

# Genesis

## Chapter 25



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**Theme:** Abraham marries Keturah; Abraham dies; Esau and Jacob

This is another great chapter of the Bible. It records the death of Abraham and the birth of the twins, Esau and Jacob, to Isaac and Rebekah. It gives the generations of Ishmael and also the generations of Isaac. Then there is the incident relative to the birthright. So this is a remarkable chapter, and it covers a great deal of ground.<sup>1</sup>

**Torah Class:** Wow, there's a lot of information jam-packed into this chapter. I suspect that prior to 1948 and the absolutely unthinkable fulfillment of the prophecy that Israel would be reborn as a nation of Jews, this listing of tribes coming from Abraham would have been relatively unimportant except for librarians and historians. But, now that Israel has returned to their homeland, and with the happenings of the Middle East that are shaking the whole earth like never before, these genealogical listings take on a little more important tone for the Church, especially; as does the strange circumstances of the birth of Isaac's twin sons, Jacob and Esau.

Chapter 25 is more or less divided into 3 parts: the first third consisting of the final important details of Abraham's life, the 2<sup>nd</sup> third, consisting of calling out the descendants of Ishmael, and giving some information about where they settled. Here in the final third of chapter 25, we begin to chart the end of Isaac's story and the beginning of his son Jacob: the torch was being prepared to be passed yet again.<sup>2</sup>

### **Genesis 25:1**

**Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah.**

[**Then again Abraham took a wife**] When Abraham took Keturah we are not informed; it might have been in the lifetime of Sarah; and the original, *vaiyoseph*, "and he added", etc., seems to give some countenance to this opinion. Indeed it is not very likely that he had the children mentioned here after the death of Sarah; and from the circumstances of his age, feebleness, etc., at the birth of Isaac, it is still more improbable.

**Keil Delitzsch Commentary:** Abraham's Marriage to Keturah is generally supposed to have taken place after Sarah's death, and his power to beget six sons at so advanced an age is attributed to the fact, that the Almighty had endowed him with new vital and reproductive energy for begetting the son of the promise. But there is no firm ground for this assumption; as it is not stated anywhere, that Abraham did not take Keturah as his wife till after Sarah's death. It is merely an inference drawn from the fact, that it is not mentioned till afterwards; and it is taken for granted that the history is written in strictly chronological order. But this supposition is precarious, and is not in harmony with the statement, that Abraham sent away the sons of the concubines with gifts during his own lifetime; for in the case supposed, the youngest of Keturah's sons would not have been more than twenty-five or thirty years old at Abraham's death; and in those days, when

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<sup>1</sup> McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 2000, c1981.

<sup>2</sup> [Torahclass.com/index.html](http://Torahclass.com/index.html), Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

marriages were not generally contracted before the fortieth year, this seems too young for them to have been sent away from their father's house. This difficulty, however, is not decisive. Nor does the fact that Keturah is called a concubine in v. 6, and 1 Chron 1:32, necessarily show that she was contemporary with Sarah, but may be explained on the ground that Abraham did not place her on the same footing as Sarah, his sole wife, the mother of the promised seed.

**Chumash:** Who was Keturah?

**Rashi:** Hagar. She was called Keturah because her deeds were as pleasant as incense.

**Chizkuni:** How could Hagar be described as a person whose "deeds were as pleasant as incense" when, after Abraham sent her away, she returned to idol worship? Clearly, she must have done *teshuvah* before Abraham took her for the second time, and the Torah calls her Keturah due to the sweet "aroma" of her *teshuvah*.

**Ku Yakar:** Abraham actually named her Keturah to make it known that she had done *teshuvah*.

**Rashbam:** At the literal level Keturah was not Hagar.<sup>3</sup>

**Augustine: The Permission of Second Marriage;**

As for those who prefer to read no symbolic meanings into such facts, they still have no ground of complaint against Abraham. For in the literal sense, there may be meant to be here an argument against those heretics who are opposed to second marriages, since the example of the very father of many nations proves that there is no sin in a second marriage that is made after one's wife is dead.<sup>4</sup>

## **Genesis 25:2**

**And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah.**

**[Zimran]** Stephanus Byzantinus mentions a city in Arabia Felix called Zadram, which some suppose to have been named from this son of Keturah; but it is more likely, as Calmet observes, that all these sons of Abraham resided in Arabia Deserta; and Pliny, Hist. Nat., lib. vi., c. 28, mentions a people in that country called Zamarenians, who were probably the descendants of this person.

**[Jokshan]** Several learned men have been of opinion that this Jokshan was the same as Kachtan, the father of the Arabs. The testimonies in favor of this opinion see in Dr. Hunt's Oration, De Antiquitate, etc., Linguae Arabicae, p. 4. Calmet supposes that the Cataneans, who inhabited a part of Arabia Deserta, sprang from this Jokshan.

**[Medan, and Midian]** Probably those who peopled that part of Arabia Petraea contiguous to the land of Moab eastward of the Dead Sea. St. Jerome terms the people of

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<sup>3</sup> Chumash, The Gutnick Edition, Genesis, Rabbi Chaim Miller, Published by Kol Menachem

<sup>4</sup> Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intervarsity Press

this country Madinaeans; and Ptolemy mentions a people called Madianites, who dwelt in the same place.

**Midian** was the father of the Midianites, some of whom later bought Joseph from his brothers (see 36:35; 37:28, 36).

**[Ishbak]** From this person Calmet supposes the brook Jabbok, which has its source in the mountains of Gilead, and falls into the sea of Tiberias, took its name.

**[Shuah]** Or Shuach. From this man the Sacceans, near to Batanla, at the extremity of Arabia Deserta, towards Syria, are supposed to have sprung. Bildad the Shuhite, one of Job's friends, is supposed to have descended from this son of Abraham.

**McGee:** Now he has quite a family. He had his biggest family after the death of Sarah. Somebody will raise the question, "I thought that at the time of the birth of Isaac Abraham was dead as far as his capability of bringing a child into the world." Granted, he was. But when God does something, He really does it. This is the reason I believe that anything God does bears His signature. Right here we see that this man Abraham was not only able to bring Isaac into the world, but he now brings in this great family of children.

The interesting thing that we have before us here is the mention of Medan and Midian. The other boys will have nations come from them also, but I can't identify them. I'm not interested in them because they do not cross our pathway in Scripture, but Midian does. We will find later that Moses will go down into the land of Midian and take a wife from there. Remember that the Midianites are in the line of Abraham and so are the Medanites. So we find here the fact that there are other sons of Abraham, but the Lord has said it is through Isaac that Abraham's seed is called—not through any of these other sons. It is not through Ishmael, nor through Midian, nor Medan. All of these were nomads of the desert.<sup>5</sup>

### **Genesis 25:3**

**And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim.**

**[Sheba]** From whom sprang the Sabeans, who robbed Job of his cattle. See Bochart and Calmet.

**[Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim]** We know not who these were, but as each name is plural they must have been tribes or families, and not individuals. Onkelos interprets these words of persons dwelling in camps, tents, and islands; and Jonathan ben Uzziel calls them merchants, artificers, and heads or chiefs of people.

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<sup>5</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (1:105). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

## **Genesis 25:4**

**And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.**

[**Midian**] Midian was the most prominent of Abraham's second family. He and his people are mentioned 67 times by name. He was defeated by Esau (Genesis 36:35). Moses fled to his land and married a woman of Midian (Exodus 2:15-16; Exodus 3:1; Exodus 4:19; Exodus 18:1). Midianites became a snare to Israel (Numbers 25:1-15), for which God commanded Israel to war with them (Numbers 25:16-18; Numbers 31:1-20). For many centuries, off and on, Israel fought with them (Joshua 13:21; Judges 6:1-2; Judges 7:8-25; Judges 8:3-28; Judges 9:17). Midian was the nation defeated by Gideon with such great destruction that its downfall is referred to as "the day of Midian" (Isaiah 9:4; Isaiah 10:26; Psalm 83:9).

When Abraham married Keturah is unknown, but the verb "took" and the adjective "another" suggest it was after Sarah's death. (Actually Keturah was a concubine, 1 Chr 1:32.) That would mean there was a maximum span of 37 years for the births of Keturah's six sons. (Abraham was 138 when Sarah died, and he died at 175.) Tribes in Sheba and Dedan, in Arabia, as well as the Midianites (v. 4), came from Abraham. This was in fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham that he would become great since so "many nations" look to him as their ancestor. Note that Arabian tribes are *not* descended from Ishmael (Hagar), but the concubine Keturah.

*(1 Chr 1:32) Now the sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine: she bare Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And the sons of Jokshan; Sheba, and Dedan.*

[**Ephah, and Epher, etc.**] Of these we know very little.

**Torah Class:** This is the winding up of the story of Abraham, and in later verses, Ishmael. We are given some final information about Abraham that we simply need to make some mental notation about. First, Abraham took another wife, a woman named Keturah, of whom we know next to nothing. Bible scholars are not even totally clear whether or not Abraham was married to Sarah at the same time as a Keturah. That said, after some further studying and researching, I think it is clear that we should NOT assume that Abraham's taking Keturah "as a wife" was in chronological sequence with the previous chapter of Genesis; that is, that Keturah came after Sarah. This literary device the Torah employs by interrupting the sequence of events, going back a few years and adding some new information about someone or something, is not unusual for either the Bible as a whole, or other writings from other cultures in that era, and even eras well before and well after that.

One possibility concerning the timing of Keturah stands out above all the rest to me: these sons of Abraham, born through Keturah, could have been born to Abraham BEFORE Isaac. This is because Abraham was far past human ability for a male to sire a child, as it was for Sarah to produce a child, when Isaac was conceived. Therefore, unless

these sons from Keturah were “miraculous conceptions”....which is unlikely.....they had to have come well BEFORE Sarah bore the miracle-baby, Isaac. Now, of course, one could argue that upon God making Abraham capable of siring Isaac, Abraham regained fertility for an extended period of time. Maybe; and several scholars choose that approach. Anyway, I just want you to see that it’s pretty much impossible to nail down exactly when Abraham took Keturah as a wife, and when these other children were born, and whether these sons came before or after Isaac.

We’re told that Keturah gave Abraham several children, of which 6 are mentioned. We have no idea who Keturah is, or who her ancestors were. Now, as is customary in the Bible, only the male children are mentioned, but it’s unthinkable that Keturah didn’t also give Abraham several daughters as well. However, it is clear that the etymology of Keturah’s name is the Hebrew word *ketoret*, which means *spices*. And, in fact, certain tribes that have long been suspected as being descendants of Abraham and Keturah were associated with the spice trade in ancient times. It is also helpful for us to know that the prime spice-producing region for the Middle East at that time, and for many centuries to come, was an area of southern Arabia today known as Yemen. This also shows just how extensive and regular trade and travel was among these ancient peoples, so very long ago.

We will run into several of these named children of Keturah later on in Scripture, and yet others will never be heard of again; so let me point out one son in particular because the territory he settled would play a large role in Moses’ life: that son is named Midian. And, true to his mother’s name, the Midianites were known as spice-traders, particularly of the highly valued frankincense. Their territory was located on the Arabian Peninsula, bordered by the eastern edge of finger of the Red Sea today called the Gulf of Aqaba. These are the same Midianites and the same region where Moses fled from Egypt, where God came to Moses in a burning bush, and where Moses found a wife. In fact, it is my view that the Gulf of Aqaba is the Biblical Red Sea that Moses led the Israelites through to safety when they were fleeing from the armies of Pharaoh.

These 6 sons of Keturah, along with the son of Hagar the Egyptian girl, Ishmael, would go on to form what we can loosely call the Arab peoples....people who populated the Middle East and Northern Africa. But, be aware that the term “Arab” wasn’t even valid until some time after the reign of King David; that is, there was no such identifiable and named people group called “Arabs” or “Arabians” until probably at least 900 BC, some 9 centuries after the time we’re currently studying.<sup>6</sup>

## **Genesis 25:5**

**And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac.**

**[gave all that he had unto Isaac]** His principal flocks, and especially his right to the land of Canaan, including a confirmation to him and his posterity of whatever was contained in the promises of God.

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<sup>6</sup> [Torahclass.com/index.html](http://Torahclass.com/index.html), Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

## **Genesis 25:6**

**But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country.**

**[unto the sons of the concubines]** Concubines is plural, there may have been more than those referred to Viz., Hagar and Keturah, Abraham gave gifts. Cattle for breed, seed to sow the land, and implements for husbandry, may be what is here intended.

Abraham loved all these boys: he gave them gifts. But they and their descendants may possibly have posed a threat to Isaac. So Abraham sent them away as he had done with Ishmael. He sent them to the land of the East (Arabia), thus preserving Isaac's primacy and his right as Abraham's heir.

**Torah Class:** We are told in V5 that Abraham gave all he had to Isaac, which would have made Isaac a very wealthy and powerful man. But, it also, most certainly, set the stage for enormous jealousy and strife between Isaac and his large cadre of half-brothers and sisters.....especially Ishmael. And, that strife and jealousy continues to this very day. With all those brothers and sisters.....dozens at the least.....Abraham was going to have to do something to assure that his son Isaac was decisively and without opposition elevated above all the rest and given a clear path to continue along the road of covenant promise that Yahweh had ordained. And, so, yet again we have a dramatic example of the ongoing God-principle of dividing, electing and separating.....and this time, the subject of the division and separation is Isaac.

