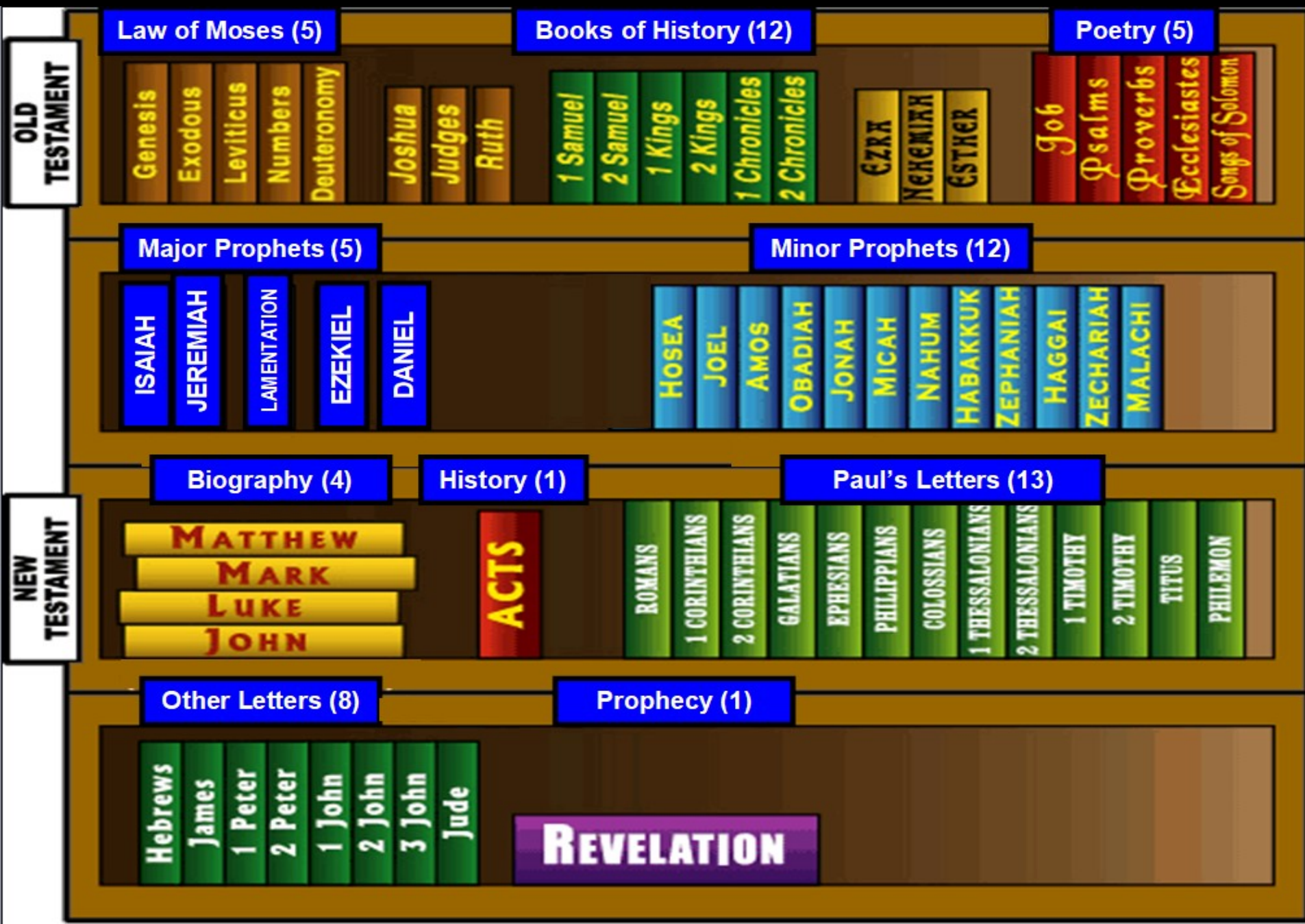


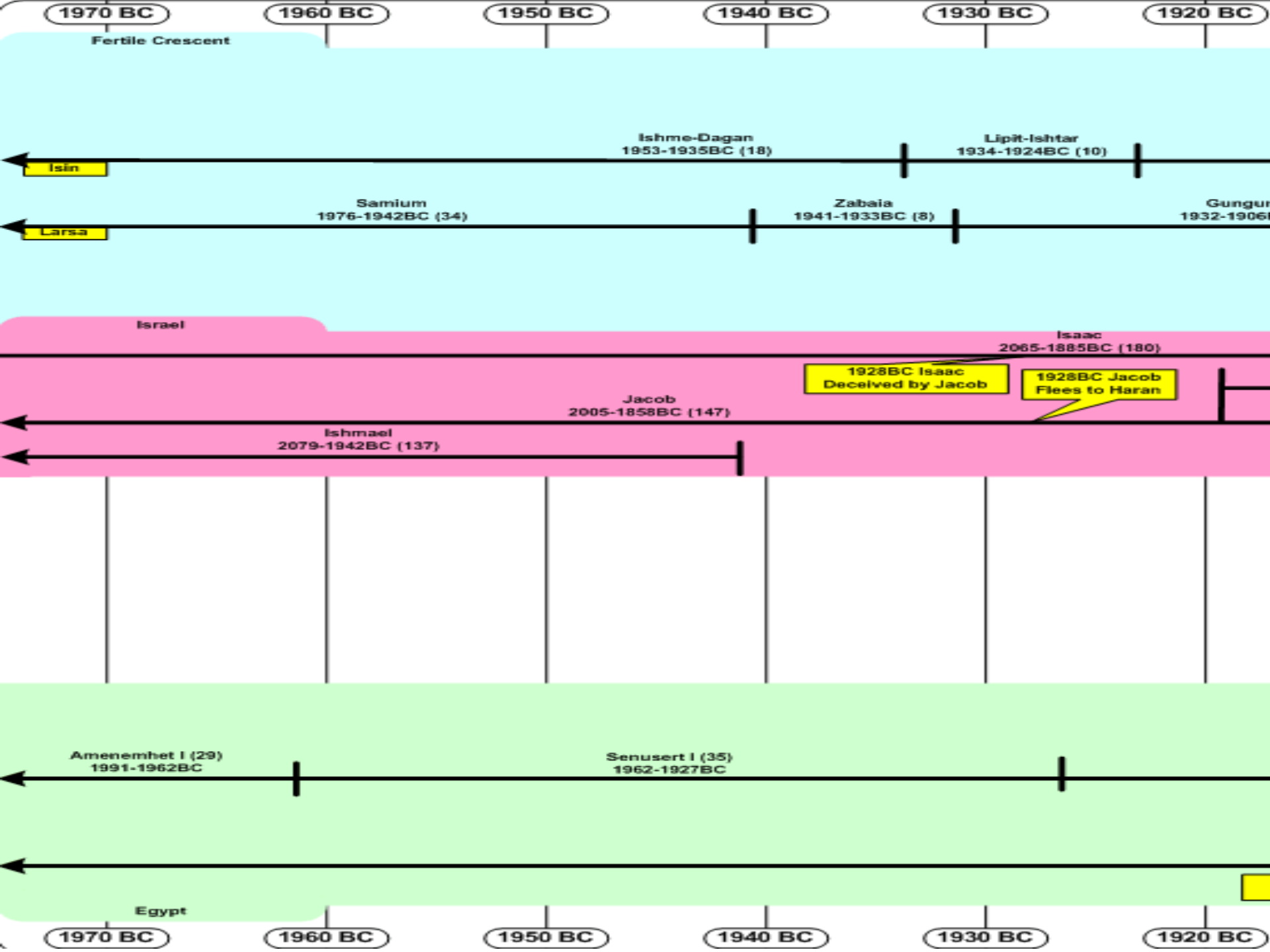
# **Patriarchal Age – The Patriarchs.**

**Genesis  
25:19; to 26:35;  
Esau and Jacob.  
Graeme Morrison**



# Remember The BIBLE is a LIBRARY of 66 Books.







**JACOB AND ESAU** are the next two famous Bible characters in line.

Jacob, one of Isaac's twin sons, eventually became the father of twelve sons.

Among these twelve was Joseph, one of the best known men of the Bible.

Genesis 35:22-26;

# THE PATRIARCHAL AGE.



**CREATION  
GARDEN of EDEN  
SACRIFICE FOR  
*SIN*  
WICKEDNESS  
THE FLOOD  
ABRAHAM & ISAAC  
JACOB & JOSEPH  
JOSEPH IN EGYPT  
MOSES BIRTH  
MOSES FREES  
ISRAEL**



**God Spoke To the Fathers**



# **Chronology Note:**

- How old was Abraham when Isaac was born?  
(21:5;)
- How old was Isaac when his sons were born?  
(25:26;)
- Therefore, how old was Abraham when Jacob and Esau were born?
- How old was Abraham when he died? (25:7;)
- Did Abraham live to see his grandsons?

# **ISAAC, JACOB AND ESAU; 25:19;**

**God made three main promises to Abraham when he asked him to leave the Chaldeans.**

**These three promises were:-**



**I will make you a great nation.**

**I will bless your seed.**

**I will give you this land as an inheritance.**

**In answer to PRAYER**

**Rebekah gave birth to twin boys.**

**The first came out red and hairy. Esau. (hairy.)**

**The second came out holding his brother's heel, Jacob. (the one who takes by the heel.)**

# **The Descendants of Isaac. Gen 25:19-26;**

**The process of election** has been apparent  
in the previous verses.

**God chose Sarah**, not Hagar or Keturah,  
to be the **mother of the child of promise**.

**God likewise chose Isaac** long before  
he was ever born **to be the heir of Abraham**.

In Gen 25:19-26; we see **the process of election continues**.  
Here it is **Jacob who is designated as the child of promise**  
as opposed to his twin brother **Esau**, the one who by  
natural course of events would have been heir of promise.

