

# Genesis 25:23-26

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/gen/gen-25/genesis-2523-26/>

*God answers Rebekah's inquiry and tells her that the turmoil indicates that her two sons within her will become two nations. The younger son and his nation will be stronger than the older one. When Isaac was 60 years old the twins were born. Esau is the firstborn. Jacob is born second, holding onto his brother's heel.*

Rebekah was experiencing something that caused her to inquire of the LORD since she could feel that “the children struggled together within her” (v. 22). Whether from desiring to soothe anxiety or a desire to make sure she did not mishandle something the LORD was telling her, or some other reason, Rebekah wanted to know what this turmoil inside her meant. Since Rebekah had been barren, and these twins were an answer to Isaac’s prayer, she might have sensed a special destiny that required her special attention (Genesis 25:21).

She sought the Lord’s explanation for this struggle taking place in her womb.

*The Lord answered her, “Two nations are in your womb;  
And two peoples will be separated from your body;  
And one people shall be stronger than the other;  
And the older shall serve the younger.”*  
(Genesis 25:23)

God revealed to Rebekah that she was going to have *two* sons: they would be *two peoples*—meaning *two nations*. This was a special sort of “gender reveal” from God Himself. The *two nations* and *two peoples* in Rebekah’s *womb* would *be separated from her body*; that did not only mean she was having two children, but that two separate people groups would originate from these children.

Each son would grow to father *nations*: the nations of Edom from Esau and Israel from Jacob. These *two nations* would fight many battles with one another throughout Israel’s history. But the two brothers would experience conflict with each other throughout their own lives, setting the stage for the continued struggle between the Edomites and Israelites. Ultimately, God says, *one people shall be stronger than the other*. This will eventually be the Israelites (out of Jacob) being *stronger* than the Edomites (out of Esau).

However, the Israelites will not completely subdue the Edomites until the time of King David (2 Samuel 8:12-14).

The LORD also says that *the older shall serve the younger*. This would come to pass in Esau and Jacob’s lifetime. Esau will be born first, which, in the case of twins, makes him *the older* brother, and therefore the rightful heir to the birthright, which is the right to rule the family. But Jacob

will acquire both the firstborn birthright from Esau and the firstborn blessing from Isaac by way of schemes (duping his appetite-driven brother into selling his birthright) and deception (deceiving his father into giving him the blessing of the birthright).

*When Rebekah's days to be delivered were fulfilled she went into labor and behold, there were twins in her womb (vs 24). Two boys were born to her, the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau. Esau had red hair and was hairy all over his body, like a hairy garment (vs 25), as if he were born wearing a suit of red hair. Esau means "hairy," so apparently the parents gave him the name based on his appearance.*

*Afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob (vs 26). Jacob ("Ya'āqōb") means "someone who grabs the heel" or "someone who supplants." In more common terms, the name means "deceiver." Jacob would live up to this name. That he was born with his hand holding on to his brother's heel shows a glimpse of the future, when Jacob would compete with and eventually successfully obtain Esau's birthright from him. The older (hairy/Esau red/Edom) brother would be supplanted by the younger brother Jacob "who supplants."*

We are given another age marker, which was common when a child was born or a marriage took place (Genesis 16:16, Genesis 21:5, Genesis 25:20). We see that *Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to Esau and Jacob (vs 26). Isaac will live to the age of 180, so at age 60 he has lived a third of his life (Genesis 35:29). In our era where someone might live to age 75, a third of one's life has been lived by age 25.*

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>23</sup> The Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger."<sup>24</sup> When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.<sup>25</sup> Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau.<sup>26</sup> Afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob; and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them.**