After we are told in V5 that Abraham gave everything to Isaac, we're also told that Abraham gave gifts BEFORE HE DIED to the sons of his *concubines*. Now, don't get confused here: Although most bibles say Abraham took Keturah as a wife, and some time earlier Hagar as well, they were not technically actual wives as was Sarah. They were concubines.....kind of a different class of wife. These so-called wives would not have been given a Ketubah, a marriage contract. There would not have been a marriage ceremony. Rather, there would have been a simple declaration by Abraham of their status of being included in his household, and as legitimate mothers of his children. These concubines were well-treated and respected, and enjoyed the status of being joined to Abraham's clan, but they did not have the exalted place as a true legal wife, and their children would have had *lesser* rights of inheritance than the sons of the true legal wife. In fact, the law of that era was that it was entirely up to the father to choose which, if any, of his children from concubines would gain inheritance. So, while Isaac got all of the inheritance and family authority, the other sons of Abraham, by means of his concubines, got gifts.....likely fairly substantial gifts because Abraham was so wealthy. Now, were there other concubines than just Keturah and Hagar? Possibly. But, at this point, it is unclear. Abraham then sent these sons of his concubines away to other territories; dividing and electing ALWAYS leads to separating. Notice the parallel with God permitting circumstances to unfold that led to the necessary separation of Abraham from his nephew Lot. Also notice what direction they were sent: EAST! Why east? Why didn't

Abraham send them to the north, or the south, or the west? Just keep making little mental notes of the direction EAST.<sup>7</sup>

**Ramban:** “But unto the sons of the concubines that Abraham had”

By way of the plain meaning of Scripture, since it was said to Abraham, *For in Isaac shall seed be called to thee, and in no other seed*, all his consorts were concubines to him, not as wives since their children would not be among his heirs. Thus, Hagar, Sarah’s handmaid, was his concubine. However, Keturah he took unto himself as a wife for if she whom he took as a concubine had been a handmaid in his house, Scripture would not have said, *And Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah*. She is called “concubine” in Scripture – it is written in Chronicles, *And the sons of Keturah, Abraham’s concubine* – only for the reason that I have explained, [namely, that it had been said to Abraham, *For in Isaac shall seed be called to thee*].<sup>8</sup>

**(1 Chronicles 1:32)** *Now the sons of Keturah, Abraham’s concubine: she bare Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And the sons of Jokshan; Sheba, and Dedan.*

Now Rashi wrote, “Wives are those whom a man marries with a marriage-contract; concubines have no marriage-contract, as it says in reference to the wives and concubines of David, in Tractate Sanhedren. But the matte is not so. A woman is called a concubine only when there is no betrothal, for a marriage-contract is only a Rabbinic ordinance. And the correct test in Tractate Sanhedrin is: “A concubine has no marriage-contract or betrothal.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Genesis 25:7**

**And these *are* the days of the years of Abraham’s life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years.**

**[these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years]** This genealogy and record of Abraham's death are given because no more was to be said of him in the Genesis story. He lived until Jacob was 15 years old, dying at the age of 175 (Genesis 25:7). He was a contemporary of Shem for 75 years.

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<sup>7</sup> Torahclass.com/index.html, Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

<sup>8</sup> Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

<sup>9</sup> Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

## **Genesis 25:8**

**Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people.**

**[ghost]** *gava`*, (H1478), *gaw-vah'*; a primitive root; to *breathe* out, i.e. (by implication) *expire* :- die, be dead, give up the ghost, perish.

The original word *yigva*, from the root *gava*, signifies to pant for breath, to expire, to cease from breathing, or to breathe one's last; and here, and wherever the original word is used, the simple term expired would be the proper expression. In translation this expression occurs Genesis 25:8, 17; 35:29; 44:33; Job 3:11; 10:18; 11:20; 13:19; 14:10; Lamentations 1:19; in all of which places the original is *gava* is used.

At the age of 175 Abraham came to the end of his earthly sojourn and expired. *He gave up the ghost*: The expression is derived from Hebrew *gawa*, "to breathe out his breath," "to fail," "to sink." Immediately he was gathered to his father's kin (literally), and took up his residence in Sheol, the place of departed spirits. [Jesus refers to this abode as "Abraham's bosom" in Luke 16...] While Isaac and Ishmael together buried their father in the cave where Sarah was buried, Ishmael's presence may have posed a possible threat to Isaac's rights, now that their father was dead. But God's blessing rested on Isaac.

**[old man]** Five men called "old man"

1. Abraham (Genesis 25:8)
2. Jacob (Genesis 43:27; Genesis 44:20)
3. An unnamed man (Judges 19:16-22)
4. Eli (1 Samuel 4:18)
5. Zacharias (Luke 1:18)

**[gathered to his people]** An expression used only in the early ages and means gathered with the other departed spirits. It is used eleven times in the writings of Moses (Genesis 15:8,17; Genesis 35:29; Genesis 49:29,33; Numbers 20:24-26; Numbers 27:13; Numbers 31:2; Deut. 32:50) and once in Judges 2:10. It could not mean that all people referred to were buried together. All spirits went to Sheol-Hades before the resurrection of Christ, but were in two separate compartments.

### **Jerome: He Died At A Good Old Age:**

I am reviewing carefully the places in Scripture where I might find old age mentioned for the first time. Adam lived for 930 years, yet he is not called an old man. Methuselah's life was 969 years, and he is not called an old man. I am coming down all the way to the flood, and after the flood for almost three thousand years, and I find no one who has been called old. Abraham is the first one, and certainly he was much younger than Methuselah, but he is called an old man because his old age had been anointed with rich oil. In fine, it is written there in the Scripture, "Abraham died at a good old age; full of days." His was a good old age because it was full of days, for the whole of his life was day and not night.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intervarsity Press

### **Genesis 25:9**

**And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre;**

**Ramban:** “And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him”

In the language of Bereshith Rabbah, “Here the son of the handmaid bestowed respect upon the son of the mistress” [since he yielded precedence to Isaac].<sup>11</sup>

They are not listed in birth order.

### **Genesis 25:10**

**The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.**

### **Genesis 25:11**

**And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahairoi.**

**Torah Class:** In verse 7, Abraham dies at the ripe old age of 175 years. What a life Abraham lived! Oh, that each of us could have such a close and intertwined life with the Lord, and that His purpose would be played out through us. We are told that he was gathered to his people. This is a term far different from “dying” or “being buried in the ground” or “went down to Sheol”. Rather it implies a sort of reunion with those, likely from the line of Seth, Noah, and Shem, who had come before him. It also speaks to a belief that death is not the end; a concept that will from here forward be built upon only slightly in the OT Scriptures, but will take on a greater meaning with the advent of Christ in the NT. That said, let me repeat something that I want you to watch for as we study Torah: while there is a hint of something beyond death in the statement “gathered to his people”, there is NO mention of “going to Heaven when we die”. I’ve done a fairly thorough study of death and dying in the OT, and I can tell you with some confidence that what lay beyond the grave.....an afterlife, if you would.....is not discussed with any depth at all in the OT; and it seems from the varying terms for death and dying.....all the terms being vague and general....that it was very fuzzy in the minds of the people of the OT what an afterlife, if any, amounted to. For some Hebrews, it is obvious from Scripture that their great fear of dying without a son to carry on the family name, spelled the end of their own essence as well. That in some unexplained way, a father lived on through his son. Not reincarnation, maybe not even with any consciousness at all..... and the idea of the human spirit being this vessel of existence after death is also not well defined in the OT. The thought that somehow a human would live in Heaven, with God, simply didn’t exist.....at least until the close of the OT about 400 BC.

We are informed that Ishmael and Isaac came together to bury their father, and as would have been customary when possible, the husband was buried with his wife. Abraham was buried in the same tomb as Sarah.....the Cave of Machpelah at

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<sup>11</sup> Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

Hebron. . . . . and later Isaac and Rebecca would join them in that same location, as eventually would Jacob.

In V11, God makes it clear to any who might doubt where the line of promise led, when it says that ‘God blessed Isaac’. The handing of the torch from Abraham to Isaac is now complete. Isaac is the new patriarch of the Hebrews, and Abraham is but a memory.<sup>12</sup>

### **Origen; Gathered to Abraham’s Bosom:**

What more can we say about the death of Abraham than what the Word of the Lord in the Gospels contains, saying, “Concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read how he says in the bush: ‘the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob’? Now he is not God of the dead abut of the living. For all those are living.” Let us also therefore choose this kind of death, as also the apostle says, that “we may die to sin but live to God. For indeed the death of Abraham should be understood to be such, which death has amplified his bosom so much that all the saints who come from the four parts of the earth “may be borne by the angels into the bosom of Abraham.”<sup>13</sup>

**(Mark 12:26-27) <sup>26</sup>And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? <sup>27</sup>He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.**

### **Genesis 25:12**

**Now these *are* the generations of Ishmael, Abraham’s son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah’s handmaid, bare unto Abraham:**

### **Genesis 25:13**

**And these *are* the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam,**

**[Nebajoth]** From whom came the Nabatheans, whose capital was Petra, or, according to Strabo, Nabathea. They dwelt in Arabia Petraea, and extended themselves on the east towards Arabia Desert.

**[Kedar]** The founder of the Cedreans, who dwelt near to the Nabatheans. The descendants of Kedar form a part of the Saracens.

**[Adbeel, and Mibsam]** Where these were situated is not known.

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<sup>12</sup> Torahclass.com/index.html, Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

<sup>13</sup> Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intervarsity Press

### **Genesis 25:14**

**And Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa,**

**[Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa]** Where the first and last of these settled is not known; but it is probable that Dumah gave his name to a place called Dumah in Arabia. See a prophecy concerning this place, Isaiah 21:11, from which we find that it was in the vicinity of Mount Seir.

### **Genesis 25:15**

**Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah:**

**[Hadar]** This name should be read Hadad as in 1 Chronicles 1:30. This reading is supported by more than three hundred MSS., versions, and printed editions. See Clarke at Genesis 25:18 (note).

**[Tema]** Supposed to be a place in Arabia Desert, the same of which Job speaks, Job 6:19.

**[Jetur]** From whom came the Itureans, who occupied a small tract of country beyond Jordan, which was afterwards possessed by the half-tribe of Manasseh.

**[Naphish]** These are evidently the same people mentioned 1 Chronicles 5:19, who, with the Itureans and the people of Nadab, assisted the Hagarenes against the Israelites, but were overcome by the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

**[Kedemah]** Probably the descendants of this person dwelt at Kedemoth, a place mentioned Deuteronomy 2:26. I wish the reader to observe, that concerning those ancient tribes mentioned here or elsewhere in the Pentateuch little is known; nor of their places of settlement have we more certain information. On this subject many learned men have toiled hard with but little fruit of their labor. Those who wish to enter into discussions of this nature must consult Bochart's Geographia Sacra, Calmet, etc.

### **Genesis 25:16**

**These *are* the sons of Ishmael, and these *are* their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations.**

Ishmael had 12 sons, as God had predicted, and died at the age of 137. His sons lived in the Arabian peninsula from Havilah (in north-central Arabia) to Shur (between Beersheba and Egypt). The Ishmaelites lived in hostility toward all their brothers, a fulfillment of God's words to Hagar (16:12).

**(Gen 16:12)** *And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.*

**[castles]** The word "castle" is found fifteen times (Genesis 25:16; Numbers 31:10; 1 Chron. 6:54; ; 1 Chron. 11:5-7; ; 1 Chron. 27:25; 2 Chron. 17:12; 2 Chron. 27:4; Proverbs 18:19; Acts 21:34,37; Acts 22:24; Acts 23:10,16,32).

### **Genesis 25:17**

**And these *are* the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years: and he gave up the ghost and died; and was gathered unto his people.**

**Ramban:** “And these are the years of the life of Ishmael.”

It appears plausible in line with the simple explanation that Scripture relates, in the case of the sons of the righteous, their generations and the number of their years in order to inform us that the seed of the righteous shall be blessed. However, it did not relate the number of Esau's Years for he outlived Jacob, and the narrative was concluded with the death of Jacob. Hence Scripture did not want to return to the life of Esau since it had already mentioned his generations in their appropriate place.

In the Midrash of our Rabbis there are many reasons for the Scriptural account of Ishmael's years. The correct one among them is that he was righteous, a man of repentance and Scripture tells of him as it does with all righteous people.<sup>14</sup>

### **Genesis 25:18**

**And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria: *and* he died in the presence of all his brethren.**

**[they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur]** The descendants of Ishmael possessed all that country which extends from east to west, from Havilah on the Euphrates, near its junction with the Tigris, to the desert of Shur eastward of Egypt; and which extends along the isthmus of Suez, which separates the Red Sea from the Mediterranean.

**[Abraham's son]** Not his only son in the strictest sense, but the only son by promise (Genesis 17:19,21; Genesis 21:12).

**Torah Class:** We ended last week taking a brief look at the descendants of Keturah, one of Abraham's concubines. Just how many concubines Abraham had beyond Hagar and Keturah we don't know; likely, there were others, with only these two playing any Biblical role. Yet, that is not at all something we can be sure of.

Generally speaking, the sons of Keturah formed tribal confederations, and along with Ishmael, make up the various Arab peoples that we see today. I say tribal confederations,

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<sup>14</sup> Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

because unlike the Israelites who very much tended to stay closely identified with their individual tribes.....Reuben, Simeon, Ephraim, Judah, Benjamin, and so on.....the sons of Keturah quickly became less identified with their individual tribes and had to band together in order to have any staying power and influence. In fact, most of names of the sons of Keturah have been lost in history, and we really can't follow their progress at all. The one that DOES have a Biblical impact is the tribe of Midian, who lived on the western end of the Arabian Peninsula, with the Gulf of Aqaba as one of their boundary lines. This is the same Midian that Moses fled to from Egypt after he had killed that Egyptian soldier; that same Midian where he found a wife and lived for 40 years as a shepherd.

