine the difference between those two words? Well, the translators have had some difficulty. Now I haven't got time tonight to do this, but if you'd like to jot down 2 Samuel chapter 8 verse 12 and 13 and also the record as you can see there, 1 Chronicles 18 verse 12, and examine them, you will find in those contexts which speak of Joab's victory over the Edomites in the valley of salt, that the record of Samuel says that he was actually fighting against the Syrians; but the record of Chronicles says he was fighting against the Edomites, now who's right? Well, of course, the record that says it was the Edomites is correct but the translators, who had both those records before them, still ended up putting Syria in one and Edom in the other, why did they do that? Well, they couldn't distinguish the difference between those two names and, I believe, that's deliberate! I believe, that's the Spirit's way of telling us something, because you see, b&s and young people, when these two boys are born, one is very much a Syrian, that is, he has all the bad characteristics of the origins of his mother; all the bad characteristics of Laban and others, and never changes them. And the other one is born with his hand locked on his brother's heel, he's a different kind of boy, but he's got a problem! The same problem that I had when I was born; it was as though my hand was lock on the heel of my forefather Adam, and that's where you get the name Edom from, that's my problem! Isn't it interesting in Genesis 3 verse 15, the point of connection between the seed of the woman and the serpent, the point of connection just happens to be the 'heel'; that's the first occurrence of the word 'heel', this one in chapter 25 is the second. 'His hand was fast hold on Esau's heel', in verse 26; so when Jacob was born he had a problem, his problem was his connection with the Syrian, or the Edomite principle, 'the Adam principle', and God spends the next 147 years unlocking the fingers of Jacob from the heel of Esau, and eventually He gets it off!

'God who has been with me all the days of my life' (he didn't always recognize that, he didn't always know that he was dwelling by the well Lahai-roi! But he could say that in Genesis 48 verse 16, 'the God who has been with me all the days of my life, bless the lads.'(I've learnt the lesson at last!) Get in the presence of God, young people, and the process begins of unlocking that hand from the heel of Esau; and I'll tell you something, the hand seems almost like it's being electrocuted, it seems to want to grab the heel and stay there! And God is going to work in your life, if you've got a conscience, He's going to work in your life to get those fingers off that heel; because He's dealing with someone in whom there is a response. Not like an Esau for whom and in whose life there was no response either way because God couldn't work with him, or wouldn't let Him work with him!

Let's come back to Rebekah, verse 22, 'And the children struggled together within her'. That word 'struggled together' is just one word in the Hebrew, it's an unusual word, it's 'ratsats' (7533) and it means 'to crack in pieces', it's not a gentle word, it's like taking a sledge hammer and going 'boing' and smashing something to pieces! That was going on inside the womb of Rebekah. Now those of you who have been mothers in this place tonight will know a little bit about this, my wife's had 4 children, some of them gave her a little bit of a hard time on the odd occasion, the oldest one in particular, she still (I better not say that, it'll go on tape), she's a nice girl actually, but there were elbows and sometimes dad could feel elbows going 'wham', or knees, and that was only one baby in the womb. What about when you get two babies in the womb who want to stay apart? that's what they're doing here! you've got to picture this in your mind. This wasn't a case of Jacob and Esau as brothers in the womb saying, 'I love you, brother; isn't this wonderful!' they were elbowing and trying to get away from each other! Now they didn't know what they were doing, but God did! and He created them. So you have these two babies trying to stay apart, fighting each other; why were they fighting each other? Well, they represented flesh and spirit, and they're in the womb in the process of gestation, which you might say can be likened to probation because the birth hasn't come yet, our nature hasn't been changed, and it won't be changed between our begetting by the Spirit when the Word enters, and the time when we are given a birth of the Spirit. So you see, it's like a probation period, isn't it? and we're looking at here, a person who represents the bride of Christ, and she is a microcosm of every other person, who is part of that bride They all have to go through this experience, there is no exemptions, b&s and young people, you can't escape this, it's got to happen, otherwise, you won't be part of the bride of Christ! God has got to enter the scene, He's got to bring to bear Spirit into your life, which can only be done through the power of His Word, and we've got it there, it's going to set up an antagonism within your mind, just like the womb of Rebekah. And you'll have flesh and spirit trying to stay apart! and flesh will be saying, 'why don't you go down here, why don't you do this, oh, that would be lovely!' and the spirit's saying, 'no, this is the way, walk ye in it', and they don't get on, they're trying to stay apart and you'll never get any peace until there's a birth! That's a conscience! if you haven't got that, you haven't got a conscience!

