



Isaac's Well at Beersheba

**(34) At the age of forty, Esau married two Hittite wives: Judith, the daughter of Beeri, and Basemath, the daughter of Elon. (35) But Esau's wives made life miserable for Isaac and Rebekah.**

- **Esau** further disregarded the wishes of God and married local Hittite women. They were apt to be pagans. Think of the challenge of raising children with pagan mothers. This decision was a grief to **Isaac** and **Rebekah**.
- **Isaac** had only one wife even though he could afford more. He was a one-woman man. There is little else said about **Isaac** in Scripture. He was largely a placeholder between Abraham and Jacob.

## GENESIS CHAPTERS 25-26

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### Genesis Previously

<b>Mankind Created</b>	<b>Nations Formed</b>	<b>Abram Covenanted</b>
<b>Abram at War, is Honored, Land Boundaries Specified</b>		
<b>Sarai substituted, then Rejected Hagar; the Lord supported Her Expanded Names given to Sarai and Abram.</b>		
<b>Abraham was Visited and Warned about Sodom Sodom Was Destroyed, but Lot and Daughters Were Saved.</b>		
<b>King Abimelech takes and then returns Sarah</b>		
<b>Isaac is born, then Hagar and Ishmael are dismissed</b>		
<b>The near-sacrifice of Isaac and the death of Sarah.</b>		
<b>Isaac Marries Rebecca</b>		

Following the death of Sarah, Abraham was able to remarry and have children.

### ABRAHAM REMARRIED

**(1) Abraham married another wife, whose name was Keturah. (2) She gave birth to Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. (3) Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan. Dedan's descendants were the Asshurites, Letushites, and Leummites. (4) Midian's sons were Ephah, Epher, Hanoah, Abida, and Eldaah. These were all descendants of Abraham through Keturah.**

- **Abraham** was 137 when Sarah died. Genesis 23:1. The rejuvenation that God had promised **Abraham** and Sarah (Genesis 18:10-12) must have continued for him to father six sons. Here **Abraham** was becoming the father of many nations as God had promised. Genesis 17:6.

**I will make you extremely fruitful. Your descendants will become many nations, and kings will be among them!**

**(5) Abraham gave everything he owned to his son Isaac. (6) But before he died, he gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them off to a land in the east, away from Isaac.**

- Beside Keturah, **Abraham** had concubines, wives that did not inherit. **Abraham** was fair to the sons of the **concubines**.
- This move headed off family squabbles over the inheritance. If we could be as wise.

### **ABRAHAM'S DEATH**

**(7) Abraham lived for 175 years, (8) and he died at a ripe old age, having lived a long and satisfying life. He breathed his last and joined his ancestors in death.**

- **Abraham** was satisfied with **life**. He could function without Sarah. Consider the “**joined his ancestors in death**” comment. There is a hint here of the afterlife.

**(9) His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, near Mamre, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite. (10) This was the field Abraham had purchased from the Hittites and where he had buried his wife Sarah.**

- **Isaac** and **Ishmael** cooperated in **burying** their dad even though they had disputed in the past. **Abraham** personally did not inherit the land that had been promised to him. That gift was to come later to his descendants when Joshua led them into the land, beginning at Jericho.

**(11) After Abraham's death, God blessed his son Isaac, who settled near Beer-lahai-roi in the Negev.**

### **ISAAC MADE A TREATY WITH ABIMELECH**

**(27) "Why have you come here?" Isaac asked. "You obviously hate me, since you kicked me off your land." (28) They replied, "We can plainly see that the LORD is with you. So we want to enter into a sworn treaty with you. Let's make a covenant. (29) Swear that you will not harm us, just as we have never troubled you. We have always treated you well, and we sent you away from us in peace. And now look how the LORD has blessed you!"**

- “Why this reversal?”
- In view of the way **Isaac** was being **blessed**, they wanted a **peace treaty**.

**(30) So Isaac prepared a covenant feast to celebrate the treaty, and they ate and drank together. (31) Early the next morning, they each took a solemn oath not to interfere with each other. Then Isaac sent them home again, and they left him in peace. (32) That very day Isaac's servants came and told him about a new well they had dug. "We've found water!" they exclaimed. (33) So Isaac named the well Shibah (which means "oath"). And to this day the town that grew up there is called Beersheba (which means "well of the oath").**

- There was a **feast** and the **treaty** was sealed with an **oath**.
- The writer wants us to note the timing: The workers struck water **that very day**. This is another instance of God's blessings on **Isaac**.
- **Beersheba** means “**well of the oath**” and still has that name today.

is our water," they said, and they argued over it with Isaac's herdsmen. So Isaac named the well Esek (which means "argument"). (21) Isaac's men then dug another well, but again there was a dispute over it. So Isaac named it Sitnah (which means "hostility").

- Isaac opened two more wells but the Philistine **shepherds** disputed over them.

(22) Abandoning that one, Isaac moved on and dug another well. This time there was no dispute over it, so Isaac named the place Rehoboth (which means "open space"), for he said, "At last the LORD has created enough space for us to prosper in this land."