In verses 12 – 18, we get a report on the line of Ishmael. Ishmael was the dispossessed “firstborn” of Abraham and the Egyptian handmaiden, Hagar. Recall that Ishmael was a teenager by the time Isaac was born. Also recall that until Abraham's ONLY legal wife, Sarah, bore him Isaac, Abraham had DECLARED Ishmael to be his firstborn son. Ishmael, as far as Abraham was concerned, was the son of promise...the son of his who would carry on the covenant that Yahweh had made with Abraham. It is no coincidence the verse just previous to this section on the genealogy of Ishmael (vs. 11) says this: “.....After the death of Abraham, God blessed his son Isaac....”

This was a reminder that Yahweh had REJECTED Ishmael as the son of promise. The son of promise was the one that God Himself had caused to be born in a miraculous way.....by means of the dead womb of Sarah, and the dead seed of Abraham. The son of promise was Isaac.

Let's review a little about Ishmael and gain some context, because we're also going to talk about Islam in this lesson. Before we look of these sons of Ishmael.....who form the core of the modern Arab peoples.....let me point out that Ishmael *is* a Semite, just as Isaac was, and of course, as Abraham was. What's a Semite? A descendant of Noah's son Shem. Actually, the word “Semite” is kind of an error in itself.....at least in the sense of how it is pronounced and spelled. The word SHOULD be shem-ite.....NOT sem-ite. The error is a typical gentile Christian one, because the Hebrew alphabet character that we transliterate as an “s” can be used in one of two ways: as a “sheen” or as a “seen”.

Moving the little dot located above the character to the far right of that Hebrew alphabet character makes it a Sheen.....that gives us an “sh” sound....like “she” or “shoot” or “Sharon”; moving the little dot to the far left makes the same character a “seen”, giving us the “s” sound.....pronounced like “Sam” or “Seattle” or “seaside”. The word Shem is spelled with Sheen, not a Seen.

In any case, since Isaac and Ishmael had the same father, and he was a descendant of Shem, then BOTH of those children are Semites. In fact, ALL the children Abraham sired are Semites. So, the Arabs and the Jewish people are very much related...they're all Semites. That's what makes the term we hear so much today, “anti-Semitic” such an oxymoron. Anti-Semitic is technically a term that means, *against Semites*.....against the descendants of Shem. Yet, the way that term has always been used, is to declare bigotry against the Jewish people. And, interestingly, it is the Arab peoples who are usually those who are most accused of being anti-Semitic. So, we have the Arab Semites being called anti-Semitic. Just another of those mindless phrases and terms that are regularly used in which no one seems to have any idea what they're actually saying.

Let me also express that just because Ishmael was rejected by God as the son of promise that does NOT mean that Ishmael was in some way cursed by God. Ishmael was not punished or judged; he simply could NOT have been the son of promise because Yahweh had determined that another, Isaac, was to be that son. In fact, to sort of make up for Ishmael being dispossessed of the firstborn status that he held until Isaac was born, Ishmael was given an almost equal physical inheritance as Isaac. It's just that while Abraham would provide Isaac's wealth and prosperity, Yahweh would provide for Ishmael's. So, in our age, while the Arab peoples are generally Israel's enemy, they are in no way an accursed people any more than we in this room are just because the leaders of our nation have recently come against Israel by forcing them to divide their land. Oh, the Arabs have been and will continue to be disciplined severely by Yahweh for coming against His set-apart people, just as we Americans (as a nation) have recently been, and will continue to be, severely disciplined by God for forcing Israel to turn over some of their land to their enemies. But, whereas the descendants of Noah's son Ham *are* generally a line of people who are in a bind, in that they DID have a curse put on them, that is *not* the case with the descendants of Shem....Arabs as well as Hebrews.... (or Japheth for that matter).

OK. I mentioned that for all practical purpose, we could say that the descendants of Ishmael, together with the descendants of Keturah, form the modern day Arab peoples. And, just like we in this room are not purebred.....that is we all have some mixture of European or Asian stock within us.....so it is with the Arab peoples. These descendants of Ishmael and Keturah began co-mingling very early on. Therefore, we find mention in Isaiah chapter 60 of Midian, Ephah, and Sheba.....who are tribes from Keturah..... side by-side with Kedar and Nebaioth, who are sons of Ishmael. Just for the sake of good context.....which is everything in Bible study.... let's all read Isaiah 60:1-7, together.

### **READ ISAIAH 60:1-7**

This is an end-times prophecy about what has been happening and is continuing to happen with Israel, mostly right before our eyes. It's about the return of the Jews to their homeland. And, of course that return of the Israelites to their God-given land is an ongoing *process* that has been occurring over the last several decades. And, in the last few verses of what we just read we see the names of those 5 tribes....ARAB tribes.....of Midian, Ephah, Sheba, Kedar and Nebaioth; names we have just finished reading in Genesis. For the sake of simplicity, what is being said here is that ARAB peoples will eventually become friends and servants of Israel and bring them wealth and prosperity. More pointedly, this is about the Arab peoples coming to worship Messiah in Israel. So, this is NOT for today, but for sometime in the near future. And, the idea is that hordes of Arabs will bow down to the Hebrew Messiah.

So, we must very careful in how we disciples of Yahshua look at the Arab peoples. Yes, today, most Arabs are on the wrong side of the issue with Israel. They have even chosen to abandon the God of their forefather, Abraham, to take on a false-god, a non-god, called Allah. They have chosen to be outright enemies of Christians and Jews BECAUSE of this fact that is so falsely reported in today's news media, and in today's tolerant seeking Churches.

But, as any who have heard my dear friend Tass speak, knows, there are MANY Arab Believers in Messiah...so-called Christian Arabs. The Arab Muslims, who believe in Allah, are no more deceived than our family, friends, and neighbors who believe in no god at all! So, while we MUST stand beside Israel...knowing that will put us against most of the world..... for that is our duty and call before God..... that does NOT mean we have to hate the Arabs or Muslims. We can hate what they believe, we can hate what they do, and we're no more wrong to destroy those who try to destroy us or Israel, than we were to fight Hitler's armies in WWII. But, we sure don't have to revel in it, or have joy in the doing.

Now is probably also a good time to mention a couple of things about Islam; because Islam says that Ishmael is the true founder of Islam. I'm spending a lot of time with this because of the horrible ignorance, and outright agenda driven lies, about the simple history of the matter of Islam and Ishmael. Let me say right up front that Ishmael is NOT the father of Islam. He's not even the father of all the Arab peoples, just some of them.

You see, Isaac and Ishmael represent the crux of the matter between Jews and Christians on the one side, and Muslims on the other; Isaac and Ishmael are a distinct fork in the road. And, please grasp that the differences between the Judeo-Christian world, and the Islamic world, are irreconcilable. There is no halfway point, there is no compromise. Islam says that the words from God, from Allah, and the people of the promise of the covenants with Abraham, come down through Ishmael and are recorded in the Koran. Of course, Jews and Christians maintain that the promise of the covenants comes down through Isaac, and are recorded in the Holy Scriptures.

We have just finished reading several chapters that explicitly state that the son of promise....the line of the covenant..... was by means of Isaac, not Ishmael. Interestingly the Muslims acknowledge that IS what the Bible says.....and they say the Bible texts have been corrupted and changed by Jews and Christians. That in fact, the Bible SHOULD say that it was Isaac that was rejected, and that Ishmael was the REAL son of promise.

Let's look at a couple of facts that makes that belief utter nonsense. First, the religion of Islam didn't even come into existence until the Prophet Mohammed formed it; the Muslims fully agree with that. And, Mohammed wasn't even born until almost 600 years AFTER the time of Jesus Christ. The last book of the OT was written 1000 years BEFORE Mohammed was born. The last book of the NT was written 5 centuries BEFORE Mohammed was born. Let me say that another way: the OT as we know it was completed in 400 BC, the NT as we know it was completed about 100 AD, and the founder of the religion of Islam was born about 575 AD. And, upon reading the Bible, Mohammed, the founder of Islam says: "oh, all that was corrupted by the Jews just to pervert what I'm telling you is the truth". It would be as though someone today stood up and said; hey, the Constitution that is under glass in Washington DC...the one that was written 250 years ago.....it isn't correct. I just wrote the correct one. The original one in Washington DC is corrupted, and it was corrupted just so you wouldn't believe that I just wrote down the right one, here on Merritt Island, in 2005. Now, is that about the most illogical, silliest thing you've ever heard? That is precisely what Islam claims about the Holy Scriptures today.

By the time Islam was even invented by Mohammed, the Roman Catholic Church was dominant throughout Europe and Asia. Constantine, who declared the new gentile form

of Christianity to be the state religion of the Roman Empire, had already been DEAD for over 200 years by the time Mohammed was born. It doesn't even matter that with the Dead Sea Scrolls we have the oldest actual, original Scriptural writings of the Hebrews from BEFORE the time Christ was born.....and they have been studied and photos of them released, and much of them are even on display in Jerusalem for any and all to see.... And they agree fully with the Bibles that you and I have before us today (OT of course); proving that no corruption or change has occurred.....at least not AFTER about 100 BC if ever. Yet, Islam says that what Genesis SHOULD have said is that Ishmael was the chosen one, and Isaac was the rejected one.

Second.....and don't ever let anyone tell you otherwise.....there are two ways and only two that we can know whom a god is.....His name and his attributes. There are those scholars who say that Allah is just Arabic for "god". While in the most general sense this is true, the ONLY name of god in Islam is Allah. They reject and all Biblical names for God, even when those names are Arab-ized. Yud-heh-vav-heh, El Shaddai, or any other Biblical name or title for the God of the Universe is wrong according to Islam. So, the god of Islam has an entirely different name than the God of the Bible.

Further, the god of Islam glorifies death. The god of the Bible glorifies life. The god of Islam says that Muslims are to win over converts to Islam by means of the sword. The god of the Bible says that His Believers are to win over converts by means of love and faith. The god of Islam says that how a Muslim behaves determines his eternal future. The god of the Bible says the condition of one's heart determines his eternal future. The god of Islam has no Messiah. The god of the Bible says there MUST be a Messiah. The god of Islam is a war god. The god of the Bible is a Shalom god. It goes on and on and on. The attributes, character, and instruction of the god of Islam as found in the Koran, is the *exact opposite* of the attributes, character and instruction of the God of the Bible. And, yet, we have a President, and many Christian religious leaders that tell us that Christians and Muslims are worshipping the same God. I have heard many pastors say that the best way to approach a Muslim is to say that we respect that they are worshipping God; they just don't know that the God they are worshipping is Jesus! JESUS! Do I sound just a little riled up? This is insanity....it is blasphemy of the worst kind, and it is teaching God's people to believe that the worshipping of ANY god is fine.....no matter his name or characteristics.....because any god is really just the god of Israel. Well, that's not what Yahweh has been telling us, is it?

Please. If you love the people of whatever church or synagogue you attend, take this information with you, and tell them the truth. Do you realize what happened to the Israelites that worshipped BOTH Yahweh and the gods of other nations? Those who tried to be politically correct and tolerant by the standards of that era? Those who declared that Yahweh and Ba'al were one? They were scattered and millions were destroyed. There is NO DIFFERENCE between what they did, and what we do today, right in our places of worship, when we declare that Yahweh, Messiah, and Allah are one. And, I remind you; God didn't deal with them person-by-person or family-by-family. He placed *a national* judgment upon them, and the exact same thing is prophesied in our time; that you don't personally believe this blasphemy doesn't exempt you and your family from suffering right along with others in our nation under God's terrible discipline. Oh, certainly, you are saved, and your eternal future is secure. But, is that really all that matters? I think not. OK. Let's examine these tribes of Ishmael.

Nebaioth was the firstborn son of Ishmael. His tribe is the people referred to as the Nabaiati, in Assyrian accounts of their Empire's battles against the people of the Arabian Peninsula, only a few decades prior to Judah being taken captive in Babylon. We more know these people as the Nabateans, and even more recently as the Jordanians of Petra. Kedar is spoken of many centuries after Genesis, in the Bible, and they formed some kind of association with the Edomite people (the descendants of Esau). These are people who wandered about as shepherds and goat herders throughout the Arabian and Sinai Peninsulas. Without doubt, they form at least part of the modern day Bedouins. Adbe'el is known in Assyrian historical records as Idiba'il; they were conquered by Tiglath-Pileser.....the same guy who was instrumental in conquering the Northern Kingdom of Ephraim-Israel.....and sent to guard the Egyptian-Assyrian border.

Dumah's tribe shows up again in Isaiah 21. They occupied a territory just above Midian, along the Gulf of Aqaba, on the Arabian Peninsula. The tribe of Tema dwelled around a well-known oasis, northeast of Dedan, because it was located on a very well traveled caravan route that connected the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula with the lower reaches of the Mesopotamia.

Jetur and Naphish appear to have integrated into a single tribe, and are described later on in the Bible (in 1 Chronicles 5) as the Hagrites.....a contraction for Hagar-ites, descendants of Hagar.

For all practical purpose, nothing is known beyond pure speculation about the remaining 12 sons of Ishmael, so we won't go there.

Verse 16 tells us that the descendants of Ishmael lived in villages; in other words, they didn't build and reside in walled cities. They were rural.....farmers and herders...and, some were desert wanderers and traders. This accounts for the lifestyle the Arabs developed in which.....because they lived in unfortified towns.....they constantly attacked one another in hopes of gaining for themselves, by taking from another. This mentality is still at work today. Part of what fundamental Islam is fighting *against*, is a way of life that PRODUCES things, rather than their traditional way of life that simply TAKES what others have produced. The traditional Arab tribal ways revolved around Arab tribes always seeking to take wealth and power from other Arab tribes. Even Mohammed, the founder of Islam, gained his reputation as a leader by leading attacks of his own tribe against other Arab tribes and winning. The goal was always the same: booty.