'Alright, (you say to me), but I know some honest people in the world, they'd never pinch

anything, except someone else's wife! They haven't got a conscience: the kind of conscience the bible talks is when flesh and spirit have entered into the arena; one there naturally, the other one put there by God, and there is an on-going conflict between those two until the day of birth. It can be uncomfortable: that's what Rebekah found, she said verse 22, 'If it be so, why am I thus?' what she's saying and we could perhaps paraphrase it in these words as in fact the Interlinear Bible does, (it doesn't paraphrase it, it gives the translation), 'If it is right, why am I thus?' Let me paraphrase it: what she is saying is this, if this is the blessing that the truth brings, why did I ask for it? They had pleaded with their God that He intervene in their life, and He did, and when He did there was this antagonism going on inside her womb. She is there as a type of all those who will be part of the bride of Christ! There is no escape from that, b&s and young people, there are some young people here, (I don't know, I may be wrong), but there may be some here who might find it a bit hard to understand, maybe 14 or 15 year olds, but the day will come for you, young people, if you put your head down, if you allow God to work in your life, if you open this book and you go along to your study weekends, and your youth conferences, and you get your head in this book and you begin to learn these principles, I'll guarantee that there will be an antagonism set up in your life between flesh and spirit; and it will build upon the conscience that your parents have put there, and you'll be able to make wise decisions, not always getting it right, but you'll be able to make wise decisions; and you'll be able to stand against the tide of iniquity which is sweeping through this world and unfortunately, is touching us more than we would like. But you won't do it, if all that's there is flesh!

See what Yahweh says when she went to enquire of Yahweh, and that's the best place to go! If you've got any problems, if you think those problems have come because you've been brought into the truth, the only problems that have come into your life that aren't there because of the truth, there's only one place to go! 'She went to enquire of Yahweh'; (who knows, it might have even been through Abraham's intercession), 'And Yahweh said unto her, two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels'. The word means 'to be parted' (6504) and you know what, b&s? there wasn't peace when they were born, but there will be for us when we are born. Oh, how we long for the day, if I can speak for the older ones, and perhaps for some of the older young people that have been bitten by the nature that we bear, how we long for the day of our birth, when flesh and spirit will no longer struggle within; won't that be a great day? It's coming, it may seem that there's been a delay, but it's coming, and it will come to those like Isaac and Jacob. It can't be otherwise, but there's an encouragement and an consolation in verse 23!

'And the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger'. The 'one people', Israel, shall be stronger than the 'other people', Edom, adam, and the elder, the old man of the flesh, shall serve the younger. Sin shall no longer reign in your mortal body, says the apostle Paul in Romans chapter 6, if the truth is entered and dominates the mind, and you have a conscience, the power of sin, 'King Sin', will no longer reign! The elder will serve the younger, why would that be the case? Well, it says there at verse 23, 'the one people shall be stronger than the other', the word 'stronger' in the Hebrew is 'amats' (553) and it means 'to be alert', and there's

nothing more alert, b&s and young people, than divine thinking; it can put it's hand on any problem of magnitude or minuscule size. If you get your head in the bible often enough and consistent enough, and you sit around with your family and you talk through the issues and you talk amongst yourselves as young people, and you go to older brethren and sisters, (which is not done enough today, I might add), you go to older brethren and sisters who have been around and learnt a few lessons sometimes the hard way, go along and ask them about the issues of life; I know it's difficult, young people, but go along and say, 'listen, I have a problem or I don't understand this, can you help me?' you will find that they will be busting themselves to do so! You do that sufficiently enough and you'll develop a sensitivity to what's right and wrong; and when issues of life come along, you won't have to be told, 'now listen here, this is what you've got to do son', you will know what to do; issues big or small, because you see the power working in your life is far more alert than Esau's brain!