- Now he moved beyond the range of the Philistines and his men were no longer harassed.

### THE LORD APPEARED TO ISAAC

(23) From there Isaac moved to Beersheba, (24) where the LORD appeared to him on the night of his arrival. "I am the God of your father, Abraham," He said. "Do not be afraid, for I am with you and will bless you. I will multiply your descendants, and they will become a great nation. I will do this because of My promise to Abraham, My servant."

- The Lord promised added children to the greater family.

(25) Then Isaac built an altar there and worshiped the LORD. He set up his camp at that place, and his servants dug another well. (26) One day King Abimelech came from Gerar with his adviser, Ahuzzath, and also Phicol, his army commander.

- Public and permanent worship was started when an **altar** was **built**.
- Top officials among the Philistines came to confer with Isaac.

- Isaac received special attention from the Lord. It was probably economic blessing so that his flocks and herds increased more than might be expected, Genesis 26:15. The Lord is sovereign and blesses whom He chooses.
- Next, we get the family map for the 12 tribes of Ishmael, Abraham's son by Hagar:

### ISHMAEL'S FAMILY LINE

(12) This is the account of the family of Ishmael, the son of Abraham through Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian servant. (13) Here is a list, by their names and clans, of Ishmael's descendants: The oldest was Nebaioth, followed by Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, (14) Mishma, Dumah, Massa, (15) Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. (16) These twelve sons of Ishmael became the founders of twelve tribes named after them, listed according to the places they settled and camped. (17) Ishmael lived for 137 years. Then he breathed his last and joined his ancestors in death. (18) Ishmael's descendants occupied the region from Havilah to Shur, which is east of Egypt in the direction of Asshur. There they lived in open hostility toward all their relatives.

- Animosity prevailed and there was no harmony with the rest of Abraham's descendants, so **his ancestors** in verse 17 must have been people of his own clan — contemporaries. The comment about **joined his ancestors in death** is used elsewhere only of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Aaron.
- People who descended from Ishmael did not mix with even their distant kin according to verse 18. So the story about this is dropped and we return to the mainline story of Abraham and his descendants.

### ISAAC PRAYS FOR A SON

(19) This is the account of the family of Isaac, the son of Abraham. (20) When Isaac was forty years old, he married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from

**Paddan-aram and the sister of Laban the Aramean. (21) Isaac pleaded with the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was unable to have children. The LORD answered Isaac's prayer, and Rebekah became pregnant with twins.**

- **Isaac** is the only one of the Patriarchs that never set foot outside of the Promised Land. Abraham and Jacob had made trips to Egypt.
- **Isaac** knew that he had to have a son because of the covenant God had made with **Abraham**. The Lord acted on Isaac's prayer for a son. **Isaac** was certainly showing his faith in the **Lord** at this point. People of that time normally prayed to a local idol such as Ashtoreth, sometimes offering their firstborn's life to appease the deity.
- **Isaac** did not take life into his own hands like **Abraham** in order to have a **son** of promise. He waited on God to take the lead. He did not take a concubine like **Abraham**.

### **SONS STRUGGLE BEFORE BIRTH**

**(22) But the two children struggled with each other in her womb. So she went to ask the LORD about it. "Why is this happening to me?" she asked. (23) And the LORD told her,**

**"The sons in your womb will become two nations.  
From the very beginning, the two nations will be rivals.  
One nation will be stronger than the other;  
and your older son will serve your younger son."**

**(24) And when the time came to give birth, Rebekah discovered that she did indeed have twins!**

- The **struggle** was a foretaste of the future. Jacob and Esau were never friends. One person familiar with the Hebrew language uses words like crushing, and thrusting, and smashing.....something pretty violent.

**"Anyone who touches this man or his wife will be put to death!"**

- This **Abimelek** also appears to be a God worshiper who keeps his laws. The **death** penalty was for anyone harming Isaac or Rebekah.

### **THE LORD BLESSED ISAAC**

**(12) When Isaac planted his crops that year, he harvested a hundred times more grain than he planted, for the LORD blessed him. (13) He became a very rich man, and his wealth continued to grow. (14) He acquired so many flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and servants that the Philistines became jealous of him.**

- The Lord enabled **Isaac's** wealth to grow in spite of his sin. He was a farmer as well as a sheep and cattle raiser. Now he became the target of envy. His wells were plugged.

**(15) So the Philistines filled up all of Isaac's wells with dirt. These were the wells that had been dug by the servants of his father, Abraham. (16) Finally, Abimelech ordered Isaac to leave the country. "Go somewhere else," he said, "for you have become too powerful for us."**

- The king ordered **Isaac** to move his people away from the **Philistine** area.