Now, I want that to sink in for a minute. Why is it that those Arab/Muslim strongholds of the world are also the most backward places in the entire world? Afghanistan, Pakistan, most of Iraq and Iran, and so on. It is because, generally speaking, the people have no concept of working, producing, fairness, and technological progress. When Islam attacked Europe in 711 AD, it was the European WEALTH that they were after, not a European way of life or European technology. They wanted to take what Europe had produced. That is exactly what they want today. The war on terror is indeed a fight about a way of life. But, the way of life they want is, we produce it, they take it. Because they don't even know how.....nor do they WANT to know how.....to produce and share.

In verse 17, we are told that Ishmael lived for 137 years; then "he was gathered to his kin". Here again, we find no reference at all to what that "he was gathered to his kin" means. Where *were* his kin? WHO were his kin? Was this an afterlife? If so, what did it consist of? We'll never find out in the Torah, and very little in the whole of the OT.

Rather, this is just a nice way of saying he lived out a good life span, and died peacefully, probably of natural causes. His people were undoubtedly his descendants as opposed to his ancestors. He had been divided and separated away from his father, so HE was the start of a new line. Being gathered to his kin, I feel certain, refers to his immediate family.....who would not be known as Arab for several more centuries.

Next we're given a general territorial boundary where Ishmael's descendants lived. And, it starts at the border of the Sinai Peninsula with Egypt....that is the reference to Shur, which means "wall", and then goes north to the Assyrians of Mesopotamia. The location of Havilah is not known, as there are many locations in the Middle East that goes by this, or variations of, name Havilah. But, the inference is that the descendants of Ishmael tended to stay among themselves; for it says they camped alongside their kinsman. They didn't seem to mix with the Mesopotamians, or Egyptians, or Nubians, or many of the other non-Semitic peoples of the earth. Generally speaking, the descendants of Ishmael occupied areas to the north, south, and east of the land of Canaan. OK. Now that you know more about Ishmael than you probably expected, or ever wanted, to know, let's move a little further into Genesis 25.<sup>15</sup>

### **Genesis 25:19**

**And these *are* the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac:**

**Ramban:** "Abraham begot Isaac"

Rashi comments: "Since it was written, Isaac, Abraham's son, it became necessary for the Scripture to say, Abraham begot Isaac, since the scoffers of the generation were saying, "It was from Abimelech that Sarah became pregnant."

In my opinion the correct reason [that Scripture states here, Abraham begot Isaac], is that it now reverts and begins the genealogy with the founding father, in consonance with Scriptural custom, which is to revert to the head of the ancestry when dealing with people of distinction.

It is necessary that Scripture return to relate this since it said And these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son. Now, had it only said, And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son, it would appear that Scripture equated Ishmael and Isaac with respect to genealogy and distinction, all the more so since it mentioned the firstborn first.<sup>16</sup>

### **Genesis 25:20**

**And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister to Laban the Syrian.**

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<sup>15</sup> Torahclass.com/index.html, Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

<sup>16</sup> Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

## **Genesis 25:21**

**And Isaac entreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.**

After briefly mentioning Ishmael's line, the narrative returns to the chosen line through Isaac. The first section records Isaac's prosperity and Jacob's struggle for the right to it—events within the land of promise. Chapters 29-32 relate Jacob's blessing in his sojourn out of the land of promise, and Chapters 33-35 his return to the land and corruption of the land. Rebekah, Isaac's wife, was also his cousin (cf. 24:15). Similarly Nahor had married his niece (11:29). Isaac's marriage to Rebekah thus tied him to Abraham's native country and family, and to the Arameans in northwest Mesopotamia (cf. 24:10), later known as Syria.

*(Gen 24:15) And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.*

*(Gen 24:10) And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.*

**[Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife]** Isaac and Rebekah had now lived nineteen years together without having a child; for he was forty years old when he married Rebekah, Genesis 25:20, and he was threescore years of age when Jacob and Esau were born, Genesis 25:26. Hence it is evident they had lived nineteen years together without having a child.

The Hebrew verb for **pleaded** indicates that Isaac prayed passionately for his wife. For examples of passionate prayer, see Ex. 8:30; 2 Sam. 21:14; 24:25.

## **Genesis 25:22**

**And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the LORD.**

Question 52. Next question is in Genesis 25:32. In other words, "If I am a mother in answer to prayer, why is this happening to me?" God alone could answer her, so she went to inquire of Him. Note the answer in Genesis 25:23.

### **Origen: You Also Will Have Departed:**

So therefore also now it is related of Rebekah: "She departed to inquire of the Lord." As we have said, she should be considered to have departed not by the steps of her feet but by the advances of her mind.

You also therefore will be said to have departed “to inquire of the Lord” if you have begun to contemplate not those things “which are seen but those which are not seen,” that is, not carnal but spiritual things, not present but future things.

Tear yourself away from your old manner of life and from the fellowship of those with whom you have lived shamefully and notoriously. Associate yourself with honorable and religious actions, when you shall have been searched for among companions of shameful and shall never have been found in crowds of the guilty. If so, then it will be said also of you: “He departed to inquire of the Lord.”

So therefore the saints depart not from one place to another but from one life to another, from beginning instructions to more advanced instructions.<sup>17</sup>

### **Genesis 25:23**

**And the LORD said unto her, Two nations *are* in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and *the one* people shall be stronger than *the other* people; and the elder shall serve the younger.**

The 33rd prophecy in Genesis (Genesis 25:23, fulfilled). Next prophecy is in Genesis 26:2. It concerned the struggle between Jacob and Esau and was partially fulfilled in their descendants many times. It will be completely fulfilled in the Millennium and the New Earth when Israel under their Messiah will be the head of all nations (Isaiah 2:2-4; Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 2:44-45; Daniel 7:13-18; Zech. 14; Zeph. 3:14-17; Rev. 11:13).

### **Origin of Races:**

This passage, with Genesis 9:24-27; Genesis 17:20; Genesis 19:33-38; Genesis 25:1-6; Acts 17:26 and other scriptures, explains how different races came into being since the flood. When the first of each type was brought into existence isn't stated and can't be known. Such facts are among the secrets of God referred to in Deut. 29:29. If two nations were born on this occasion, then the same could have happened at other times. Hence, there remains no mystery as to where the other races came from. The only part not known is when and by whom. This much is sure, the various races came into being since the flood, for only one race was saved in the ark (Genesis 6:18).

**[two manner of people]** The Edomites and Israelites have been two different peoples in manners, customs, and religion from the very beginning. The Edomites were idolaters (2 Chron. 25:20), and their history was one of wars with Jews (Exodus 15:15; Numbers 20:14-21; 1 Samuel 14:47; 2 Samuel 8:14; 1 Kings 11:15; 2 Kings 8:20-22; 2 Kings 14:7,10; Ezekiel 25:12-14). Edom is the subject of many Old Testament prophecies (Exodus 15:15; Numbers 24:18; Psalm 60:8-10; Isaiah 11:14; Isaiah 63:1; Jeremiah 9:26; Jeremiah 25:21; Jeremiah 27:3; Jeremiah 49:7-22; Ezekiel 25:12-14; Ezekiel 32:29; Daniel 11:41; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:6-11; Amos 2:1; Amos 9:12; Obadiah 1:1-10; Malachi 1:4).

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<sup>17</sup> Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intervarsity Press

**[stronger than the other people]** The family of Esau (or Edom) seemed to be stronger at first than Jacob's (or Israel's), for they had dukes and kings long before Israel did (Genesis 36) and they were powerful enough to resist Israel's passage through their land when coming out of Egypt (Numbers 20). Later, David completely defeated them and made them subject to Israel for about 150 years (2 Samuel 8:14). After the Babylonian captivity, the Maccabees compelled them to leave their country or embrace the Jewish religion. From then on they were ruled by Israel. In the Millennium they will again be under Israel (Psalm 60:8-10; Isaiah 11:14; Isaiah 63:1; Amos 9:12).

**Torah Class:** Isaac is spoken of only sparingly as compared to his son Jacob, and his father, Abraham. For instance, we are told at the end of chapter 24 that Isaac married Rivka, but then there is no information given to us about the first 20 years of their marriage. We do know that unlike Abraham, Isaac seems to have stayed closer to home. The known stories about Isaac center around Be'er Sheva; as far as anyone knows, he didn't live in Hebron as his father did, except near the end of his life. But, *like* his father, he was an owner of flocks and herds.

In verse 21, we find that, much in the same way as it was for his father; Isaac went a long time with his beloved wife unable to bear him an heir. Further, saying she was barren meant she had given Isaac NO children at all....not even girl children. And, as with Abraham, Isaac goes before Yahweh, and Yahweh grants his request for a son.....Rebecca is now pregnant. While there, of course, are great similarities between the situation of Abraham and Sarah conceiving and the current problem with Isaac and Rivka, there are also great differences. For instance, neither Isaac nor Rivka were elderly or beyond child bearing years. Even more, we don't find Isaac with any concubines or Rivka offering a handmaiden or slave girl to bare a child in her stead. There appear to be no plans to do anything but live with the situation until Yahweh decides to do something.

Is it that the Lord waited for Isaac to approach Him before allowing him children? Is it that the Lord was constrained by Isaac, in that it was *necessary* for Isaac's prayers so that God COULD allow Rebecca to become fertile? This is the substance of many arguments among spiritual leaders: does God NEED our prayers in order to act?

I think not. But, God does want to teach us. And, He also wants a relationship with us; yet, what relationship with anyone is possible without communication? While oral speech is the typical human-to-human way of communicating, prayer is the way God ordained for human-to-God communication. And, while God does not NEED prayer, He does WANT prayer. Conversely, we as humans NEED to pray. I cannot think of a way that builds a stronger faith than communicating my needs, or that of another, to God, and then marveling over his response.

But, this much longed for pregnancy by Rebecca almost immediately became uncomfortable for her. And, these apparently very active twin sons within her womb caused her to inquire of God just what was going on. Let's be clear: this pregnancy worried Rivka. The activity within her womb was NOT normal. Even an unusual Hebrew word is chosen to describe the goings on.....the word usually translated as struggled: and that word is *va-yitrotsetsu*. This verb has more of the sense of crushing, and thrusting, and smashing.....something pretty violent.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> [Torahclass.com/index.html](http://Torahclass.com/index.html), Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

**Ramban:** “Two nations are in thy womb”

The intent of this is that He informed her that she should not fear, for the reason that the struggle in her womb is that she is pregnant with twins, this being the customary way among women who are pregnant with twins.

It is possible that He is also saying that since they are destined to be two peoples, hating and warring with each other, at the very beginning of their creation they initiated a quarrel, thus intimating at the situation which will ultimately exist between them. But He assured her that now they will rest, and she will find rest and quiet for herself.<sup>19</sup>

**Origen: Two Nations Within You:**

I think that this can be said also of each of us as individuals that “two nations and two peoples are within you.” For there is a people of virtue within us, and there is no less a people of vice within us. “For from our heart proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, thefts, false testimonies” but also deceits contentions, heresies, jealousies, reveling and such like.” Do you see how great a people of evil is within us? But if we should deserve to utter that word of the saints, “From fear of you, Lord, we have conceived in the womb and have brought forth. We have wrought the spirit of your salvation on the earth.” Thus another people, begotten in the Spirit, is found within us. For “the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, gentleness, temperance, purity” and so forth. You see another people that is also itself within us. But this one is less; that one greater. For there are always more evil than good people, and vices are more numerous than virtues. But if we should be such as Rebekah and should deserve to conceive from Isaac, that is from the Word of God, “one people shall overcome the other, and the elder shall serve the younger,” even in us, for the flesh shall serve the Spirit, and vices shall yield to virtues.<sup>20</sup>

**Augustine: The Older To Serve The Younger:**

This is interpreted by the apostle Paul as an obvious proof of the working of grace: “For before the children had yet been born or had done anything of good or evil, the younger was chosen, through no merits of his own, and the older rejected. So far as original sin goes, both were equal. As for personal sins, neither had any.”<sup>21</sup>

**(Romans 9:10-13)** <sup>10</sup>And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; <sup>11</sup>(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) <sup>12</sup>It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. <sup>13</sup>As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

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<sup>19</sup> Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

<sup>20</sup> Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intervarsity Press

<sup>21</sup> Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intervarsity Press

### **Genesis 25:24**

**And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, *there were twins in her womb.***

This account of the births of Esau and Jacob is a fitting introduction to the following chapters, for their struggle for supremacy manifested itself even before their births (cf. Hosea 12:3). Two nations, that is, twin progenitors of two nations, were struggling in her womb and the younger would triumph. Indeed the Israelites (Jacob's descendants) and the Edomites (Esau's descendants) fought continuously (under David, Edomites served Israel: 2 Sam 8:14). [Note: *Isaac knew God's will in the matter (25:23).*] God's election of Jacob the younger over Esau the older was against the natural order.

**(Hos 12:3)** *He took his brother by the heel in the womb,  
and by his strength he had power with God:*

[twins] Three sets of twins in Scripture:

1. Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25:24-28)
2. Pharez and Zarah (Genesis 38:25-30)
3. Thomas (Didymus, twin) and his brother or sister (John 11:16; John 20:24; John 21:2)

The birth of **twins** was regarded as a special blessing.

### **Genesis 25:25**

**And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.**

[Esau] The parents observed the strange situation, and in view of God's oracle they commemorated the event by giving them appropriate names. The first of the twins was red and hairy, like a little animal, so they named him Esau. The mention of "red" anticipated the future rugged nature of Esau (vv. 27-34). [Esau (and Nimrod) were men of the field ("world" in Mt 13).] Fascinating wordplays were used to describe the first twin. The name Esau (*'esaw*) has a loose connection with the word "Seir" (*sie'ir*), the early name for Edom to the southeast of the Dead Sea, where Esau later lived. The Hebrew word "red" (*'admoni*) is related to the word "Edom" (*'edom*; cf. 25:30); and "hairy" (*sie'ar*) is similar to "Seir." Those words were carefully chosen to portray in the lad the nature of Edom, a later arch rival of Israel.

