

Jacob and Esau; Gen. 25:19-28; Rom. 9:10-13; I. The Twins of Isaac Born II. The Doctrine of Election Illustrated

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, human beings make choices every day. Usually, we choose something because it meets our needs or our interests. We make choices about when and what to eat, what to wear and what to do. For example, if I choose to wear a purple tie, I am also passing over all the other ties. So to choose something is to pick that one- while passing over or not choosing the other. Today as we consider Jacob and Esau, we are going to see this sovereign choosing of God illustrated. It is interesting that we normally speak of Jacob and Esau- why not Esau and Jacob? Why do we unconsciously put Jacob first since he is the youngest? Two weeks ago, with Isaac and Ishmael- with Sarah and Hagar- we saw that God used these two mothers and their two sons to illustrate 2 covenants. Isaac illustrates the covenant of grace and he remains the child of the promise. We continue this focus on the grace of our God today as we see the sovereign choosing of Jacob over Esau. This week we see God's grace in His electing love. So we consider this theme: God sovereignly chooses to love His child. Our text is Rom. 9:13- Jacob I loved but Esau I hated.

I. The Twins of Isaac Born

In our first point we are going to have a little background on these two sons. The better we understand the history of these two men, the more surprising and gracious the doctrine of election will become. So Abraham had 2 sons by 2 wives- while only one, namely Isaac, would be called the only beloved one. Only Isaac would be the child of the promise through whom the blessings of grace would be passed on as we also find in Rom. 9:7. Now with Isaac, he also has 2 sons. He has 2 children by the same wife- and yet this same distinction and division is seen. One is chosen to be the recipient of grace, while the other is not. So Isaac finds a good wife- or really a good wife is found and brought to him as per Abraham's request. Isaac was 40 when he got married- and his wife was much younger. But Rebekah was barren like her mother in law, and it is only after the prayers of Isaac that her womb would be opened. So she had hardship as she waited for children- and when she finally conceived she had hardship within as the twins struggled within. So as we read in Gen. 25, the LORD reveals that there are not only 2 children within, these 2 boys will become 2 nations. Two people

groups that will be divided- as we will see- Israel and Edom. But more than that, with these 2 sons we will see the 2 parts of predestination as well- both election and reprobation are present in the womb of Rebekah! The conflict is as old as the fall- both the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent are present in her one womb! No wonder there was conflict! So in their due time, these twins are born. The older one is named Esau- he is red, hairy and wild. He is a true outdoorsman. He will prove to be rash and proud- easily angered and keeping a record of wrongs. The second born son is Jacob- his name means heel grabber or one who trips others. He will be jockeying for position all his life. Jacob is smooth skinned and more of a tent dweller as Gen. 25:27 says. He is quiet- and very conniving! He is good at manipulating others as we will see. So these two brothers are very different- one will be loved by his father while the other will be loved by his mother. Jacob will go on to cheat his brother twice- and thus secure both the birthright and the blessing. But Jacob will also be on the receiving end of deceit- only to be finally humbled when he wrestles with the LORD. Esau will seek revenge as he plans to kill his brother Jacob- only to finally be reconciled to him after many years. These two men will marry very different women as well. Esau will marry 2 Hittite women- causing great bitterness and strife for his parents. While Jacob will be sent to Laban where he will find Rachel and Leah as we will consider next week. One quick application is found in the danger of favoritism! When parents choose to love one child over another- sibling rivalries and conflict are sure to follow!