You know, he only had one way of thinking! Esau was like those people in the world who think they're free! They think that the world is there, you see, and they all go around wearing black jeans and black tops or whatever it is; I mean, they're as narrow minded as you're ever going to see anybody, aren't they? They're all conforming (they're drinking, etc. and can hardly talk civilly- 'whaaattt did you saaayyy?'), their mind is rivetted on one thing, pleasing 'Number One', which means they're dumb, just dumb! But the spirit is alert; you look at our young people here, we've got a lot of them, there's probably 300 young people here, and I look around this group and I see them, I look at their faces (you don't think I look at your faces, but I do) and I see something that I think is absolutely terrific. I see young people who are not like the world our there, they're not like those 'doe-doe's' who go around and say, 'what do we do now boys?'; they're alert people, they are young people who have got a look in their face that has been bred by the power of the Word! But you've got to choose to be like that, no one can stuff it down your throat; when it comes to being 15 or 16 the time has come for you to take over from your parents; it doesn't mean take the house over, it means take over the responsibility and begin to lift that upon your shoulders, and give mom and dad a break, they've got to let the reins go at that time of life! Oh, yes, they'll try and keep some kind of attachment and they'll say 'Listen boy, (preferably), listen girl, 11:00 o'clock tonight, eh?' and you're wise to listen. But that's about the only control they've got, because while they can ask you, 'Where have you been, dear?' unless you've got a conscience, you won't tell them! Give mom and dad a break, you take the responsibility.

Now listen, there's a very important lesson here, there came the day when the boys were born, and you can tell the difference already. Verse 25, 'the first came out red all over like a hairy garment, and they called his name Esau' (when was the last time you saw a baby born covered, absolutely covered, from top to toe in red furry hair? I mean, most mothers would say, 'oh yuck!; what was God saying? Well, they named him Esau, now 'Esau' means 'hairy or rough' (6215), but it's akin to the word 'asah' (6213), 'to do or to make' in the sense of handling something that's already there and fully made. I don't know if I was born with hair on my head, I haven't got much left now, but you don't see babies born hairy like a grown man, that is, naturally hairy; but Esau was like he was almost mature when he was born, and he was 'red', the colour of sin, the colour of flesh,

'adom' meaning 'rosy' (122), hence, they named him 'Edom', 'red'. You see what it's telling us, b&s and young people, is that here was a boy who was born that way and he never changed; I mean, he had a choice, it wasn't as though he was stuck in a groove and couldn't get out of it, but he had a battle, a greater battle than Jacob; he just wasn't willing to even begin the battle. That's his problem, he just wasn't willing, he just wasn't interested in anything else but Esau; as for God, he was taught the same Sunday School lessons, he did the readings together with his brother Jacob, as a family. You can imagine that Abraham was there, Abraham, Isaac and Rebekah and company sitting around the readings as it were, and Abraham's wisdom would be brought to bear! He had all that, but he was like his uncle, he's a donkey, it sort of didn't make any impression on the grey matter inside this cranium up here. But he wasn't one of these weaklings who did nothing! Oh, no, he was very different as we shall see!

His brother came out, and had his hand on Esau's heel; don't need to say anymore about that, do we? 'And the boys grew, (verse 27), and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents'. (Now verse 28 we'll leave to a later session, God willing), let's just focus on verse 27. 'The boys grew', the word in the Hebrew is 'naar', it means 'a boy from infancy to adolescence' (5288), so you get the idea they're getting in the teenage years here. 'And Esau was known as a cunning hunter', the word 'cunning' means ('yada' 3045) 'to know', 'a man skilled' says Rotherham, and the word 'hunter' is the word for 'the chase' (6718) (in those days it wasn't a matter of getting into a 4-wheel drive vehicle and charging out into the paddocks and chasing animals), you had to use your legs, so if you were a fast runner, you caught the animal, if you were a slow runner then you were left in the dust. So they called it 'the chase', he was a man skilled in the chase, so to use modern parlance, he was a good sportsman. Now, there's nothing wrong with being a sportsman, as a young person I used the word 'sportsman' in the sense of someone who likes activity (I'm not talking here about being a footballer or a cricketer playing for the state or the country, I'm talking about someone who likes activity) and, as a young person, I guess I was amongst those who loved the end of the year activities and the other young people's activities here in Adelaide where we were given opportunity to bounce around all over the paddock, and to demonstrate that we had plenty of energy and, in fact, many of us had plenty of skill, whether it be in tennis or football or cricket, and there was nothing wrong with that, in fact, I think it's very healthy; but as I said in one of the previous studies, there came a time in my life when having gone through school as a sportsman and having had some success, the time came and we have people saying, 'Now, listen, I think you could probably go on and represent the state or whatever else', the time came for decisions to be made about direction, about destiny! You couldn't go on thinking that you could devote yourself to sport; it came to a time in life when you got down to think about things that were important, critical to your future. That transition I didn't find easy, because, at 18 or 19, I could bounce around with the best of them, but the time's got to come, sadly I guess when some of us are in our 40's and 50's, we haven't completely left behind our love of sport, even though we can't even, many of us, get up a good run.