### **Genesis 25:26**

**And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.**

[Jacob] The name Jacob (*ya'aqob*, meaning "may He [God] protect") was selected because of its connection in sound and sense to the noun "heel" (*'aqeb*). The verb *'aqab* means "to watch from behind"; *'aqob* means "deceitful, sly, insidious." Thus, "one who

grabs the heel” or “one who trips up.” But as with Esau, so Jacob’s name would take on a different sense later in life as his deceptive nature became evident. So the twins’ births had great significance for later events in their lives.

**(Rom 9:11-13)** <sup>11</sup>*(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)* <sup>12</sup>*It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.* <sup>13</sup>*As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*

God’s fulfillment of His promise to Abraham was carried out by His election of Jacob (later, the nation Israel). From the outset the birth of the nation of Israel was supernaturally superintended. Paul noted that before the twins’ births the younger was chosen over the elder (Rom 9:11-12). God often reverses man’s natural order, for His ways are not man’s ways.

#### **By-Pass of Firstborn**

|               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| Seth          | Cain             |
| Shem          | Japheth          |
| Isaac         | Ishmael          |
| Jacob         | Esau             |
| Judah, Joseph | Reuben           |
| Moses         | Aaron            |
| David         | All his brothers |

Esau took wives including Nebajoth’s sister; his descendants, Ishamel’s, and Keturah’s, all intermarried... no tribal distinctions were maintained...

**[Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them]** Abraham waited twenty-five years (Genesis 12:4; Genesis 21:5) and Isaac waited twenty years for a son (Genesis 25:20,26). Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac was born (Genesis 17:17; Genesis 21:5); and Isaac was "threescore" or sixty years old when Jacob and his twin brother were born (Genesis 25:26).

#### **Genesis 25:27**

**And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.**

**[hunter]** The last of two hunters named in Scripture (Genesis 25:27; Genesis 10:9).

**[plain man]** An upright man, one of steady, domestic, moral habits as distinguished from Esau who was wild and restless.

### **Genesis 25:28**

**And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of *his* venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.**

#### **Twelve Divided Families:**

1. Isaac and Rebekah (Genesis 25:28; Genesis 27:1-46)
2. Jacob and wives (Genesis 29:31; Genesis 30:1; Genesis 37:1-4)
3. Moses and Zipporah (Exodus 4:24-26; Exodus 18:2)
4. Moses, his brother and sister (Numbers 12)
5. Jephthah and brothers (Judges 11)
6. Naomi and daughter-in-law (Ruth 1:14-15)
7. Elkanah and wives (1 Samuel 1:1-9)
8. Jesse and sons (1 Samuel 16:8-13; 1 Samuel 17:28)
9. Saul and sons (1 Samuel 14:44; 1 Samuel 20:30)
10. David and sons (2 Samuel 13:1-18:33)
11. Job and family (Job 2:9-10; Job 19:14-17)
12. Jesus and brothers (John 7:5; Psalm 69:8)

**[because he did eat of his venison]** The stomach was the way to Isaac's heart.

### **Genesis 25:29**

**And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he *was* faint:**

**[sod pottage]** Hebrew: *yazed* (H2102) *naziyd* (H5138), boiled a boiling. Beans, lentils, and peas were the "pulse" of Canaan (Genesis 25:34; Daniel 1:12). This "red pottage" (Genesis 25:30) was made of lentils (Genesis 25:34). When boiled with garlic and oil beans and lentils made a delicious dish, chocolate in color. Jacob was the first male cook recorded in Scripture (Genesis 25:29-34; cp. 2 Kings 4:38-41; John 21:9). Sarah was the first female cook recorded (Genesis 18:6). Angels can also cook (1 Kings 19:5-7).

### **Genesis 25:30**

**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.**

### **Genesis 25:31**

**And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.**

Jacob and Esau developed in accord with their initial characteristics. Esau, "the red man," was overcome by his physical appetite for *red stew* and sold his birthright; that is, the rights and privileges of the first-born, which were very important, the chief being that

they were the family priests (Ex 4:22) and had a double portion of the inheritance (Deut 21:17). And Jacob, “the heelgrabber,” cunningly overtook his brother and gained the birthright. It is probable that pottage was made of Egyptian beans, which Jacob had procured as a dainty; for Esau was a stranger to it. Though Jacob was not righteous, he was not in this instance deceptive. He was open and obvious, but he was unscrupulous. He must be given credit for knowing what was of value and going after it. Esau, however, was totally “godless” (“profane,” KJV; Heb 12:16.)

**(Ex 4:22)** *And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn:*

**(Deut 21:17)** *But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.*

**(Heb 12:16)** *Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.*

This passage includes several important wordplays. Esau was a skillful hunter; “a man knowing game” (*sòayid*), a man of the open country, but he could not find game this time. His father loved him because of his own taste for wild game. Thus Esau’s nature and occupation were favored by Isaac because of the satisfaction of his palate. Both Isaac and Esau made choices because of this. Jacob was loved by Rebekah, partly because of the oracle which she probably mentioned often. And he was a quiet man, staying among the tents. But ironically Jacob was the craftier hunter, baiting his trap for the hungry “animal.” One day he was cooking (“boiling,” *wayyazed*) some stew (“vegetable soup,” *nazid*) made of lentils. These words reflect by sound the word for “game” (*sòayid*). But also the verb *zid* (“to boil”) speaks of Jacob’s presumption, for it means “to be exalted or presumptuous.” Thus the boiling soup portrays a man whelming up over his bounds.

Ramban: “Sell me this day (*Kayom*) thy birthright”

It would appear from the opinion of Onkelos that because the sale of the birthright was to take effect after the death of his father Isaac, he [Jacob] said, “Sell me the birthright, with the sale to take effect on whatever day [our father’s death] may occur.

It is possible that Onkelos understood the word *kayom* (as the day) as if it were *bayom* (on the day). The verse would then be stating, “Sell the birthright to me on the day it will come into your possession.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

### **Genesis 25:32**

**And Esau said, Behold, I *am* at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?**

Question 53. Next question is in Genesis 26:9. This question showed his disposition and character—his faithlessness in spiritual things.

Esau traded the lasting benefits of his birthright for the immediate pleasure of food. He acted on impulse, satisfying his immediate desires without pausing to consider the long-range consequences of what he was about to do. We can fall into the same trap. When we see something we want, our first impulse is to get it. At first we feel intensely satisfied and sometimes even powerful because we have obtained what we set out to get. But immediate pleasure often loses sight of the future. We can avoid making Esau's mistake by comparing the short-term satisfaction with its long-range consequences before we act.

Esau exaggerated his hunger. "I am about to die," he said. This thought made his choice much easier because if he was starving, what good was an inheritance anyway? The pressure of the moment distorted his perspective and made his decision seem urgent. We often experience similar pressures. For example, when we feel sexual pressure, a marriage vow may seem unimportant. We might feel such great pressure in one area that nothing else seems to matter and we lose our perspective. Getting through that short, pressure-filled moment is often the most difficult part of overcoming a temptation.

### **Genesis 25:33**

**And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.**

[Swear] *shaba`*, (H7650), *shaw-bah'*; a primitive root; properly to *be complete*, but used only as a denominative from Hebrew 7651 (*sheba`*); to *seven* oneself, i.e. *swear* (as if by repeating a declaration seven times) :- adjure, charge (by an oath, with an oath), feed to the full [*by mistake for* Hebrew 7646 (*saba`*)], take an oath, × straitly, (cause to, make to) swear.

### **Genesis 25:34**

**Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised *his* birthright.**

As the firstborn, Esau had the birthright and Jacob had the stew. But in the exchange, Esau received the stew and Jacob the birthright. But Esau despised his birthright, for what could it do for him if he died of starvation? Jacob, the second-born, then had the birthright. The calculating, quiet man who recognized the spiritual value in the birthright

manipulated his profane brother into giving it up. Perhaps knowing the oracle, Jacob had been waiting for this opportunity.

Esau is portrayed as emotional: he was fainting and gasping, and then despising. In this instance he was not a skillful hunter; he was more like an animal he had trapped with bait. To live on this base level, to satisfy one's appetites, inevitably leads to a despising of spiritual things. Jacob, though an indoorsman, was a better hunter than Esau. He too craved—but something worth craving. Once he had grabbed by the heel; now he pressed the matter harder. But danger lies even in such spiritual ambition. Believers should seek things of spiritual value, but they should avoid the devices of the flesh. After Jacob was later purged of his human expedience, however, he became a capable servant, for his priorities were then correct. [Note oath in 25:33.]

**Ramban:** “So Esau despised his birthright”

This was because he was in mortal danger from his hunting animals, and it was likely that he would die while his father was alive, and the birthright carried with it no distinction except after the passing of the father. So of what benefit was the birthright to him? <sup>23</sup>

Ramban's commentary is very interesting when you look at the book of Jasher:

**(Jasher 27:1-12)** 1 And Esau at that time, after the death of Abraham, frequently went in the field to hunt.

2 And Nimrod king of Babel, the same was Amraphel, also frequently went with his mighty men to hunt in the field, and to walk about with his men in the cool of the day.

3 And Nimrod was observing Esau all the days, for a jealousy was formed in the heart of Nimrod against Esau all the days.

4 And on a certain day Esau went in the field to hunt, and he found Nimrod walking in the wilderness with his two men.

5 And all his mighty men and his people were with him in the wilderness, but they removed at a distance from him, and they went from him in different directions to hunt, and Esau concealed himself for Nimrod, and he lurked for him in the wilderness.

6 And Nimrod and his men that were with him did not know him, and Nimrod and his men frequently walked about in the field at the cool of the day, and to know where his men were hunting in the field.

7 And Nimrod and two of his men that were with him came to the place where they were, when Esau started suddenly from his lurking place, and drew his sword, and hastened and ran to Nimrod and cut off his head.

8 And Esau fought a desperate fight with the two men that were with Nimrod, and when they called out to him, Esau turned to them and smote them to death with his sword.

9 And all the mighty men of Nimrod, who had left him to go to the wilderness, heard the cry at a distance, and they knew the voices of those two men, and they ran to know the cause of it, when they found their king and the two men that were with him lying dead in the wilderness.

10 And when Esau saw the mighty men of Nimrod coming at a distance, he fled, and thereby escaped; and Esau took the valuable garments of Nimrod, which Nimrod's father

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<sup>23</sup> Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

had bequeathed to Nimrod, and with which Nimrod prevailed over the whole land, and he ran and concealed them in his house.

11 And Esau took those garments and ran into the city on account of Nimrod's men, and he came unto his father's house wearied and exhausted from fight, and he was ready to die through grief when he approached his brother Jacob and sat before him.

12 And he said unto his brother Jacob, Behold I shall die this day, and wherefore then do I want the birthright? And Jacob acted wisely with Esau in this matter, and Esau sold his birthright to Jacob, for it was so brought about by the Lord.<sup>24</sup>

**Torah Class:** Let's pause and put this in perspective and watch the progress of the Patriarchs: Abraham....Jacob's grandfather.... began life as a pagan. The world, at the time of Abraham's birth, consisted of only one kind of people: the human race. Other than genealogical and social divisions, all humans were about the same in Yahweh's eyes; the one exception being that the line of Ham.....one of Noach's 3 sons.....was an accursed line. As of Abraham's time there was no division of humanity, there was no set-apart people.

Once God called Abraham to leave his country AND his immediate family, THEN began the process of a divine dividing of the world into TWO groups of people: His people and everybody else. The name we give "God's people"....the name we find in the Bible.....is Hebrew. So, when Abraham obeyed God and moved to the land of Canaan, by DECLARATION did God divide mankind into Hebrews on the one hand, and all else on the other. Decisions by Abraham, and a declaration by God, were the sole factors in making Abraham different, in God's eyes, from all other human beings.

Isaac, son of Abraham, represents the next step in the evolution of the Hebrew people; Isaac was the firstborn Hebrew. Purely by *declaration* was Abraham a Hebrew, but Isaac was a Hebrew by *birth*. Yet, even then, a declaration of God was still involved; for Abraham had another son, Ishmael, which he thought to be his firstborn, and therefore would be the one to carry on the covenants God had made with Abraham. In other words, as far as Abraham was concerned, Ishmael was a Hebrew. And, in the strictest sense, Ishmael WAS a Hebrew until something changed. Does that mess with your heads a little bit? You see, a time came when Yahweh said to Abraham "not so fast, Abraham; just like I divided YOU away from your father and brother, I'm going to divide Ishmael away from his father and brother. Ishmael was to be divided and separated away from his father Abraham and his brother Isaac. The effect is that Ishmael was NOT to continue being Hebrew.....but Isaac was.

So, here's the \$64,000 question: if Ishmael and Isaac *both* had a Hebrew father..... Abraham..... how come only the one, Isaac, is today considered a Hebrew? Why isn't Ishmael just another branch of Hebrews? How come we don't think of Ishmael and all of his descendants....the ones we refer to as Arabs.....instead as Hebrews, too? Well, an important principle gets established here, that EVERY Jew and gentile needs to pay close attention to; so please, give me all of your attention, and put this into the permanent part of our memory banks; while birthright (that is, genealogy, your physical blood lines) establishes your PHYSICAL identity....your flesh and blood identity.....it is the

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<sup>24</sup>The Book of Jasher, Faithfully Translated 1840, Hebrew to English, J.H.Perry & Co, Salt Lake City UT

election and declaration of The Lord that establishes your SPIRITUAL identity. Your physical identity and your spiritual identity are two different matters, are they not? So, the term *Hebrew* BEGAN by denoting much more than simple physical identity; Hebrew ALSO defined a spiritual identity.

