

Conflict Resolution



Esau and Jacob

This segment of Conflict Resolution will introduce us to Esau and Jacob, and the events surrounding the birthright. Before we do, however, we want to reference the conflict Isaac had with Abimelech king of the Philistines. As the event involving his wife Rebekah, Isaac had adopted the same strategy his father Abraham had, saying, “She is my sister.” Conflict and Resolution not sufficiently different from that of Abraham, i.e., Abimelech was deceived, and not unlike Pharaoh king of Egypt, and Abimelech king of Gerar, Abimelech, king of the Philistines asked the question, “What is this thou hast done unto us? One of the people might easily have lain with thy wife, and thou wouldest have brought guiltiness upon us” (Genesis 26:6, 10), and Abimelech sent Isaac away from among them, “for thou art much mightier than we.” Following this event, and a number of conflicts over water rights, “Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath his friend, and Phicol the captain of his host. And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore are ye come unto me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you? And they said, We saw plainly that Jehovah was with thee. And we said, Let there now be an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee, that thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in

peace. Thou art now the blessed of Jehovah. And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink. And they rose up betimes in the morning, and swore one to another. And Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace. And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water. And he called it Shibah. Therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba unto this day" (Genesis 26:26-33). Following these relatively minor inconveniences of life we are introduced to a Conflict in Isaac's family, and the years of despair that ensued. A conflict generated by numerous actions.

Is it true that time heals all wounds? One "Licensed Professional Counselor in Austin, Texas," says, "Time doesn't heal, it's what you DO with the time that does."

Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy, the mother of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, said, "It has been said, 'time heals all wounds.' I do not agree. The wounds remain. In time, the mind, protecting its sanity, covers them with scar tissue and the pain lessens. But it is never gone." She knew wounds, having buried four of your nine children.

Conflicts in a family are difficult, but not uncommon. The family of our inquiry concerns Isaac, Rebekah, Esau and Jacob. Our introduction: "And Isaac entreated Jehovah for his wife, because she was barren. And Jehovah was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her. And she said, If it be so, wherefore do I live? And she went to inquire of Jehovah. And Jehovah said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, And two peoples shall be separated from thy bowels. And the one people shall be stronger than the other people. And the elder shall serve the younger. And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment. And they called his name Esau. And after that came forth his brother, and his hand had hold on Esau's heel. And his name was called Jacob. And Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them. And the boys grew. And Esau was a skilful hunter, a man of the field. And Jacob

was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. Now Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison. And Rebekah loved Jacob. And Jacob boiled pottage. And Esau came in from the field, and he was faint. And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage. For I am faint. Therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me first thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am about to die. And what profit shall the birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me first. And he swore unto him. And he sold his birthright unto Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils. And he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way. So Esau despised his birthright” (Genesis 25:21–34).

This event was the beginning of travail that would not only affect the household of Isaac, but would eventually extend to the two nations that were to come through his seed.