**A Key element in the idea of election for  
those who are chosen / elected / predestined:-  
It is always for SERVICE not for SALVATION.**



## **JACOB AND ESAU'S BIRTH; Gen 25:21-26;**

**21; “Now Isaac pleaded with the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived.”**

**22; “But the children struggled together within her; and she said, “If all is well, why am I like this?”  
So she went to inquire of the Lord.”**

**23; “And the Lord said to her: “Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger.”**

## **JACOB AND ESAU'S BIRTH; Gen 25:21-26;**

**24; “So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb.**

**25; “And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau.**

**26; “Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when the twins were born.”**

# **JACOB AND ESAU'S BIRTH; Gen 25:21-26;**

**Isaac married Rebekah** when he was 40, but it was **20 years later** before she bore him children.

During her pregnancy **Rebekah was perplexed** by the **intense struggle** that took place within her womb, **so she inquired of God as to why?**

The Hebrew term for the struggle implies an **intense activity** in the womb which **Rebekah understood to be far greater than normal, and thus of great significance.**

# **JACOB AND ESAU'S BIRTH; Gen 25:21-26;**

**How did Rebekah inquire of the Lord?**

**“There are very different opinions  
as to the manner in which she made this inquiry.**

**Some think it was simply by secret prayer;  
but the phrase to inquire of the Lord,  
in general usage signifies more than praying,  
and from its being said that she went to inquire,**

**It is more probable that she resorted  
to some established place,  
or some qualified person  
for the purpose of consultation.**



# **JACOB AND ESAU'S BIRTH; Gen 25:21-26;**

We are told, **1 Samuel 9:9**; that “Beforetime in Israel when a man went **to inquire of God**, so he said, Come and let us **go to the seer**; for he that is now **called a prophet**, was beforetime called a seer.”

