

Battle of the Brothers

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Sibling Rivalries and Family Dynamics

- Many sibling rivalries result in the younger having status over the older sibling
- Contradicts the role of the firstborn
- Why does this happen?
- Argument: They are favored by God or their parents

Cain and Abel

- “And the Lord had regard for Abel’s offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard” (Gen. 4:4)

- 1st set of siblings in the Bible and the world
- Cain decides to make an offering to God, Abel follows
- Cain kills Abel out of jealousy
 - How were they raised?
 - Was this the only time Abel was favored or was this common?

Ishmael and Isaac

- “Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; Whatever Sarah tells you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named for you. As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring” (Gen. 21:12-13)

- Ishmael: oldest, son of Hagar, not legitimate
- Isaac: youngest, son of Sarah, legitimate
- Sarah gets jealous, demands that Ishmael and Hagar are cast out with no inheritance
- Abraham doesn't even question it
- Abraham's love for Isaac was so strong God used it to challenge his faith

Esau and Jacob

- “Isaac loved Esau, because he was fond of game; but Rebekah loved Jacob” (Gen. 25:28)
- “two nations are in your womb,/ and two people born of you shall be divided;/ the one shall be stronger than the other,/ the elder shall serve the younger.” (Gen. 25-23).

- Esau traded his birthright for food
- Jacob would feed him unless he got Esau's birthright
- Rebekah tells Jacob to pretend to be Esau to get his blessings and he doesn't fight it
- Esau's blessing is to serve his younger brother who got everything
- Rebekah favored Jacob before her kids were even born

Leah and Rachel

- Jacob “loved Rachel more than Leah” (Gen. 29:30)
- “the Lord saw that Leah was unloved, he opened her womb; but Rachel was barren” (Gen. 29: 31)

- Jacob wanted to marry Rachel but was tricked into marrying Leah first
- Younger daughters can't get married until their older sisters are wed
- Jacob didn't want to marry Leah in the first place
- Leah: older sister, first wife, has Jacob's first child, and 7/13 kids
- Rachel: younger sister, second wife, has Jacob's last 2 kids, first choice

10 Older brothers and Joseph

- “Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children. . . when [Joseph’s] brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him” (Gen. 37.3-4)
- “[Manasseh] shall also become a people, and he also shall be great. Nevertheless his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his offspring shall be a multitude of nations” (Gen. 48:19)

- Blatant favoritism leads to jealousy and resentment
 - First born of favorite wife
- Jacob has dreams where his brothers bow to him
- They plan to kill him, then change their minds and decide to sell him for profit
- Dreams come true!
- Israel/Jacob purposefully gives Joseph’s younger son the elder’s blessing
 - How did he know this? Did God tell him?

Aaron, Miriam, and Moses

- “Has the Lord only spoken through Moses? Has he not spoken through us too?” (Num. 12:2).

- Priest, prophet, leader
- Aaron and Miriam: older, grew up together as slaves
- Moses: youngest, grew up in affluence and freedom
 - Saved by his mother, chosen to be the voice of God
- Siblings vs Coworkers
- “Why does our baby brother get to be in charge?”
- Aaron and Miriam die before reaching the Promised Land
- Moses gets to see it before he dies

Conclusion

- God tends to favor the younger brothers and influences the parents
 - Picking favorites causes problems
 - Jealousy breeds resentment
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