You see, when that time came, there were two different types of young people. Now

let's just see if we can find out something about these two boys from the New Testament. Hebrews 12 and Hebrews 11, there's something here in the record of Hebrews 12 which we are not told, at least we're not told in so many words back in the record of Genesis, it's there to be sure, but we are told it very plainly in the record of Hebrews 12. We won't go into the entire context, we'll just take verse 16, 'Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright'. And then it speaks about the judgment seat in verse 17, which basically was what it was for him; 'he found no place of repentance though he sought it carefully with tears'. 'Lest there be any fornicator', you see, Esau was a young man, who not only had very great skills as a sportsman, which you can be guaranteed he was to show off. You know, he's one of those sorts of fellows who get out on the field, (and by the way, the Lord Jesus Christ in the parable of the tares in Matthew chapter 13 and 38 says, 'the field is the world'), he'd get out in the field of the world and there he'd bounce around like a gazelle chasing gazelles or whatever it was he was chasing; and you can see this man, can't you, pounding across the fields with his arrows on his back and his bow in his hand, and as he came up close to the deer, he would take out the arrow and would shoot it right through the heart. Chest out! and as he grabbed this animal and would take it back to his father who delighted in his exploits (and we'll see the reason why Isaac did later on), all the local girls are saying, 'Wellll, isn't he nice!' along with the fluttering of the eyes, and Esau would say, 'Wowwww!' Fifteen years of age, I believe, he was 15 years of age, and he was a fornicator, playing around with the girls, 15 years of age!

We spoke about the girls preserving their virginity one night this week, what about the boys? Are we just as jealous as our quality girls are? Have we had, or will we have, young fellows who will see the young people's groups almost as a pool of possibilities? We need to get that right young people! God hates fornicators, fornicators and adulterers God will judge! and Esau was like that. Now why do I say that? He was something else as well, because to be a fornicator, sometimes you have to cross the threshold of the house of your birthright; says there, 'he was a profane person'. The word 'profane' in the Greek is 'bebelos' (952), it means literally 'to cross the threshold', and this is the epistle in which the apostle Paul talks about some who are about to leave the truth, and to trample underfoot as they leave the house, to trample under foot the blood of Christ. It says that in chapter 10, and Esau was like that, 'to hang with the birthright!', he would go out there into the world to show off his prowess and bounce around with the young ladies. When he went to marry, he married two Canaanite women, and when he saw it didn't please his parents, he said, 'Well, they're happy to send Jacob to find a wife amongst our family in the north, maybe I misunderstood this, maybe what they want is for me to marry into my family!' so he went and found a daughter of Ishmael. He never had a day in his life that he understood God, and his daughters were the same!

Well, why do we say he's 15? Well, just come back a page to Hebrews 11, and you'll remember the words about Jacob (we'll come back to those in a moment) 'that he was a plain man, dwelling in tents'. Why does it say that in the record of Genesis 25 do you think? It doesn't say that Esau dwelt in tents, it doesn't say that Esau dwelt in houses, it