“As **Abraham** was now living, and no doubt sustained **the character of a prophet**, Genesis 20:7; she may have gone to him, and inquired of the Lord through his means.”  
**George Bush**, Notes on Genesis (Minneapolis: James and Klock Publishing Co., Reprint, 1976), II, p. 62.

The answer from the Lord **verified the Significance of the activity** within Rebekah's womb:  
**(Genesis 25:23;)**

# The Birthright and the blessing; Gen 25:23;

“Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples shall be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; **The older shall serve the younger.**”

Without all the sophisticated medical tests employed today, **God informed Rebekah that she was to give birth to twins.**

**Each of the children** would be the father of a nation of people. Of these two nations, one would prevail over the other.

Of these two sons, **the older would not, as was the custom, become pre-eminent.**



**God in His foreknowledge knew what would happen.**  
**Romans 9:10-13;**

# **The Birthright and the blessing; Gen 25:23;**

**Normally, the first born son would have been the heir through whom the covenant blessings would have passed.**

**While the father could designate a younger son to be the owner of the birthright, (Genesis 48:13 20;) this was the exception, not the rule. Also, the oldest son could sell his birthright, as Esau did.**

**“Now the sale of the birthright or, as it was here, its exchange was an accepted custom in the patriarchal period.**

**At a later time the supplanting of the firstborn was forbidden.**

**(Deut. 21:15 17;)**

# **The Birthright and the blessing; Gen 25:23;**

It has been **pointed out above** that exchange or sale of the birthright was done in Nuzi, **explaining patriarchal custom.**

**At Nuzi it is recorded that one Gulpazah traded his inheritance for immediate possession of three sheep from his brother Tupkitilla.”**

Harold Stigers, A Commentary on Genesis.

(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), p. 211.

We must acknowledge that **God in His omniscience knew all of the deeds of both these sons from eternity past**, Paul says that the choice of Jacob over Esau had nothing to do with their works. **Jacob was chosen in the womb and without regard to the works passed or future.**



# **The Birthright and the blessing; Gen 25:23;**

**In Romans 9 the Apostle Paul referred to this incident as an illustration of the principle of election for service:-**

**“And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac, for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God’s purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, ‘The older will serve the younger.’ (Romans 9:10-12;)**

**See special study on Election,  
Predestination and Foreknowledge**

# **The Birthright and the blessing; Gen 25:23;**

The events surrounding the birth of the twins gave further evidence to **the truth of the words of the Lord spoken to Rebekah before their birth:-**

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

“Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau. And afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau’s heel, so his name was called Jacob; and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them. (Genesis 25:24-26;)

The Hebrew word to describe **the colour of Esau** sounded **similar to Edom** and may have prepared the way for **his nickname** as it was decided in 25:30;

# **The Birthright and the blessing; Gen 25:23;**

**Jacob** came forth from the womb  
grasping the heel of his brother **Esau**.

**Jacob's name** was suggested by the Hebrew word for 'heel.'

**Later events**, such as the barter of the birthright  
**Gen 25:27-34**; indicate that the name, taken in its negative  
sense, referred to **Jacob's grasping and conniving nature**.

**Jacob and Esau Grow. (25:27-28;)**

**Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents.**  
**Some might describe him as a 'mothers boy.'**

**Isaac loved Esau and Rebekah loved Jacob,**  
**this partiality** shown to each son,  
**will play a significant role in their story.**

# **The Barter of the Birthright. Gen 25:27-34;**

**In the life of Abraham the birth of Ishmael was an event which taught the patriarch that God's blessings are not wrought by self effort but by trusting God.**

**In Jacob's life the incident in which he outwitted his brother into selling his birthright served the same purpose.**

**It was a shrewd bargain that Jacob struck, but it was not the means of bringing about God's blessing.**



# **The Barter of the Birthright. Gen 25:27-34;**

**In addition** to the events surrounding the birth of the twins, **three factors played heavily in the relationship of the two boys.**

**First, the boys had very different dispositions. Esau** seems to have been a masculine, outdoor type man who loved to do the things a father could take pride in. **He was a skillful hunter, and he knew how to handle himself in the outdoors.**

**He was a real macho man,**  
the kind of son a father would swell  
with pride **to talk about among his friends.**

# **The Barter of the Birthright. Gen 25:27-34;**

**Jacob was entirely different.**

**While Esau seems to have been aggressive,  
daring, and flamboyant.**

**Jacob appears to be just the opposite:-**

**Quiet, pensive, more interested  
in **staying at home** than in venturing out  
making great physical conquests.**

**In the solitude of his tent **Jacob**  
could **mentally reason out** how to **get ahead**  
without getting his hands dirty  
and **without taking dangerous risks.****

# **The Barter of the Birthright. Gen 25:27-34;**

**Not that he had no ambition to get ahead,  
quite the contrary; but Jacob  
couldn't see the sense in tracking  
about the wilderness just to bag some game.**

**The second factor which tended  
to separate the two sons was  
the divided loyalty between their parents.**

**Isaac seems to have been the outdoor type himself; at least  
he had an appetite for the wild game that Esau brought home.  
(Gen 25:28;)**

**Esau was the kind of son that Isaac  
could proudly take with him wherever he went.**

# **The Barter of the Birthright. Gen 25:27-34;**

**Rebekah, on the other hand, favoured Jacob.**  
She probably thought Esau crude and uncultured.

**Jacob was a much more refined person,**  
gentle and kind, the type of son  
a mother would be proud of.

Besides, Jacob probably  
spent more time **at home** than Esau did.