**(17) So Isaac moved away to the Gerar Valley, where he set up their tents and settled down. (18) He reopened the wells his father had dug, which the Philistines had filled in after Abraham's death. Isaac also restored the names Abraham had given them.**

- The old **names** of the wells were restored to make it clear who the wells belonged to. **Isaac** hadn't moved far enough as seen in the next verses:

**(19) Isaac's servants also dug in the Gerar Valley and discovered a well of fresh water. (20) But then the shepherds from Gerar came and claimed the spring. "This**



### “SHE’S MY SISTER”

(8) But some time later, Abimelech, king of the Philistines, looked out his window and saw Isaac caressing Rebekah. (9) Immediately, Abimelech called for Isaac and exclaimed, "She is obviously your wife! Why did you say, 'She is my sister'?" "Because I was afraid someone would kill me to get her from me," Isaac replied.

- **Abimelech** saw through the deception because **Isaac** was **caressing Rebekah**. What he was doing was perfectly legal and moral - but it revealed the relationship to onlookers. **Abimelech** then summoned **Isaac** and questioned him severely. **Isaac** revealed his **fear** and lack of relying on the Lord to solve the problem.

(10) "How could you do this to us?" Abimelech exclaimed. "One of my people might easily have taken your wife and slept with her, and you would have made us guilty of great sin." (11) Then Abimelech issued a public proclamation:

- The **Lord** told her, maybe in a dream, that her sons would head up **two nations**. She delivered **twin** boys as God had said.
- Here the **Lord** spoke directly with **Rebecca**. More often, God revealed his plans to men. **Rebecca** knew that Jacob would carry the covenant line. So often in the flow of the story, it is the younger son that God chooses. Abel-Cain, Isaac-Ishmael, Joseph and his older brothers, Moses-Aaron.

(25) The first one was very red at birth and covered with thick hair like a fur coat. So they named him Esau. (26) Then the other twin was born with his hand grasping Esau's heel. So they named him Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when the twins were born.

- The brothers were very different in appearance, even at birth. The second was holding his brother's **heel**. Was he trying to restrain his brother? **Bradford** brings us help with the language: "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 lovable 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."
- **Jacob** is absent in the next chapter, but present for the following 10 chapters.

### THE PARENTS HAD FAVORITES

(27) As the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter. He was an outdoorsman, but Jacob had a quiet temperament, preferring to stay at home. (28) Isaac loved Esau because

**he enjoyed eating the wild game Esau brought home, but Rebekah loved Jacob.**

- Favoritism is seen. Daddy's boy and momma's boy. And trouble is coming as a result.

**(29) One day when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau arrived home from the wilderness exhausted and hungry.**

**(30) Esau said to Jacob, "I'm starved! Give me some of that red stew!" (This is how Esau got his other name, Edom, which means "red.") (31) "All right," Jacob replied, "but trade me your rights as the firstborn son."**

- The birthright involved:
  - Headship of the family.
  - The family priesthood.
  - A double portion of the wealth.
  - Designation as the covenant (with Abraham) channel.
- **Jacob** valued the birthright, but was unscrupulous in the way he achieved it. **Jacob** shows his lack of faith in God and His timing by forcing the issue.

**(32) "Look, I'm dying of starvation!" said Esau. "What good is my birthright to me now?" 33) But Jacob said, "First you must swear that your birthright is mine." So Esau swore an oath, thereby selling all his rights as the firstborn to his brother, Jacob. (34) Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and lentil stew. Esau ate the meal, then got up and left. He showed contempt for his rights as the firstborn.**

- **Esau** did not care about the covenant with Abraham. His present hunger controlled him. His descendants were the Edomites. King Herod of the New Testament was an Edomite.

### THE LORD RESTATES THE COVENANT

**(26:1) A severe famine now struck the land, as had happened before in Abraham's time. So Isaac moved to Gerar, where Abimelech, king of the Philistines, lived.**

- The land promised to **Abraham** was subject to famines.
- This Abimelek is probably the son or grandson of the Abimelek Abraham had dealings with. His name is actually a title.

**(2) The LORD appeared to Isaac and said, "Do not go down to Egypt, but do as I tell you. (3) Live here as a foreigner in this land, and I will be with you and bless you. I hereby confirm that I will give all these lands to you and your descendants, just as I solemnly promised Abraham, your father. (4) I will cause your descendants to become as numerous as the stars of the sky, and I will give them all these lands. And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed. (5) I will do this because Abraham listened to Me and obeyed all My requirements, commands, decrees, and instructions."**

- **Isaac** must have been planning on moving toward **Egypt** to locate food. Vs. 2-3. His faith that God would provide food was being tested. God repeats the essence of the covenant and warned **Isaac** not to leave the land. **All the nations of the earth** will be blessed through the **descendants** of **Isaac**. It is clear that they will not die here of starvation. Instead, the coming Messiah is hinted at.

**(6) So Isaac stayed in Gerar. (7) When the men who lived there asked Isaac about his wife, Rebekah, he said, "She is my sister." He was afraid to say, "She is my wife." He thought, "They will kill me to get her, because she is so beautiful."**

- The old story repeated. **Isaac** did not have a "**she's my sister**" excuse like Abraham. Killing a man for his wife happened, especially in cities where kings ruled as despots. **Rebekah's** beauty was remarkable and a cause of fear for his life for **Isaac**.
- Deception is a trait of this family. Abraham and Sarah did it, here **Isaac** and there is more to come.