doesn't say that Esau did anything except chase the game. But why does it say that Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents? Well, it wants to tell us something very plain, of course, about his character, about his faith and we're told in verse 9 of Hebrews 11, 'by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob', (notice that, with Isaac and Jacob), the heirs with him of the same promise'. Now Jacob was born when Abraham was 160 years of age; Abraham died at 175 years of age, which means there were 15 years in which Abraham had opportunity to dwell with Jacob in tents. Of course, when Jacob was a baby he didn't know he was dwelling in a tent, but as he grew up to be a child and ran around and went to his grandfather, and then began to get in the teenage years, you know, through that year 13, (Boy! I tremble when I get to 13, when I see what happens to teenagers at 13, the number of rebellion in the bible, by the way!). Thirteen, well, Jacob got to 13 and Abraham was still there and Abraham worked on him, and worked on him, and when Jacob was 15, Abraham died, and by the time that Abraham died, Jacob had faith that pleased God; Jacob had made the choice to be a pilgrim and a stranger in the earth. He had made a conscious choice to be like his grandfather and like his father. He had said, 'I want to be like you, my aim is for the kingdom, I'm prepared to dwell in tents!' At 15, young people, he had made a conscious choice to be like mom and dad.

That's a bit of a challenge, isn't it? At 15 he had a conscience. We know that, because when you come back to Genesis 25 it says this, verse 27, 'And Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents'. Now the word 'plain' is the Hebrew word 'tam' (8535), it means 'complete or morally pious', especially has the idea of 'a gentleness or a simplicity', so it's about simplicity, sincerity and single mindedness. It's the word used of Job, that Job was an 'upright man', Job chapter 1 verse 1 and 8, and chapter 2 verse 3; it's a word used about the bride of Christ in the Song of Solomon 5:2 and 6:9, it's used in Psalm 37 and Psalm 64 of the perfect man. It's actually about someone who's got to a point in their life, where God is larger than themselves! And that's our big problem, isn't it? My big problem is 'Number One', physically fairly large but spiritually gigantic! My problem is me! I'm too big for my boots! and my nature is bigger than I can beat. It's only when God looms larger than self, b&s and young people, that we get anywhere; and here was a young man at 15 who had sorted himself out, he'd made certain commitments, he had a conscience, he was an upright man, there was singleness and sincerity, his only problem was that his hand was still locked on Esau's heel! So, he's got to go to the land of the Syrians, remember that? the connection between Syria and Edom. He has to spend 40 years in the land of the Syrians, for God to teach him, to be absolutely without guile! But as a young man he was uncomplicated, he'd sorted himself out largely, he'd made a commitment to the faith of Abraham, it can be done, can't it? and he lived in the company of a brother who was a fornicator, who was crossing the threshold. His brother was going out of the door of his parents' house every night, saying 'well, I'm off again, here we go!' Where are you going, boy? Never you mind!' and out he'd go and play around with the girls, play around with this, and play around with that; providing he brought back some venison to shove down his father's throat, he got away!

Not Jacob, he was out in the field keeping sheep, learnt to be a shepherd out there,

looking after other young people at 15. Do you know what some young people call those young fellows and girls? Our people have got a saying for them, their squares! Well, maybe they are, but they're square pegs in a square hole. They fit quite nicely and that's the way God wants them!

We know the story, (my time is gone), the time comes when Esau wants to shove some red pottage down his throat, and he's prepared to sell his birthright. There always comes a day, young people, you can only run away from God for so long, but there comes a day when for some reason, something's going to happen in which God is involved, like I believe on this day, when Esau went out there and bounced around the paddocks, until he was absolutely exhausted, and even the sick gazelles run away from him at a 100 miles an hour; he couldn't catch them, because God made sure he couldn't catch them! And when he got back, he was exhausted, he was hungry, he was tired, he was miserable with himself because he couldn't achieve what he wanted to achieve, and he was prepared to sell his birthright for a mouthful of red baked beans! And when he was done that, he wiped his mouth as it says in verse 34, 'Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils (baked beans); he did eat and drink, and rose up (and the most significant words in this story!!). Here's the boy without a conscience, 'AND HE WENT HIS WAY'; I'll do it my way, thanks! HE WENT HIS WAY, thus Esau despised his birthright'. Yes, b&s and young people, the birth is coming, and then it will be seen that two manner of people have been separated in the bride of Christ, an Esau class who went their own way, and a Jacob class, who like his father Isaac, loved to dwell in the presence of the living One, their Beholder!