# **The Barter of the Birthright. Gen 25:27-34;**

**Jacob buys the birthright. (25:29-34;)**

**Esau came in from hunting  
and was exhausted and hungry.**

**Esau asked Jacob for some of his red stew.  
Jacob offered to trade the food for Esau's birthright.**

**Esau agreed and sold his birthright to Jacob.**

# **The Barter of the Birthright. Gen 25:27-34;**

Each parent seems to have **identified too much** with a particular son, thus **creating divisions which would be devastating.**

**This favouritism** also brought about **disharmony** between **Isaac and his wife.** **Later Rebekah was to conspire with Jacob to deceive her husband.** (chapter 27;)

**The third factor** which Moses recorded for us in chapter 25 was **the under handed means** by which Jacob wrested **the birthright** from his brother.

**While Esau had been out in the field, Jacob had been at home preparing a stew.**

## **The Barter of the Birthright. Gen 25:27-34;**

Weary and famished, though hardly at death's door,  
**Esau was enticed by the fragrant aroma of the meal.**

Esau greedily pleaded for some of **“that red stuff.”**  
Rather than **showing his brother the hospitality**  
**due even a stranger,** Jacob saw this  
as **an opportunity to gain the advantage.**

29. “Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. 30. And Esau said to Jacob, “Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary.” Therefore his name was called Edom. 31. But Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright as of this day.”



# **The Barter of the Birthright. Gen 25:27-34;**

32. “And Esau said, “Look, I am about to die;  
so what is this birthright to me?”

33. Then Jacob said, “Swear to me as of this day.”  
So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.”

34. “And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils;  
then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way.  
**Thus Esau despised his birthright.”**

“lest there be any fornicator or **profane person like Esau**,  
who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.  
For you know that afterward, when he wanted  
to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found  
no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently  
with tears.” **Hebrews 12:16-17;**

# **The Barter of the Birthright. Gen 25:27-34;**

Here Jacob's greedy, grasping disposition rose to the forefront.

**Without a hint of shame**

Jacob bartered,

**“First sell me your birthright.” (25:31;)**



With this **Esau's carnal nature emerged,**  
“Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then  
is the birthright to me?” (25:32;)

With an **exaggerated estimation**  
of his **physical condition** and need and a **minimal**  
**appreciation for the value of his birthright,** Esau  
was willing to exchange his destiny for a dinner.

# **The Barter of the Birthright. Gen 25:27-34;**

**Jacob was not willing to let Esau take the occasion as casually as he was inclined to; therefore, he made him swear a solemn oath declaring the sale of the birthright.**

**This done, the meal was served, and Esau went on his way.**

**As Moses concluded his report of this event, we find his estimation of Esau's character: "Thus Esau despised his birthright." (25:34;)**

**And so it is that the writer to the Hebrews can speak of Esau as a man who has no appreciation whatsoever for spiritual and eternal things.**

# **The Barter of the Birthright. Gen 25:27-34;**

**“See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birth right for a single meal. (Hebrews 12:15-16;)**

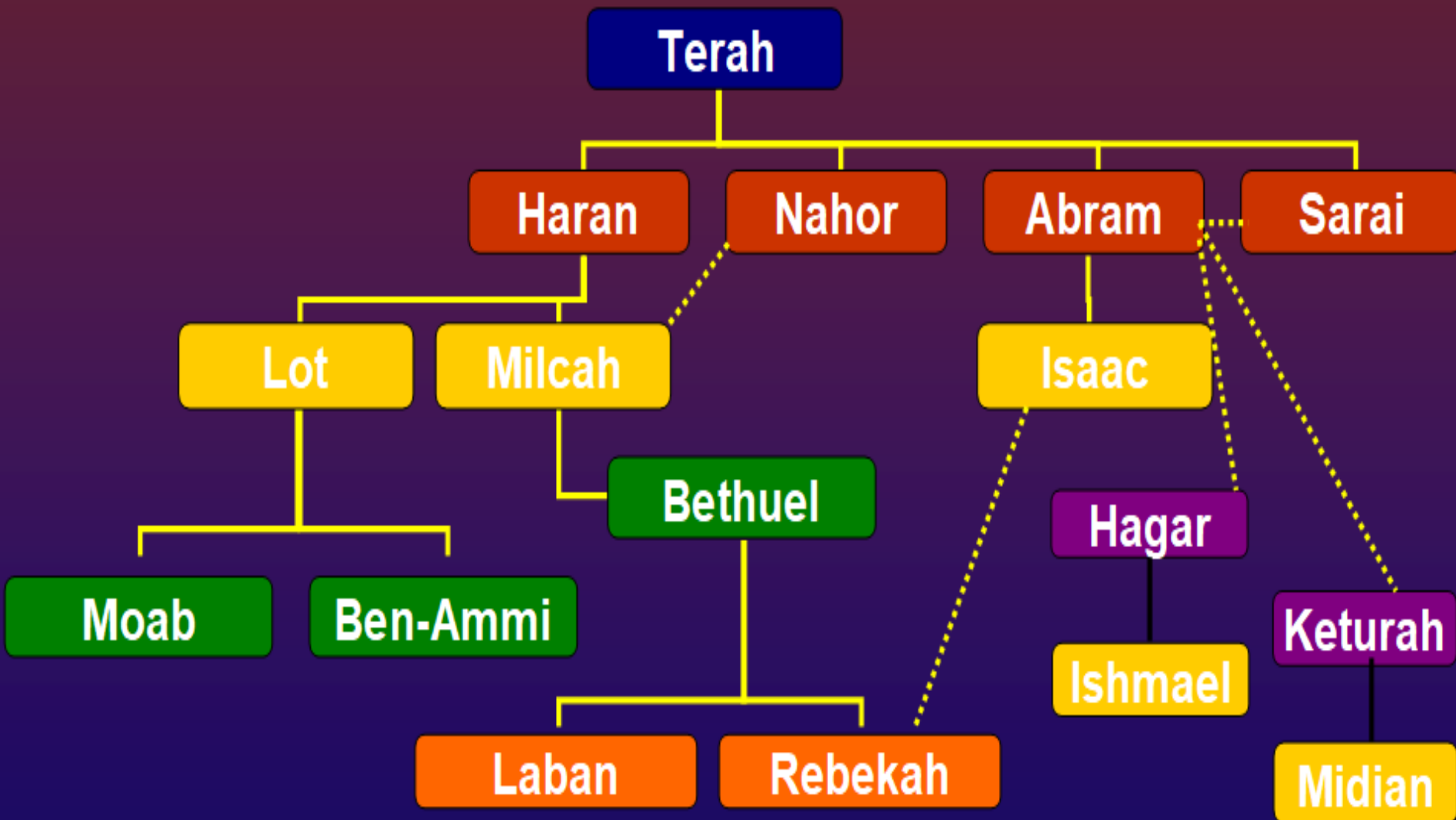
**One cannot avoid the fact that this chapter clearly teaches the principle of divine election for service.**