Let me put that together for you: by God's design, "Hebrew" was meant to be a term that described *a combination* of physical and spiritual attributes of a person. Further, the life of a Hebrew....physically and spiritually.....was to operate under a set of laws and promises that God made with the first Hebrew, Abraham. A Hebrew's earthly life was to revolve around his spiritual life. We call these laws and promises that define this overall life of a Hebrew the Abrahamic Covenant, and later they were expanded and given to Moses, and are now called Torah.

So, even though Isaac was physically of the right stock to be a Hebrew, it still took an act of God.....an election of God....for Him to be *declared* a Hebrew. Think about it: Ishmael was ALSO physically of the right stock to be a Hebrew, but God did NOT grant Ishmael the necessary SPIRITUAL status to be a Hebrew. Therefore, we have with the election of Isaac, and the rejection of Ishmael, an enormous fork in the road. One direction led to the Hebrews, the other AWAY from the Hebrews.

As we start to deal, in Genesis 25, with Isaac's twin sons, Jacob and Esau, we're going to see this process and principle repeated yet again. The issue of who will be chosen as inheritor of the rights of the covenant given to Abraham is the crux of the matter. Put another way, between Jacob and Esau, God would declare His chose to be Hebrew....and the other NOT. Both Jacob and Esau were, by all physical evidence, BORN from their Hebrew father, Isaac. By birth.....if one went PURELY by physical definition.....then it would seem that BOTH were Hebrews. And, in a sense, they both were. But, no: God would again, by declaration, *divide*.

Let us remember that while we could see some physical and genealogical differences between Isaac and Ishmael....after all, they had different mothers of different nationalities, and so were half-brothers..... it was entirely different for Jacob and Esau because they, of course, had the SAME mother and father. Jacob and Esau were twins..... physically, genealogically, there was NO difference between Jacob and Esau....their DNA was almost identical. So, how is it that Jacob was elected to be a Hebrew and Esau not? It was by DECLARATION ALONE....God's sovereign decision (that's what the word election means).... that God chose Jacob over Esau. Jacob would be a Hebrew; Esau was STRIPPED of his right to be called Hebrew. The ONLY difference between Jacob and Esau was the spiritual difference, and that was brought about purely by the declaration of Yahweh.

So, to better help us define just what a Hebrew is, we can say that a Hebrew is one who has been made a descendant in the line of covenant promises given to Abraham; or in more Bible terminology, a Hebrew is an *inheritor* of the covenant promises as given to Abraham. If a human being is an inheritor of the covenant promises, then that human being is part of God's set-apart people. And, thus, the world was, upon God's covenants with Abraham, divided into two groups: Hebrews, all other human beings. Abraham established the line of covenant promise, at the declaration of God, Abraham's father and brother were excluded. Abraham's son Isaac continued the line of covenant promise, at the declaration of God, and Abraham's other son, Ishmael, was excluded. Isaac's son

Jacob would continue the line of covenant promise, at the declaration of God, and Isaac's other son, Esau, would be excluded.

But, as we'll see in a couple more chapters, from Jacob forward, ALL descendants of Jacob would be called Hebrew.....no more exclusions...and, no more election by declaration of God. Beginning with Jacob's offspring, one was now a Hebrew by law. If one was physically born to a Hebrew, that person was a Hebrew. Period. But, even more, if one who was NOT born a Hebrew.....that is, he was a gentile.....if that gentile wanted to become part of the Hebrew people, it was allowed by means of some rules, some laws, that had been set down by Yahweh.

Are you following me? I certainly hope so.....because this applies to YOU, me, and everyone who lives on this planet! All of what I've been explaining sets up the pattern for HOW once becomes part of God's people.

So, how one comes to be called part of God's set-apart people.....the Hebrews, who eventually came to be called the Israelites..... occurs by means of a number of sequential forks-in-the road. It started with the Abraham fork, then the Isaac fork, and then the Jacob fork. And, it stays that way for about 1800 years. 18 centuries after Jacob, we're going to find yet another fork in the road; it's called the new covenant. And, the new covenant is an Old Testament prophecy about a time when these physical covenants and laws of the Hebrews, called the Torah, would be written, spiritually, on certain men's hearts. Not ALL men's heart.....just those who were elected and declared by God to be His. And, the way this would happen would be by means of a Messiah. And, this new fork-in-the-road brings us full circle; this fork brings to fruition that promise of the Abrahamic Covenant that "all the families of the Earth will be blessed" in you, Abraham. All doesn't mean gentiles and NOT Jews. All also doesn't mean Jews and NOT gentiles. All means all. Further, just WHO is included under the covenants of the Hebrews ONCE again involves God's election and declaration...and, the key to all this, is the Messiah. So, this story we're about to dissect here in Genesis 25.....the story of a crucial division, election and separation by the God of Israel.....is one that has so many wonderful nuances and establishes so many Messianic principles; unfortunately, time only permits us to explore a couple of them.

### **RE-READ GEN. 25: 19 – END**

Rivka, wife of Isaac, is worried. Her womb is in absolutely violent upheaval. What is going on in there is NOT normal. These may have been her first children, but she undoubtedly witnessed hundreds of pregnancies and assisted in not just a few births; that's part of what women did. So, she seeks Yahweh for reassurance and to calm her fears. God gives her His answer: two nations live within her, and what she is feeling is a struggle for dominance. Even more, He tells Rebecca that the first one out of the birth canal shall NOT be given the rights and honor as the firstborn....in Hebrew, *Bekhor*.... as was customary: rather it shall be the 2<sup>nd</sup> one born. This is a theme that is ongoing in the Bible; a theme that separates what SEEMS to be from a physical-earthly sense, from what actually IS from spiritual-heavenly point of view. From a physical sense, it SEEMED to Abraham that Ishmael, the son of his concubine, Hagar, was his firstborn son.....the son of promise. But, from a spiritual sense, it was Isaac.....to be born

miraculously by Sarah...who was to have all the firstborn rights and to be the all important son of promise.

Here, in Genesis 25, we have a similar thing happen: Rivka is carrying twins. The law is that the first one to be born is the firstborn...the bekhor... and the 2<sup>nd</sup> one to be born is more or less subservient to the first. The fact that a firstborn was a twin meant little. They don't divide the inheritance; they don't each get a share of the firstborn inheritance; one is chosen and the other is not. And, this violent struggle in Rivka's womb foretells the coming struggle over just which child will dominate the other. Even more, we find that God has *predetermined* the outcome; neither Isaac nor Rivka are involved in the decision.

In verse 23, Rivka is told that "...the older will serve the younger". In other words, the *physical* firstborn will not receive the usual and customary rights of the bekhor...the firstborn...instead, the 2<sup>nd</sup> will be given that right. The eternal importance of this matter is that the *physical* firstborn, Esau, is NOT going to be the inheritor of the covenant promises; instead, the physical 2<sup>nd</sup> born, Jacob, is going to be the inheritor. Jacob is the bekhor on a *spiritual* level...he is the firstborn based on divine declaration. Notice; the physical firstborn of Isaac, who will be Esau, is parallel to Ishmael, the *physical* firstborn of Abraham. The *spiritual* firstborn of Isaac, who will be Jacob, is parallel to Isaac, the *spiritual* firstborn of Abraham, and the future carrier of the covenant promises. So, we have here this ongoing principle and pattern of the Reality of Duality: everything has a spiritual reality and a physical reality that exists simultaneously. But, this much is also certain: these two separate nations...one being Jacob and other Esau... will have enmity for one another...that is part of the meaning of the phrase "the older shall *serve* the younger".

The twins are born; the first one to be born was Esau; he was of red...or ruddy... complexion, and very hairy...you know, a loveable little fuzzball. Here's where some knowledge of Hebrew comes in handy: the Hebrew word for "hairy" (as used here in this verse) is Se'ar. If that word rings a bell for you, it should: because we'll find out later in Genesis that Esau moved away from Jacob and established his nation in the district called Mt. Seir. This is a word play...Mt. Seir got its name from Esau being born very Se'ar...hairy. So, Mt. Seir, named for a characteristic of Esau, *literally* means "hairy mountain" or Mt. Hairy.

We're also told that during the birth process, Jacob was holding on to Esau's heel; the idea being that Jacob was trying to keep Esau from being born first. Now, to better help explain what comes next, we should here understand that Rebecca would not have kept this information that Yahweh gave her about the destinies of her twin sons, to herself; that would have been disloyal and disrespectful to her husband.

Rather she would have told him post-haste of what God had informed her (that which ever of the twins came out first was NOT to be declared bekhor...firstborn; rather it was the 2<sup>nd</sup> to emerge that God instructed was to have that designation)...after all, there was little more important in a family of that era than who would succeed the father in authority over the clan...that successor being the bekhor, the firstborn.

Even more, you can be sure Rebecca informed her twin sons, Esau and Jacob, of God's determination that Jacob, and not Esau, would be bekhor. How cruel it would have been to have waited until their maturity to inform them of this all important decree; a decree that mother and father were aware of BEFORE these children were even birthed.

So, it is with this understanding of the entire family's awareness of the younger, Jacob, being destined to have the birthright above the older, Esau, that we must view what happens next.

As the story unfolds, we find that, as is common within families, parents have their favorites. Isaac preferred Esau. Esau was apparently impetuous, brave, skillful with a bow, quite macho.....things dads typically admire in their sons. Jacob was quieter and introspective, more sensitive.....things that mothers typically prefer. Notice our parallel once again with Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was a favorite of Abraham; Isaac was a favorite with his mother. When Yahweh told Abraham that it was to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> born, Isaac, that was to obtain the firstborn position currently held by Ishmael, Abraham cried out to God: "oh, if only Ishmael could live in your presence!" Abraham determined he wanted Ishmael as the firstborn; Isaac determined he wanted Esau as the firstborn. Neither would get what they wanted.

And, so we see that a day arrives when Esau has just come in from a hunt, famished, and sees that Jacob has prepared a pot of lentils.....or more literally translated, red stew. Jacob, apparently never having been entirely comfortable with having the rights of the first born assigned to himself, decides he's going to help God out: he's going to get Esau to openly and finally sell his traditional birthright to Jacob.

The impulsive Esau makes a statement in response to Jacob's proposal that begins with "since I'm about to die".....he might as well give his birthright to Jacob, and seals the deal with an oath. The "I'm about to die" statement is not literal.....it's just a saying, something akin to "Who cares?". Of course, since God had long ago settled the issue, in reality Esau had no birthright to sell, for it already belong to Jacob. And, Jacob had no need to resort to treachery to obtain the birthright, because the Lord had already assigned it to him: but neither Jacob nor Esau had the faith to accept it as fact.

We're also given, here, a small piece of information we will find useful in the chapters ahead: Esau is given a nickname.....Edom. Edom means red, and it not only refers to his ruddy hairy body features, but also to this infamous incident at the stew-pot that has just transpired. So, for future reference, remember that Edom and Esau are one in the same. And, therefore, the future nation of Edom, so prevalent from here on in the bible as an ongoing enemy of Israel, will also play a role in end-times; and know that the people of Edom.....the Edom-ites, are simply the descendants of Esau.

Finally, in V34, we're told that Esau despised his birthright.....a very serious biblical condemnation of Esau. I have little doubt that Rivka told Esau, as she undoubtedly did Jacob, that despite the chronological order of birth, it was Jacob who was to have the firstborn rights. What a hurtful thing for Esau; knowing that, from his point of view, his own mother was telling him....the bekhori.....that he would NOT be recognized as the firstborn. How else could it have felt that his mother was siding with Jacob? This had to have shaped much of Esau's life; making him somewhat bitter, untrusting, and cynical. His father, Isaac, was not a poor man. To think that Esau had no interest in having all the rights and powers of the firstborn, frankly, doesn't make any sense. He probably saw his LOSING of the firstborn rights as an inevitable....though grossly unfair.... event, and so behaved as though it didn't matter in the first place. Kind of rejecting the office of firstborn before it was rejected for him.

Folks, these people we read about in the Bible were just that....people. They had feelings, they had wants and needs, they had quirks, they had shortcomings, they had

pride....they were real. When we better understand the circumstances, it's not too hard to put ourselves in their shoes.

OK. Let's backup a bit, and take a look at some circumstances surrounding this event that are not so evident; at least not so evident to gentiles.

First, does anyone find it odd that we have a male, Jacob, doing the cooking here? Clearly, the Scriptures say that Jacob had cooked the stew. Now, cooking was a woman's task, particularly when they were camped or living in villages. Certainly, men who were away from home did some cooking. But, it was traditional and would have been shameful, under normal circumstances, for a young man to be the one doing the cooking. So, was Jacob just a sissy? Had his mother's favoritism turned him into a momma's boy? Where I'm going is, that when we understand ancient Hebrew culture.....much of which, by the way, has carried over into more modern Hebrew traditions.....when we run across Biblical scenes like of Jacob and Esau and the stew, we can recognize that something out of the ordinary is happening. It is not USUAL that Jacob.....at least 15 years old at this time....would have been doing the cooking; it just wasn't done.

So, what's going on here? Well, the answer may well lie in one of those beautiful Hebrew traditions that is part of every observant Jewish family today; it is a tradition that goes back to time immemorial and is called "sitting Shiva". It is part of the rites of mourning the dead. So, what has this to do with our story, here? The ancient Hebrew sages are near unanimous that the context for what is playing out between Esau and Jacob is that there has been a death in the family. And, the one who died was Abraham. Lentil stew or Lentil soup is called the meal of mourning. Lentil soup is a traditional food eaten during the 7-day period of mourning that is called "sitting Shiva". I'll explain that a little more in a minute.

So, think about it: what's the point of the Holy Scripture going on and on about this being a red stew, and then identifying it as "Lentils" in vs. 34? How does it add anything to the context or meaning? What difference does it make that the soup was Lentil? Any good Jew knows that this is indicative of a period of mourning.

