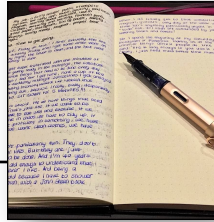


# Genesis & The Story of Your Life (Part 3) Ishmael, Esau & Jacob



*"This is the **account** [story] of the family of **Ishmael**, the son of Abraham through Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian servant."* Genesis 25:12. *"This is the **account** of the family of **Isaac**, the son of Abraham."* Genesis 25:19 NLT

Genesis tells us the stories of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Lot, Rebekah, Jacob, Esau, and Joseph. Each had a "life message." Their stories teach us important lessons. Our lives are also a story and have a message. What message do you want to come from your life?

## The Central Lesson:

**Our lives have a "life message." What do you want your message to be?**

### 1. Ishmael - People may inherit undesirable **GENETIC** tendencies from their family line - but God's **SALVATION** and the Holy Spirit's work of **SANCTIFICATION** can transform people's lives.

Genesis 21:13 *"But I will also **make a nation** of the descendants of Hagar's son because he is your son, too."* Genesis 21:18 *"...for I will **make a great nation** from his descendants."* Genesis 25:16 *"These **twelve sons of Ishmael** became the founders of twelve tribes named after them, listed according to the places they settled and camped."* Genesis 25:18 *"...There they lived in **open hostility** toward all their relatives."*

Galatians 5:22-23 NLT *"<sup>22</sup> But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!"*

The story of Ishmael is recorded in Genesis 16-17; 21:8-20; 25:12-18. The back story was - Abraham and Sarah were old and childless. God **promised** that the elderly couple would miraculously have a son. Through this son, God would fulfill His covenant and blessing upon the world. Through this son, God would raise a great nation (Israel) and send the Messiah and Savior of the world (Jesus Christ). However, years passed. Abraham and Sarah continued to advance in years (he was 86 years old - Gen. 16:15. Sarah was 76 years old). However, Sarah had not conceived a son.

In Genesis 16, we read that **Sarah's faith weakened**, and her **patience ended**. She decided to take matters into her own hands. She exercised a custom of her day by giving her servant, Hagar, to Abraham as a **substitute** or **surrogate** wife. She demanded that Abraham give her a son through Hagar. **Ishmael was born** as a result (Genesis 16).

Thirteen years later (when Abraham was 99 years old - Gen. 17:1), God spoke to Abraham. He re-affirmed His covenant and **repeated His promise** to give Abraham a son **through Sarah** (See Genesis 17:15-22). **A year later, Sarah gave birth to Isaac** (Gen. 21:1-7). Unfortunately, **conflict developed** between Sarah and Hagar. Sarah demanded that Abraham

send Hagar and Ishmael away. Abraham was deeply troubled, but God comforted Abraham and told him to do as Sarah had demanded. God **promised to bless Ishmael** and also make him a great nation (see Gen. 21:13, 18; 25:16).

According to the Bible, Ishmael had **twelve sons** who became **twelve tribes** (Gen. 25:12-18). The Bible also states that *"...they lived in **open hostility** towards all their relatives"* (Gen. 25:18). Today, the ancestors of Ishmael make up the Arabs in the middle east. They are followers of Islam and continue to live in hostility.

The Life Application Bible explains: **"There are circumstances over which we have no control (heredity, for instance), but there are others that we can control (decisions we make)... In the context of history, Ishmael's life represents the mess we make when we don't try to change the things we could change."**

### 2. Esau & Jacob - resolve conflict **GOD'S** way (first get right with God, and then get right with others).

*"O LORD, please rescue me from the hand of my brother, Esau. I am afraid that he is coming to attack me, along with my wives and children. But you promised me 'I will surely treat you kindly, and I will multiply your descendants until they become as numerous as the sands along the seashore—too many to count.'" Genesis 32:11-12 NLT*

Esau and Jacob were twins born to Isaac and Rebekah, who struggled with infertility for twenty years. Finally, like Abraham and Sarah, God promised that the lineage of the Messiah would come through Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 17:15-19). Isaac prayed on behalf of his wife, Rebekah, and God allowed her to conceive twin boys whom they named Esau and Jacob (Gen. 25:21-26).

Even though Esau and Jacob were twin brothers, they lived in strife from their birth (Gen. 25:22-23). Jacob was the younger and grew up to be a skimmer. He tricked his brother Esau into giving him his birthright as the firstborn son (Gen. 25:29-34). Of course, Esau did not value his special favor. He gave away his birthright for a bowl of stew (Gen. 25:34). Later, when Isaac was on his deathbed, Jacob, with the help of his mother, Rebekah (an illustration of favoritism in the family causing family conflict), schemes and swindles his brother from his father's blessing. The result was Esau intensely hating his brother and plotting to kill him (Gen. 27:18-40).

Jacob had to run for his life and went to live with his uncle Laban (Gen. 29-30), where he married his two daughters, Leah and Rachel (Gen. 29:16-30). God blessed Jacob, and he became very wealthy. He decided to return to the land of his father, Isaac, which was controlled by his brother, Esau. However, he remembers how he did his brother wrong, and Esau had planned to kill him (Gen. 32). But Jacob wanted to make things right with his brother (Gen. 32). First, he got his life right with God (Gen. 32:9-12), and second, sought to make things right with Esau, his brother (Gen. 33).

## The Central Lesson

**Our lives have a "life message." What do you want your message to be?**

- ▶ Accept Christ as your Savior. ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ▶ Attend a small group. ▶ Read the Bible this week ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.