**Out of all the sons of Abraham, God chose Isaac to be the heir of promise and this even before the birth of the boy. (Gen 17:21;)**

**Isaac, not Ishmael nor Zimran nor Jokshan nor Medan nor any of the other sons of Abraham was to be the heir of promise. Sarah, not Hagar nor Keturah was to be the mother of this child.**

# The Barter of the Birthright. Gen 25:27-34;

## Terah's Family Tree.



# **The Barter of the Birthright. Gen 25:27-34;**

**God's choice is not determined  
by His knowledge of the good works  
that the chosen will later accomplish.**

**Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob  
all had very visible faults.  
Their conduct often was not any better  
than that of any other person.**

**Yet, at the conclusion of the account  
Moses did not say that Esau sold his birthright  
because God had predetermined this to happen,  
but because Esau “despised his birthright.”  
(Gen 25:34;)**

# **The Barter of the Birthright. Gen 25:27-34;**

**The message of the Bible is that all of us deserve the eternal wrath of God for our sins. (Romans 3:10,18,23; 6:23;)**

**The message of the gospel is that God has provided a solution for the sins of man.**

**That solution is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross of Calvary where He bore the punishment that we deserve. He offers us the righteousness we lack. (Rom 3:21-26; 2 Cor 5:21;)**

**Our response to the gospel through our faith and obedience ensures our salvation if we then remain faithful.**



# **Isaac Walks in His Father's Steps. Gen 26:1-35;**

**Because of famine, Isaac moved to Gerar.  
(26:1,6;)**

**God spoke to Isaac and warned him  
not to go into Egypt.**

**God repeated the promises  
previously made to Abraham.**

# **Isaac Walks in His Father's Steps. Gen 26:1-35;**

**There is a world of difference  
between a rerun and an instant replay.**

**A rerun is simply seeing the same thing over again.**

**An instant replay is seeing something over,  
but not all of it. It is looking at certain events again,  
usually much more carefully.**

**The critics have tended to view Genesis 26;  
as a rerun, and not a very good one at that.**

## **Isaac Walks in His Father's Steps. Gen 26:1-35;**

**They, of course, are right in recognizing the similarities between Isaac's experiences in this chapter and those in the life of Abraham in the previous chapters.**

**However, they misinterpret the similarities in such a way as to suggest that they do little, if anything, to benefit us.**

**Indeed, they even question the historicity of these events in the life of Isaac.**

# Isaac Walks in His Father's Steps. Gen 26:1-35;

## CANAAN IN THE DAYS OF THE PATRIARCHS

Scale of Miles  
0 10 20 30 40

The Great Sea



Canaanites

Canaanites

Wilderness of Paran

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are thought to be located beneath the shallow waters at the south end of the Dead Sea. This area was called the Vale of Siddim.

Map by permission of S. Scott Richardson • Russellville, AL



## **Isaac Walks in His Father's Steps. Gen 26:1-35;**

Early in the **life of Abraham** a **famine** set in motion a sequence of events which greatly shaped the life of the patriarch.

**Likewise, a famine occurred early in the record of the life of Isaac:**

“Now there was a famine in the land, besides the previous famine that had occurred in the days of Abraham. So Isaac went to Gerar, to Abimelech king of the Philistines.

**(Genesis 26:1;)**

**Isaac Walks in His Father's Steps. Gen 26:1-35;**

**This famine is specified to be a different one than that which happened during the life of Abraham.**

**Taking this at face value,  
we cannot agree with the critics,  
who see only one famine variously reported.**

**In an attempt to preserve his wealth  
in the form of many cattle,  
Isaac went to Gerar to avoid the famine.**

## **Isaac Walks in His Father's Steps. Gen 26:1-35;**

**While in Gerar, or perhaps even before,  
Isaac decided to go down to Egypt  
just as his father had done. (Gen 12:10ff;)**

**This was not according to the plan which  
God had for Isaac, and so He appeared to him  
with this word of instruction and promise:**



## **Isaac Walks in His Father's Steps. Gen 26:1-35;**

**“Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land of which I shall tell you. Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham.”**

**“And I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My Laws.”**

**(Genesis 26:2b 5;)**

## **Isaac Walks in His Father's Steps. Gen 26:1-35;**

**In verse 2 God commanded Isaac to remain in Gerar for a time. In verse 3 We understand God to have promised Isaac that He would guide him to the land where he should go in God's good time.**

**The remainder of God's revelation is a reiteration of the Abrahamic covenant.**

**To us these words are not only familiar but almost redundant.**

**Again and again we have seen God confirm and clarify His covenant with Abraham.**

**(Gen 13:14, 17; 15:1; 18 21; 17:1, 7ff; 21:12; 22:17 18), but let us not overlook the fact that, so far as we are told, this is the first time God has spoken thus to Isaac.**

**Gen 26:5;** “I will do this because Abraham listened to me and obeyed all my requirements, commands, regulations, and laws.”