II. The Doctrine of Election Illustrated

Now that we have a little background on these two sons, our text from Rom. 9 builds upon their lives. The LORD illustrates the doctrine of predestination in Rom. 9:13- Jacob I have loved while Esau I hated. Now this loving of Jacob can be seen in the line of Jacob- specifically the Israelites who become the special recipients of God's favor. But more than that, we see the individual and specific work of God in loving one and hating the other- in choosing one and passing over the other. So let's focus in on Rom. 9 to see what God is teaching us about His work of election. First of all, we see that election is a work of God. Rom. 9:11- God's purpose of election stands. It is He who loves and He who hates. So election is a work of God that He performs for a

specific purpose. Election is also a free work of God. Free as a potter is over the clay. He can choose those whom He desires- He is not bound or forced to choose one or the other. The electing work of God remains free and sovereign. He can choose one and pass the other over without doing wrong to one or the other. This point is also made in Rom. 9:21- the potter has right over the clay. None can question His choice or resist His plan. The third aspect of God's election on display is that God chooses a person without regard to their works or actions. This is the point of 9:11- Jacob was chosen by God before he was born. Eph. 1 says we are chosen before the foundation of the world. So before Jacob and Esau has done anything- good or ill- one was loved and the other hated. One chosen and elect for eternal life while the other passed over and left in their sins. So the point is clear, God does not choose to save people based on their works. God does not elect and save those based on their past nor on their future actions. God chooses some without any consideration of that person's actions or character- either good or ill. So it is clear that God does not choose to save the good son or the better of the two. The electing love that Jacob receives is undeserved. As Rom. 9:11 says- not because of Jacob's works but because of God's calling. When we remember what kind of man Jacob would be- deceitful, manipulating and cunning. We can clearly see that Jacob is no better than Esau. It was not that God picked the better son- but rather God chose one simply because He is a kind, loving and gracious God! This, the choosing of Jacob, proves that election is an election based on grace! Sovereign election is a gracious election! As 9:14 says, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy! Election is gracious- Jacob is loved by God because God is love- not because Jacob was lovely! So what then is the basis of this electing love? If it is not found in human works, merit or actions; why or how can God choose us? Well, the answer is found in the love of God and the gracious character of God. In other word- God's character and sovereign will- that is why He is free and that is why He did choose some! His good pleasure- and for His glory! Look back at what Rom. 8:33 says- who can bring any charge against God's elect- it is God who justifies! And again in 8:35- who can separate us from the love of Christ! We have love of God upon us because Christ loves us and died for us- securing our election by the Father's choice and securing our salvation by Jesus' works! And this really is where we need to draw our comfort- nothing can separate us from the love of God because that love is ours in

Jesus Christ! Why did God choose Jacob- why did God choose you? Not because of your works- not because you are lovely- but because God loves! Election is based on the sovereign good will of God! That is why we are loved. Or to say this another way- it is because the Father loved us that He sent His Son to die for us- to secure our salvation! We are chosen in Him before the foundation of the world as Eph. 1 says. And because we are the recipients of God's love- we can know that this love is eternal and lasting! What can remove- who can cancel God's love? No one and nothing! If God has loved you- who can be against you? If Christ died for you, who can separate you from Him? So there is no power or principality that can separate you from God's love! And there is nothing in this life- or the life to come; nothing in the physical or spiritual realm- not even sin, the devil or death! Nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord! That, my friends, is the comforting truth found in sovereign and divine election! Once Jacob was loved by God, He could not be unloved by God! Once you are loved by God- you will always remain in His love! Jesus Himself said, I know those whom I have chosen and no one can snatch one of my sheep from my hands!

Yet we also see that God's electing love is surprising. The older will serve the younger as 9:12 says- the older is hated while the younger is loved. God's ways are not our ways- we cannot fathom His mind and we cannot trace His steps. God does not choose the wise, strong or wealth- but rather He normally chooses the week and lowly! So high and so far beyond what we can see and comprehend. And His electing work is always effective. The one He loves He will save. Those whom He predestined He calls and these will be justified as Rom. 8:30 put it. What should be striking to us is not that Esau was hated, but rather that Jacob was loved! We dare not presume on His kindness! All sinners deserve to be hated by God- the fact that some are loved; that some are chosen- that is miraculous and marvelous grace!

As we close, the two brothers- Jacob and Esau- in that order- prove that God is free and sovereign to do and choose and He sees fit. To love one and hate another- to choose one and pass over the other. God sovereignly chooses to love His child. We are the clay, He is the potter. He will have mercy on whom He wills. So may those who are chosen give thanks and praise God for His electing love!