



Tug of War Within

Genesis 25: 22-23

Suggested Illustration: *Have a rope suitable for the game of Tug of War. Do a very tame and brief tug of war game between a limited number of students just prior to opening with prayer.*

Introduction

We are all familiar with the game “Tug of War” but there are some Tug of Wars that are not games.

There are struggles and battles between people, and there are struggles between nations.

There is the struggle a roper feels when the lasso hits the mark and the steer begins quite a battle for who gives up first.

However, the greatest Tug of War is actually going on within each of us.

In Genesis 25 the battle between two brothers is described. Their struggle began before they were born and did not end for 60 years.

This struggle had some effect in shaping their lives, however, the struggle that Jacob had within himself was the determining factor in the outcome of his nation of Israel.

The Birthright:

Genesis 25:22-23

And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the Lord.

And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

Jacob and Esau were twin brothers. Jacob was not the firstborn son and he was not the stronger. But he did desire to be the son that would inherit the promise that God had made to his father, Isaac and to his grandfather, Abraham.

His methods were not right, but he did have faith that God could and would give him the promise.



Up to this time in history [[Genesis 25](#)] the birthright went from father to oldest son. That was just the way it had “always been done”. Jacob thought this could be changed.

Everyone in the world has opinions on what they THINK God should do to allow someone to go to Heaven. But it does not matter what anyone thinks. What matters is what God says!

God promised to bless all people through a son of Isaac and Jacob wanted to be that son. He didn't care about tradition or what everyone else said: He wanted the promise of God; he had faith that it could and should be him, **but he was willing to do anything to get it!**

Esau lived by impulse. Whatever pleased him, he did it. He was an outdoorsman and hunter.

Jacob was more of a planner and a conniver. When he saw an opportunity, he took it.

This Tug of War between these twin brothers' descendents is still going on today in fact. The children of Jacob are the Israelites [*or Jews or Hebrews*] and the children of Esau are people that generally come from the regions around Israel and continually there is friction and fighting between these descendents of Isaac. This is true also of the Grandfather Abraham's descendents. The direct line God promised to bless is Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob [*who eventually got the blessing.*] Abraham's other offspring through Ishmael produced many of the Arab nations.

The Blessing:

Isaac was now old and going blind. His sons were 40 years old. Esau had married pagan girls and made it clear that he lived for this current world, not for what God had promised to future generations.

Esau's did not care about his birthright and his father's blessing. His attitude played out as he decided that temporary wealth and power were more important.

Jacob knew that this promise was much greater than that. It was a promise of God. The problem with Jacob was that he didn't know how to get the “blessing of God”. He went about it all wrong.

- He tricked his father by lying to him and it forced him to flee. [Genesis 27:36](#)
- He then tried to bargain with God and it cost him 20 years of hard work. [Genesis 28:20](#)
- He made a deal with Laban to get Rachel for a wife rather than pursue her properly and Laban tricked him. [Genesis 29: 20 & 25](#)
- He cheated Laban out of his cattle, goats, and sheep, but had to flee from Laban before his cheating caught up with him.
- He was on the run from all of his cheating and had nowhere else to go but back home to face the first person he cheated, Esau.
- Now he fears for his life, but knows it has to be done. At this time Jacob repents [Genesis 32:10](#) and realizes that God provides the way to reach His promises.
- He learns that relying on God to direct your path will save you from all of the mess and trouble that is created by doing things your own way.

Conclusion:

God brought the Messiah, Jesus Christ through Jacob even though Jacob kept messing things up. God kept His promise to his father and grandfather when he changed Jacob from a conniver to a man of God called Israel.

We see that God implemented His overall plan in spite of Jacob's messing things up.

As a Christian, we can struggle with problems we create or we can be Spirit filled and enjoy the journey.

The choice is yours to make.

Present Salvation Here.