**For Isaac this was no dull recital  
but a thrilling assurance that what God  
had promised Abraham, He now promised his son.  
This is a covenant with Isaac.**

**26:5; Reminds us that the blessings  
of the covenant are, to some degree, a result of  
Abraham’s faithfulness and obedience to God.**

**Of this Isaac was a witness. (cf. chapter 22;)  
Implied in 26:5; is the necessity  
for Isaac to believe God’s promise,  
accept it as a personal relationship,  
and to live obediently, even as his father had.**

**Gen 26:6; “So Isaac stayed in Gerar.”**

**The first step in this life of obedience was to remain in Gerar, which Isaac did.**

**It is significant that Moses, who recorded in the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Law) the giving of the Law, used the terms “charge, commandments, statutes and laws” with regard to Abraham’s relationship with God.**

**Leupold says:- “By the use of these terms Moses, who purposes to use them all very frequently in his later books, indicates that “laws, commandments, charges, and statutes” are nothing new but were involved already in patriarchal religion.”**

## **Isaac's Conflict with Abimelech. Gen 26:7-11;**

**Isaac told the men of Gerar  
that Rebekah was his sister.**

**Abimelech saw Isaac and Rebekah together  
and realized this was not true.**

**Abimelech issued a command of death  
to anyone who touched Rebekah.**

## **A Repetition of Abraham's Sin. Gen 26:7-11;**

**What? Again? I'm afraid so.** Strange as it may seem,  
the same old **sin of deception** raises  
its ugly head for **the third time** in chapter 26.

If nothing else proves it, this does **Isaac is a son of his father.** Frightened concerning his own safety,  
**Isaac succumbs to the temptation**  
**to pass off his wife as his sister.**

**In doing this he was willing to risk**  
**Rebekah's purity as the price**  
**for his personal protection.**

## **A Repetition of Abraham's Sin. Gen 26:7-11;**

**The similarities between this sin of Isaac and that of his father Abraham are numerous.**

**Both sinned in the presence of Abimelech, and both were rebuked by the ruler of the Philistines.**

**Both had a beautiful wife and feared for their own safety, thinking that they might be killed so that someone could marry their wife.**

**Both lied by saying that their wife was their sister. It would also appear that neither Abraham nor Isaac recognized the gravity of their sin or fully repented of it.**



## **A Repetition of Abraham's Sin. Gen 26:7-11;**

**The differences between the sin of Abraham and that of Isaac cannot be overlooked.**

**These differences verify the fact that two different deceptions took place in the land of the Philistines:- one by Abraham and the other by his son.**

**There seems to be little doubt that there are two different "Abimelech's" in these chapters of Genesis.**

**Many years had passed since Abraham stood without adequate excuse before Abimelech.**

## **A Repetition of Abraham's Sin. Gen 26:7-11;**

We would be on safe ground to assume that the term **“Abimelech”** is a title of office, like **“Pharaoh,”** rather than a given name.

The same could be said for the term **“Phicol.”** 26:26;  
Another consideration is that  
**Sons were often named after their grandfathers.**

**Either of these possibilities** would readily explain the fact that the names **“Abimelech”** and **“Phicol”** are found in chapter 26; as well as in chapter 20;

## **A Repetition of Abraham's Sin. Gen 26:7-11;**

**Abraham's policy of deception was just that:-  
a policy established before he entered into  
any danger. (Genesis 12:11-13; 20:13;) From the  
very outset Abraham introduced Sarah as his sister.**

**Isaac, however, waited until he was approached  
concerning Rebekah. At this point  
his confidence left him, and he resorted to a lie:**

**When the men of the place asked about his wife,  
“he said, “She is my sister,” for he was afraid to say,  
“My wife,” thinking “The men of the place might kill  
me on account of Rebekah, for she is beautiful.”  
(Genesis 26:7;)**

## **A Repetition of Abraham's Sin. Gen 26:7-11;**

**We are not told what part Rebekah played in all of this.** It is possible that she refused to actively cooperate, thus creating suspicions in the minds of the Philistines.

**Sarah was taken as a wife twice,** but physical intimacy was divinely restrained.

In the case of Rebekah, no one took her for a wife. God sharply warned Abimelech when he took Sarah, but here **Abimelech learned of the deception** by observing the conduct of Isaac with Rebekah. **Isaac did not treat her like a sister, but like a wife.**

**Gen 26:8-9;** “But some time later, Abimelech, king of the Philistines, looked out a window and saw Isaac fondling Rebekah. Abimelech called for Isaac and exclaimed, “She is obviously your wife! Why did you say she was your sister?”

There may well have been **a hint of doubt already entertained** by Abimelech and perhaps others of the Philistines, for **when he saw Isaac caressing Rebekah** he said, “Behold, certainly she is your wife!

The word used here, which is rendered “**caressing**” by the NASV, is interesting because its root is the same word from which the **name Isaac** is derived. **Isaac (to laugh) was caressing (“sporting,” KJV) Rebekah.**

In Genesis 39:17; and Exodus 32:6; this word is used by Moses to refer to “**play,**” which has rather obvious **sexual overtones.**

**Gen 26:8-9;** “But some time later, Abimelech, king of the Philistines, looked out a window and saw Isaac fondling Rebekah. Abimelech called for Isaac and exclaimed, “She is obviously your wife! Why did you say she was your sister?”