But, there's more evidence those who are members of the immediate family are NOT to cook during that seven-day period. Other family members, or friends, are to provide food for those 7 days; or, foods pre-prepared (cooked and preserved before the death of the family member) can be eaten. And, the definition of just WHO makes up the immediate family is important: one's father and mother, sister and brother, son and daughter, or spouse is an immediate family member. Grandchildren are NOT immediate family members for purpose of this part of the mourning rites. Rivka, who normally cooked for the family, would have been prohibited from cooking. Jacob, Abraham's grandchild, was PERMITTED to cook.....he was OUTSIDE that circle of immediate family...so, perhaps that's why it was *he* who was cooking the meal of mourning, Lentil stew. Why Lentils? In fact, we also find that eggs are also considered a food suitable for mourning. What these two food items.....Lentils and eggs.....have in common is that they are round. And, the roundness illustrates the circular nature of life; the cycle of being conceived from nothing, and returning to nothing....physically speaking, of course. And, it also speaks of one generation dieing off, and the next beginning, in an unending pattern.

It is the Bible, and naturally the Hebrew thought that comes from it, that shows us that history is circular; that history repeats itself. Over and over we see these same patterns

that God ordained, established, and wove into the fabric of the Universe repeating. And, naturally, it is secular humanism, and its proud son Darwin Evolutionism, that says...no, no...history is a straight line. It starts from some unknown place in the past, and randomly proceeds to some unknowable future. Every moment of every day is new and there is nothing in the past to compare it to. There are no patterns. Morality evolves. The old becomes obsolete, and the new becomes preeminent. The old becomes replaced by something that destroys the prior pattern and establishes a new one.

The illustration of the Lentil and the egg says otherwise. And, I really like this tradition. We humans NEED physical illustrations of God's spiritual principles. When we put them aside, or think we no longer need them, the result is deception and error. So, it appears that Abraham had just died, and Jacob was preparing the meal of mourning when Esau shows up from the hunt. He didn't come in to some surprise that his grandfather Abraham had died....he was well aware before he went out. Rather than be with the family and do his duty to be a mourner and a comforter to his father, in particular, he did what it pleased him to do....hunt game.

It is no coincidence that when Jacob approached Esau with the offer to trade Esau's birthright for some Lentil stew, Esau responded with the morbid words: "...Look, I'm about die, what use is my rights of the bekhor?" This was, at least in part, graveyard humor done at a most inappropriate time.

Let's remember.....at this point, Esau was a mid-to-late teen.....an **angry** mid-to-late teen. So, these weren't mature or well thought out words he blurted out; they were impetuous and foolish. Yet, it shows us just what he thought about his exalted position as the bekhor, the firstborn. And, the answer is, not much.

Look: when we talk about the RIGHTS of the firstborn.....which includes getting a double-portion of the family's wealth AND the right to rule over the clan....it's easy to forget the **responsibilities** that goes hand in hand with those rights. Any straight-thinking parent knows what I'm speaking about. Any executive or manager or leader knows what there are duties that, if carried out properly, rise above any amount of reward and personal benefit. Esau knew his grandfather Abraham well, and was equally aware of the great and terrible burden he carried. Esau, of course, knew his father Isaac well, and the tremendous burden of responsibility for the covenants of God that HE carried. Esau wanted no part of it. Without doubt, like many teens, Esau wanted all the fun stuff....telling people what to do, but nobody telling HIM what to do; he loved the idea of possessing the best place at the table, being wealthy and so on.... but, he did NOT want the responsibilities and duties that went with it.

The great sage Rashi says that another lesson of this incident is how a righteous person views life in general, versus how a wicked person does the same. Jacob, the righteous one's, view of life is, "what am I here to accomplish? What are my duties and my goals?" The wicked one's view, Esau's view, is "eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we may die". Esau was thinking, after contemplating the death of his grandfather, that he didn't want to be tied to all the duties of the firstborn and family patriarch when HIS father, Isaac, died. No way! I just want to enjoy life .....as much as I can.....get all I can.... responsibility is for suckers.

Jacob chose that very moment to challenge Esau, because no one knows another person better, perhaps, than one twin knows another. Jacob knew that Esau was ready to give up his birthright and all the burdensome duties it came with; and the death of his

grandfather, and the thinking we all tend to do about our own lives when someone near to us dies, drove him over the edge. The divinely ordained duties that Isaac must have talked about, and Abraham must have talked about, incessantly, were nothing Esau wanted....so great was the importance of carrying on with the line of covenant promise that nothing could be put above it.

Much was contained in verse 27 as to inform us of the character of each young man: it says Esau became a hunter, while Jacob was a quiet man who lived in Tents.

I won't spend long with this, but please take note: only in two places in the Holy Scriptures is a man called a hunter.....that is, in Hebrew he is called a *tsayid*. The first man to be labeled as *a hunter* as a means of identifying his **character** was Nimrod; the only other is Esau. AS the Bible uses it, tsayid is a negative term..... it really means a stone-cold killer. A guy who kills animals for the love of killing, and has little if any conscience in killing a man.

Jacob, on the other hand, is called a "quiet man" in some Bibles.....a "plain man" in others.....and a "peaceful man" in still others. The Hebrew word that is being translated is *tam*. While peaceful or plain is not necessarily incorrect, it misses the point: Jacob and Esau are being contrasted. They are being compared as OPPOSITES. Tam more means blameless, or not having guilt....it is implied that this blamelessness is being blameless before God. It is another way of saying "righteous". The contrast here is about one who loves killing, versus one who loves life. One who wanders aimlessly, versus one who stays near. One who slaughters the flock, versus the one who shepherds the flock. The last verse sums up this entire episode and really requires no comment. It says: "Thus Esau showed how little he valued his birthright."<sup>25</sup>

## **Book of Jasher:**

### CHAPTER 25

1 And it was at that time that Abraham again took a wife in his old age, and her name was Keturah, from the land of Canaan.

2 And she bare unto him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuach, being six sons. And the children of Zimran were Abihen, Molich and Narim.

3 And the sons of Jokshan were Sheba and Dedan, and the sons of Medan were Amida, Joab, Gochi, Elisha and Nothach; and the sons of Midian were Ephah, Ephher, Chanoch, Abida and Eldaah.

4 And the sons of Ishbak were Makiro, Beyodua and Tator.

5 And the sons of Shuach were Bildad, Mamdad, Munan and Meban; all these are the families of the children of Keturah the Canaanitish woman which she bare unto Abraham the Hebrew.

6 And Abraham sent all these away, and he gave them gifts, and they went away from his son Isaac to dwell wherever they should find a place.

7 And all these went to the mountain at the east, and they built themselves six cities in which they dwelt unto this day.

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<sup>25</sup> [Torahclass.com/index.html](http://Torahclass.com/index.html), Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

8 But the children of Sheba and Dedan, children of Jokshan, with their children, did not dwell with their brethren in their cities, and they journeyed and encamped in the countries and wildernesses unto this day.

9 And the children of Midian, son of Abraham, went to the east of the land of Cush, and they there found a large valley in the eastern country, and they remained there and built a city, and they dwelt therein, that is the land of Midian unto this day.

10 And Midian dwelt in the city which he built, he and his five sons and all belonging to him.

11 And these are the names of the sons of Midian according to their names in their cities, Ephah, Epher, Chanoch, Abida and Eldaah.

12 And the sons of Ephah were Methach, Meshar, Avi and Tzanua, and the sons of Epher were Ephron, Zur, Alirun and Medin, and the sons of Chanoch were Reuel, Rekem, Azi, Alyoshub and Alad.

13 And the sons of Abida were Chur, Melud, Kerury, Molchi; and the sons of Eldaah were Miker, and Reba, and Malchiyah and Gabol; these are the names of the Midianites according to their families; and afterward the families of Midian spread throughout the land of Midian.

14 And these are the generations of Ishmael the son Abraham, whom Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham.

15 And Ishmael took a wife from the land of Egypt, and her name was Ribah, the same is Meribah.

16 And Ribah bare unto Ishmael Nebayoth, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam and their sister Bosmath.

17 And Ishmael cast away his wife Ribah, and she went from him and returned to Egypt to the house of her father, and she dwelt there, for she had been very bad in the sight of Ishmael, and in the sight of his father Abraham.

18 And Ishmael afterward took a wife from the land of Canaan, and her name was Malchuth, and she bare unto him Nishma, Dumah, Masa, Chadad, Tema, Yetur, Naphish and Kedma.

19 These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, being twelve princes according to their nations; and the families of Ishmael afterward spread forth, and Ishmael took his children and all the property that he had gained, together with the souls of his household and all belonging to him, and they went to dwell where they should find a place.

20 And they went and dwelt near the wilderness of Paran, and their dwelling was from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt as thou comest toward Assyria.

21 And Ishmael and his sons dwelt in the land, and they had children born to them, and they were fruitful and increased abundantly.

22 And these are the names of the sons of Nebayoth the first born of Ishmael; Mend, Send, Mayon; and the sons of Kedar were Alyon, Kezem, Chamad and Eli.

23 And the sons of Adbeel were Chamad and Jabin; and the sons of Mibsam were Obadiah, Ebedmelech and Yeush; these are the families of the children of Ribah the wife of Ishmael.

24 And the sons of Mishma the son of Ishmael were Shamua, Zecaryon and Obed; and the sons of Dumah were Kezed, Eli, Machmad and Amed.

25 And the sons of Masa were Melon, Mula and Ebidadon; and the sons of Chadad were Azur, Minzar and Ebedmelech; and the sons of Tema were Seir, Sadon and Yakol.

26 And the sons of Yetur were Merith, Yaish, Alyo, and Pachoth; and the sons of Naphish were Ebed-Tamed, Abiyasaph and Mir; and the sons of Kedma were Calip, Tachtu, and Omir; these were the children of Malchuth the wife of Ishmael according to their families.

27 All these are the families of Ishmael according to their generations, and they dwelt in those lands wherein they had built themselves cities unto this day.

28 And Rebecca the daughter of Bethuel, the wife of Abraham's son Isaac, was barren in those days, she had no offspring; and Isaac dwelt with his father in the land of Canaan; and the Lord was with Isaac; and Arpachshad the son of Shem the son of Noah died in those days, in the forty-eighth year of the life of Isaac, and all the days that Arpachshad lived were four hundred and thirty-eight years, and he died.

## CHAPTER 26

1 And in the fifty-ninth year of the life of Isaac the son of Abraham, Rebecca his wife was still barren in those days.

2 And Rebecca said unto Isaac, Truly I have heard, my lord, that thy mother Sarah was barren in her days until my Lord Abraham, thy father, prayed for her and she conceived by him.

3 Now therefore stand up, pray thou also to God and he will hear thy prayer and remember us through his mercies.

4 And Isaac answered his wife Rebecca, saying, Abraham has already prayed for me to God to multiply his seed, now therefore this barrenness must proceed to us from thee.

5 And Rebecca said unto him, But arise now thou also and pray, that the Lord may hear thy prayer and grant me children, and Isaac hearkened to the words of his wife, and Isaac and his wife rose up and went to the land of Moriah to pray there and to seek the Lord, and when they had reached that place Isaac stood up and prayed to the Lord on account of his wife because she was barren.

6 And Isaac said, O Lord God of heaven and earth, whose goodness and mercies fill the earth, thou who didst take my father from his father's house and from his birthplace, and didst bring him unto this land, and didst say unto him, To thy seed will I give the land, and thou didst promise him and didst declare unto him, I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the sea, now may thy words be verified which thou didst speak unto my father.

7 For thou art the Lord our God, our eyes are toward thee to give us seed of men, as thou didst promise us, for thou art the Lord our God and our eyes are directed toward thee only.

8 And the Lord heard the prayer of Isaac the son of Abraham, and the Lord was entreated of him and Rebecca his wife conceived.

9 And in about seven months after the children struggled together within her, and it pained her greatly that she was wearied on account of them, and she said to all the women who were then in the land, Did such a thing happen to you as it has to me? and they said unto her, No.

10 And she said unto them, Why am I alone in this amongst all the women that were upon earth? and she went to the land of Moriah to seek the Lord on account of this; and she went to Shem and Eber his son to make inquiries of them in this matter, and that they should seek the Lord in this thing respecting her.

11 And she also asked Abraham to seek and inquire of the Lord about all that had befallen her.

12 And they all inquired of the Lord concerning this matter, and they brought her word from the Lord and told her, Two children are in thy womb, and two nations shall rise from them; and one nation shall be stronger than the other, and the greater shall serve the younger.

13 And when her days to be delivered were completed, she knelt down, and behold there were twins in her womb, as the Lord had spoken to her.

14 And the first came out red all over like a hairy garment, and all the people of the land called his name Esau, saying, That this one was made complete from the womb.

15 And after that came his brother, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel, therefore they called his name Jacob.

16 And Isaac, the son of Abraham, was sixty years old when he begat them.

17 And the boys grew up to their fifteenth year, and they came amongst the society of men. Esau was a designing and deceitful man, and an expert hunter in the field, and Jacob was a man perfect and wise, dwelling in tents, feeding flocks and learning the instructions of the Lord and the commands of his father and mother.

18 And Isaac and the children of his household dwelt with his father Abraham in the land of Canaan, as God had commanded them.

19 And Ishmael the son of Abraham went with his children and all belonging to them, and they returned there to the land of Havilah, and they dwelt there.

20 And all the children of Abraham's concubines went to dwell in the land of the east, for Abraham had sent them away from his son, and had given them presents, and they went away.

21 And Abraham gave all that he had to his son Isaac, and he also gave him all his treasures.

22 And he commanded him saying, Dost thou not know and understand the Lord is God in heaven and in earth, and there is no other beside him?