**The king’s way** of stating the case implies suspicions that he has held right along:

‘Look (here), she certainly is your wife,’  
A shade of thought caught by Meek  
when he renders: **‘So she really is your wife.’**  
Leupold, Genesis, II, p. 722.

**Abimelech’s ethics** appear to be based  
on **a higher standard than Isaac’s.**

**Gen 26:9;** “Abimelech called for Isaac and exclaimed,  
“She is obviously your wife! Why did you say she was your sister?”

God had not spoken threateningly here  
to Abimelech as He had done when  
Sarah was taken into the Philistine ruler’s harem.

**Then Abimelech** had been told that he was “**as good  
as dead**” (Gen 20:3;) if he so much as touched Sarah.

There is no sword hanging proverbially  
over the head of Abimelech here.

Nevertheless, he viewed the taking of a man’s wife  
as sin, and one of great consequence.

**Abimelech seemed to regard marital purity  
higher than Isaac did.**

**Gen 26:11;** “Then Abimelech made a public proclamation:  
“Anyone who harms this man or his wife will die!”

After discovering **Isaac's deception**,  
Abimelech ordered that neither Isaac  
nor his wife was to be harmed.

**Isaac was not instructed to leave,  
nor was he encouraged to stay.  
He was simply tolerated.**



## **Return to the Place of Blessing. Gen 26:12-25;**

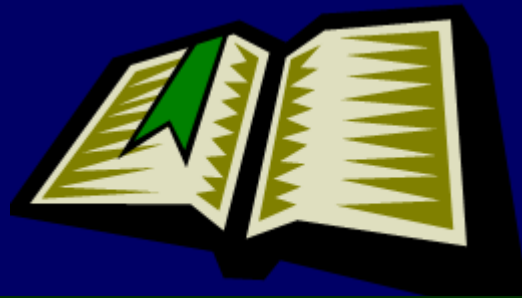
In **26:2**; God had promised to **guide Isaac** to the place where he should dwell.

**Little did Isaac realize just how God was to lead him back to the place of His promise and presence.**

To a large degree it was by means of adversity and opposition. **On the surface, opposition seemed like the last thing which Isaac experienced.**

**Staying on in Gerar** after Abimelech had confronted him, **Isaac harvested a bumper crop:**

**Gen 26:12-14;** “That year Isaac's crops were tremendous! He harvested a hundred times more grain than he planted, for the Lord blessed him. He became a rich man, and his wealth only continued to grow, for he had possessions of flocks and herds and a great household, so that the Philistines envied him.”



**In spite of Isaac's deception,** God poured out His **blessings** upon him. For reasons we shall speak of later, **Abimelech failed to recognize Isaac's prosperity as the blessing of God.**

**All Abimelech knew was that Isaac was a powerful figure, one whom he did not want to contend with.**

**Gen 26:15;** “and they filled up all of Isaac's wells with earth. These were the wells that had been dug by the servants of his father, Abraham.”

**Abimelech knew** also that **the Philistines were growing uneasy** about **Isaac's presence** in the land.

**Isaac was rather threatening personally** not only **because of his prosperity and power** but also **because of his father Abraham.**

**Digging a well** was considered tantamount to a **claim of ownership of the land** on which it was located. **It enabled a man to dwell there and to sustain herds.**

**Rather than recognize this claim,**  
**the Philistines sought to wipe it out**  
**by filling up the wells dug by Abraham.**

**Gen 26:16;** “And Abimelech asked Isaac to leave the country. “Go,” he said, “for you have become too rich and powerful for us.”

**Their desire to overthrow all claim on their land was so intense that they would rather fill in a well, an asset of great value in such an arid land, than to allow this claim to remain unchallenged.**

**The sentiments of the Philistines were concisely expressed in Abimelech’s terse suggestion that Isaac depart from Gerar. (v16;)**

**Rather than fight for possession of this property, Isaac retreated. The meek would inherit this land, but in God’s good time.**

**Gen 26:18-19;** “He reopened the wells his father had dug, which the Philistines had filled in after Abraham's death. Isaac renamed them, using the names Abraham had given them. His shepherds also dug in the Gerar Valley and found a gushing spring.”

It would seem that **Isaac had developed a strategy** by which he determined where he was to travel.

Essentially, **Isaac refused to stay where there was conflict and hostility.** Being a man with many animals to tend, **he must be at a place where water was available in abundance.**

He not only **re opened the wells** once dug by his father, but **he dug other wells also.**

If a well was dug that produced water and **use of this well was not disputed,** **Isaac was inclined to stay at that place.**

**Gen 26:20-21;** “then the local shepherds came and claimed the spring. “This is our water,” they said, and they argued over it with Isaac's herdsmen. So Isaac named the well ‘Argument,’ because they had argued about it with him. Isaac's men then dug another well, but again there was a fight over it. So Isaac named it ‘Opposition.’”

While **Isaac may not have realized it** for some time, it was the disputes over the ownership of the wells he dug or reopened that served to **guide him in the direction of the land of promise.**

**To Isaac these wells were a necessity for survival, but to the Philistines these were a claim to the land.**

**Opposition** was thus humanly explainable, but it was **a means of guidance as well.**

**Gen 26:20-21;** “then the local shepherds came and claimed the spring. “This is our water,” they said, and they argued over it with Isaac's herdsmen. So Isaac named the well ‘Argument,’ because they had argued about it with him. Isaac's men then dug another well, but again there was a fight over it. So Isaac named it ‘Opposition.’”

In the **valley of Gerar Isaac dug a well** that produced **“living water,”** that is, water that originated **from a spring** - running water, not simply water that was contained.