23 And it was he who took me from my father's house, and from my birth place, and gave me all the delights upon earth; who delivered me from the counsel of the wicked, for in him did I trust.

24 And he brought me to this place, and he delivered me from Ur Casdim; and he said unto me, To thy seed will I give all these lands, and they shall inherit them when they keep my commandments, my statutes and my judgments that I have commanded thee, and which I shall command them.

25 Now therefore my son, hearken to my voice, and keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I commanded thee, do not turn from the right way either to the right or to the left, in order that it may be well with thee and thy children after thee forever.

26 And remember the wonderful works of the Lord, and his kindness that he has shown toward us, in having delivered us from the hands of our enemies, and the Lord our God caused them to fall into our hands; and now therefore keep all that I have commanded

thee, and turn not away from the commandments of thy God, and serve none beside him, in order that it may be well with thee and thy seed after thee.

27 And teach thou thy children and thy seed the instructions of the Lord and his commandments, and teach them the upright way in which they should go, in order that it may be well with them forever.

28 And Isaac answered his father and said unto him, That which my Lord has commanded that will I do, and I will not depart from the commands of the Lord my God, I will keep all that he commanded me; and Abraham blessed his son Isaac, and also his children; and Abraham taught Jacob the instruction of the Lord and his ways.

29 And it was at that time that Abraham died, in the fifteenth year of the life of Jacob and Esau, the sons of Isaac, and all the days of Abraham were one hundred and seventy-five years, and he died and was gathered to his people in good old age, old and satisfied with days, and Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him.

30 And when the inhabitants of Canaan heard that Abraham was dead, they all came with their kings and princes and all their men to bury Abraham.

31 And all the inhabitants of the land of Haran, and all the families of the house of Abraham, and all the princes and grandees, and the sons of Abraham by the concubines, all came when they heard of Abraham's death, and they requited Abraham's kindness, and comforted Isaac his son, and they buried Abraham in the cave which he bought from Ephron the Hittite and his children, for the possession of a burial place.

32 And all the inhabitants of Canaan, and all those who had known Abraham, wept for Abraham a whole year, and men and women mourned over him.

33 And all the little children, and all the inhabitants of the land wept on account of Abraham, for Abraham had been good to them all, and because he had been upright with God and men.

34 And there arose not a man who feared God like unto Abraham, for he had feared his God from his youth, and had served the Lord, and had gone in all his ways during his life, from his childhood to the day of his death.

35 And the Lord was with him and delivered him from the counsel of Nimrod and his people, and when he made war with the four kings of Elam he conquered them.

36 And he brought all the children of the earth to the service of God, and he taught them the ways of the Lord, and caused them to know the Lord.

37 And he formed a grove and he planted a vineyard therein, and he had always prepared in his tent meat and drink to those that passed through the land, that they might satisfy themselves in his house.

38 And the Lord God delivered the whole earth on account of Abraham.

39 And it was after the death of Abraham that God blessed his son Isaac and his children, and the Lord was with Isaac as he had been with his father Abraham, for Isaac kept all the commandments of the Lord as Abraham his father had commanded him; he did not turn to the right or to the left from the right path which his father had commanded him.

## CHAPTER 27

1 And Esau at that time, after the death of Abraham, frequently went in the field to hunt.

2 And Nimrod king of Babel, the same was Amraphel, also frequently went with his mighty men to hunt in the field, and to walk about with his men in the cool of the day.

3 And Nimrod was observing Esau all the days, for a jealousy was formed in the heart of Nimrod against Esau all the days.

4 And on a certain day Esau went in the field to hunt, and he found Nimrod walking in the wilderness with his two men.

5 And all his mighty men and his people were with him in the wilderness, but they removed at a distance from him, and they went from him in different directions to hunt, and Esau concealed himself for Nimrod, and he lurked for him in the wilderness.

6 And Nimrod and his men that were with him did not know him, and Nimrod and his men frequently walked about in the field at the cool of the day, and to know where his men were hunting in the field.

7 And Nimrod and two of his men that were with him came to the place where they were, when Esau started suddenly from his lurking place, and drew his sword, and hastened and ran to Nimrod and cut off his head.

8 And Esau fought a desperate fight with the two men that were with Nimrod, and when they called out to him, Esau turned to them and smote them to death with his sword.

9 And all the mighty men of Nimrod, who had left him to go to the wilderness, heard the cry at a distance, and they knew the voices of those two men, and they ran to know the cause of it, when they found their king and the two men that were with him lying dead in the wilderness.

10 And when Esau saw the mighty men of Nimrod coming at a distance, he fled, and thereby escaped; and Esau took the valuable garments of Nimrod, which Nimrod's father had bequeathed to Nimrod, and with which Nimrod prevailed over the whole land, and he ran and concealed them in his house.

11 And Esau took those garments and ran into the city on account of Nimrod's men, and he came unto his father's house wearied and exhausted from fight, and he was ready to die through grief when he approached his brother Jacob and sat before him.

12 And he said unto his brother Jacob, Behold I shall die this day, and wherefore then do I want the birthright? And Jacob acted wisely with Esau in this matter, and Esau sold his birthright to Jacob, for it was so brought about by the Lord.

13 And Esau's portion in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham had bought from the children of Heth for the possession of a burial ground, Esau also sold to Jacob, and Jacob bought all this from his brother Esau for value given.

14 And Jacob wrote the whole of this in a book, and he testified the same with witnesses, and he sealed it, and the book remained in the hands of Jacob.

15 And when Nimrod the son of Cush died, his men lifted him up and brought him in consternation, and buried him in his city, and all the days that Nimrod lived were two hundred and fifteen years and he died.

16 And the days that Nimrod reigned upon the people of the land were one hundred and eighty-five years; and Nimrod died by the sword of Esau in shame and contempt, and the seed of Abraham caused his death as he had seen in his dream.

17 And at the death of Nimrod his kingdom became divided into many divisions, and all those parts that Nimrod reigned over were restored to the respective kings of the land, who recovered them after the death of Nimrod, and all the people of the house of Nimrod were for a long time enslaved to all the other kings of the land.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> The Book of Jasher, Faithfully Translated 1840, Hebrew to English, J.H.Perry & Co, Salt Lake City UT

## Thirty Lessons From Jacob and Esau

1. They were given in answer to prayer (Genesis 25:21)
2. They were at enmity before birth (Genesis 25:22-23)
3. God planned for them before birth (Genesis 25:23)
4. They had different dispositions, colors, and manner of people from the same mother and father (Genesis 25:23)
5. Dispositions are formed early (Genesis 25:23)
6. It is unwise of parents to have favoritism among children (Genesis 25:28)
7. Parents will reap if favoritism is practiced (Genesis 27:1-46)
8. God will work out His purpose without human deception (Genesis 25:23; Malachi 1:2-3)
9. God can predict human acts on the basis of human traits (Genesis 25:23; Malachi 1:2-3)
10. God is sovereign in His choice (Romans 9)
11. Traits of parents are passed on to their children (Genesis 29:1-30:43)
12. God can see further than man (Genesis 25:23)
13. God's choice is based entirely upon human traits, dispositions, and acts (Romans 9:14-24)
14. Do not permit natural feelings to divide the family (Genesis 27)
15. Do not put personal preferences before the will of God (Genesis 25:23; Genesis 27:1-4)
16. We have no right to question the will of God (Romans 9:8-24)
17. Do not permit natural dispositions to hinder spiritual blessings (Genesis 25:34)
18. God has made it possible for natural traits and dispositions to be completely changed so as to obey Him (Genesis 32:24-29; 2 Cor. 5:17)
19. One must choose to submit to God to have such changes made (John 3:16)
20. A mere moment of fleshly gratification can damn the soul (Genesis 25:34; Hebrews 12:16)
21. God's principle of dealing with us today is on the basis of man's choice or rejection of Him (John 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9; Rev. 22:17)
22. Man can be cut off after such choice is made if he rebels (Romans 11:7-20)
23. Rebels can be brought back to original righteousness again by repentance (Romans 11:20-32; 1 John 1:9)
24. What a man sows he will reap (Genesis 27; Genesis 33; Galatians 6:7-8)
25. God deals with men even before they are changed to conform to Him (Genesis 28:12-22; Genesis 31:1-13; Genesis 32:1-32)
26. God has certain callings for qualified men (Genesis 25:23; Malachi 1:1-3; Romans 9)
27. God works out even human schemes to His own glory (Genesis 27; Romans 9)
28. Revelation comes when we are sincere and persevere (Genesis 28:12-22; Genesis 32:1-32)
29. The younger are sometimes the better in the end (Genesis 25:23; Genesis 32:1-32)
30. The black sheep of the family is sometimes the white sheep in the crisis (Genesis 32:1-32; Luke 15:11-32)<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study bible

## **PROFILE: ESAU**

Common sense isn't all that common. In fact, the common thread in many decisions is that they don't make sense. Esau's life was filled with choices he must have regretted bitterly. He appears to have been a person who found it hard to consider consequences, reacting to the need of the moment without realizing what he was giving up to meet that need. Trading his birthright for a bowl of stew was the clearest example of this weakness. He also chose wives in direct opposition to his parents' wishes. He learned the hard way.

What are you willing to trade for the things you want? Do you find yourself, at times, willing to negotiate *anything* for what you feel you need *now*? Do your family, spouse, integrity, body, or soul get included in these deals? Do you sometimes feel that the important parts of life escaped while you were grabbing for something else?

If so, your initial response, like Esau's, may be deep anger. In itself that isn't wrong, as long as you direct the energy of that anger toward a solution and not toward yourself or others as the cause of the problem. Your greatest need is to find a focal point other than "what I need now." The only worthy focal point is God. A relationship with him will not only give an ultimate purpose to your life; it will also be a daily guideline for living. Meet him in the pages of the Bible.

### **Strengths and accomplishments:**

- Ancestor of the Edomites
- Known for his archery skill
- Able to forgive after explosive anger

### **Weaknesses and mistakes:**

- When faced with important decisions, tended to choose according to the immediate need rather than the long-range effect
- Angered his parents by poor marriage choices

### **Lessons from his life:**

- God allows certain events in our lives to accomplish his overall purposes, but we are still responsible for our actions
- Consequences are important to consider
- It is possible to have great anger and yet not sin

### **Vital statistics:**

- Where: Canaan
- Occupation: Skillful hunter
- Relatives: Parents: Isaac and Rebekah. Brother: Jacob. Wives: Judith, Basemath, and Mahalath

### **Key verses:**

"Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root

grows up to cause trouble and defile many. See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears” (Hebrews 12:14-17).

Esau’s story is told in Genesis 25-36. He is also mentioned in Malachi 1:2-3; Romans 9:13; Hebrews 12:16-17.

## **PROFILE: JACOB**

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are among the most significant people in the Old Testament. It is important to realize that this significance is not based upon their personal characters, but upon the character of God. They were all men who earned the grudging respect and even fear of their peers; they were wealthy and powerful, and yet each was capable of lying, deceit, and selfishness. They were not the perfect heroes we might have expected; instead, they were just like us, trying to please God, but often falling short.

Jacob was the third link in God’s plan to start a nation from Abraham. The success of that plan was more often in spite of than because of Jacob’s life. Before Jacob was born, God promised that his plan would be worked out through Jacob and not his twin brother, Esau. Although Jacob’s methods were not always respectable, his skill, determination, and patience have to be admired. As we follow him from birth to death, we are able to see God’s work.

Jacob’s life had four stages, each marked by a personal encounter with God. In the first stage, Jacob lived up to his name, which means “he grasps the heel” (figuratively, “he deceives”). He grabbed Esau’s heel at birth, and by the time he fled from home, he had also grabbed his brother’s birthright and blessing.

During his flight, God first appeared to him. Not only did God confirm to Jacob his blessing, but he awakened in Jacob a personal knowledge of himself. In the second stage, Jacob experienced life from the other side, being manipulated and deceived by Laban. But there is a curious change: the Jacob of stage one would simply have left Laban, whereas the Jacob of stage two, after deciding to leave, waited six years for God’s permission. In the third stage, Jacob was in a new role as grabber. This time, by the Jordan River, he grabbed on to God and wouldn’t let go. He realized his dependence on the God who had continued to bless him. His relationship to God became essential to his life, and his name was changed to Israel, “he struggles with God.” Jacob’s last stage of life was to *be* grabbed—God achieved a firm hold on him. In responding to Joseph’s invitation to come to Egypt, Jacob was clearly unwilling to make a move without God’s approval.

Can you think of times when God has made himself known to you? Do you allow yourself to meet him as you study his Word? What difference have these experiences made in your life? Are you more like the young Jacob, forcing God to track you down in the desert of your own plans and mistakes? Or are you more like the Jacob who placed his desires and plans before God for his approval before taking any action?

**Strengths and accomplishments:**

- Father of the 12 tribes of Israel
- Third in the Abrahamic line of God’s plan
- Determined, willing to work long and hard for what he wanted
- Good businessman

**Weaknesses and mistakes:**

- When faced with conflict, relied on his own resources rather than going to God for help
- Tended to accumulate wealth for its own sake

**Lessons from his life:**

- Security does not lie in the accumulation of goods
- All human intentions and actions—for good or evil—are woven by God into his ongoing plan

**Vital statistics:**

- Where: Canaan
- Occupation: Shepherd, livestock owner
- Relatives: Parents: Isaac and Rebekah. Brother: Esau. Father-in-law: Laban. Wives: Rachel and Leah. Twelve sons and one daughter are mentioned in the Bible

**Key verse:**

“I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you” (Genesis 28:15).

Jacob’s story is told in Genesis 25-50. He is also mentioned in Hosea 12:2-5; Matthew 1:2; Matthew 22:32; Acts 3:13; Acts 7:46; Romans 9:11-13; Romans 11:26; Hebrews 11:9, 20-21.