**The Philistine herdsmen disputed with the herdsmen of Isaac over it, so Isaac moved on.**

**Another well was dug, 26:21; and there was yet another dispute.**

**Gen 26:22;** “Abandoning that one, he dug another well, and the local people finally left him alone. So Isaac called it ‘Room Enough,’ for he said, “At last the Lord has made room for us, and we will be able to thrive.”

**Finally a well was dug that brought about no opposition.** I would imagine that this was due somewhat to the distance Isaac had travelled from the Philistines.

This well was named ‘**Rehoboth,**’ signifying **the hope Isaac had** that this was **the place** God had designated for him to stay.

**The parallel between Isaac’s life and that of his father is again evident** in this account of the **disputes over the wells and Isaac’s response.**



**Gen 26:22;** “Abandoning that one, he dug another well, and the local people finally left him alone. So Isaac called it ‘Room Enough,’ for he said, “At last the Lord has made room for us, and we will be able to thrive.”

**Due to their prosperity Abraham and Isaac  
needed much room  
for their flocks and a source of water.**

**Prosperity brought contention between  
Lot’s herdsmen and those of Abraham, (Gen 13:5ff;)  
just as it did between Isaac’s herdsmen  
and the herdsmen of Gerar.**

**Isaac, like his father, chose to keep the peace  
by giving preference to the other party.**

**Gen 26:23-25;** “From there Isaac moved to Beersheba, 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 give you many descendants, and they will become a great nation. I will do this because of my promise to Abraham, my servant.”  
Then Isaac built an altar there and worshiped the Lord.  
He set up his camp at that place, and his servants dug a well.”

**Genesis 26:23-25; is the key  
to the interpretation of this chapter 26.**

**Here a very strange thing happens.  
Up to this time Isaac’s decision as to where  
he should stay was based upon the finding  
of abundant water and the absence of hostilities.**

**But now, having dug a well  
that was uncontested,  
we would have expected Isaac to dwell there.**

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## **Isaac's Conflict with Abimelech. Gen 26:25-31;**

**Isaac built an altar to God and called upon the name of the LORD. (26:25;)**

**He also pitched his tent there and had his servants dig a well.**

**Abimelech came to Isaac and requested an agreement of peace. (26:26-29;)**

**Abimelech and Isaac swore to a covenant. (26:30-31;)**

**Gen 26:23-24;** “From there Isaac moved to Beersheba, 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.

**Instead of staying there, we are told that he moved on to Beersheba, with no reason stated for this move:**

**Perhaps a significant change has occurred in Isaac’s thinking. Circumstances had previously shaped most of his decisions,**

**Now something deeper and more noble seems to be giving direction in his life.**

**Beersheba was the first place that Abraham had gone with Isaac after they came down from the “sacrifice” on Mount Moriah. (Gen 22:19;)**

**Gen 26:23-24;** "From there Isaac moved to Beersheba, 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."

**Isaac knew that God had promised to give him the land promised to his father Abraham. 26:3-5;**

**Isaac finally comes to see that through all the opposition over the wells he had dug, God had been guiding him back to the land of promise.**

**Back to those places where Abraham had walked in fellowship with God.**

**Perhaps Isaac went up to Beersheba because he sensed on a spiritual level that this was where God wanted him to be.**

# Isaac Walks in His Father's Steps. Gen 26:1-35;

## CANAAN IN THE DAYS OF THE PATRIARCHS

Scale of Miles  
0 10 20 30 40

The Great Sea



Canaanites

Canaanites

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah are thought to be located beneath the shallow waters at the south end of the Dead Sea. This area was called the Vale of Siddim.

## **Isaac Walks in His Father's Steps. Gen 26:23-25;**

If God had previously been “**driving**” Isaac through opposition, **now Isaac was willing to be led.**

The decision was shown to be the right one, for **God immediately spoke words of reassurance:**

“the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham; Do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you, and multiply your descendants, For the sake of My servant Abraham.” **(Genesis 26:24;)**



# **Isaac Walks in His Father's Steps. Gen 26:23-25;**

**Gen 26:25;** is of particular interest.

Notice especially the order in which Isaac set up residence in Beersheba:

**“So he built an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there; and there Isaac’s servants dug a well.”**

**Previously the touchstone for knowing the will of God had been circumstances, in particular, Isaac stayed wherever he dug a well, found sufficient water, and was not opposed.**

**Yet in this verse the sequence of events is reversed.**

**Gen 26:25;** “Then Isaac built an altar there and worshiped the Lord.  
He set up his camp at that place, and his servants dug a well.”

**First** Isaac built an altar; **then** he worshipped,  
**after which** he pitched his tent.  
**Finally**, he dug a well.

**There is a great lesson in faith and guidance here.**  
**The place** for God’s people  
**is the place** of God’s presence.

**The place** of intimacy, worship, and communion  
with God is the place to abide.

**There we should dwell**, and there we may be  
assured of God’s provision for our needs.

**Gen 26:25;** “Then Isaac built an altar there and worshiped the Lord.  
He set up his camp at that place, and his servants dug a well.”

**Material needs are thus considered last,  
while spiritual needs are primary.**

Is this not what Jesus referred to when He said:-  
“But seek first His kingdom, and His righteousness;  
and all these things shall be added to you.”  
(Matthew 6:33;)

**From this point on everything  
seems to take on a different aspect.**

## **The Witness of Abimelech. Gen 26:26-31;**

**Previously Isaac** had been directed more providentially, but **now that Isaac's priorities** have been rearranged, the blessings and guidance of God are far more evident in his life.

**Abimelech, Ahuzzath, and Phicol** all paid a state visit to Isaac. Isaac's irritation as well as his curiosity can be seen in his interrogation:-

**“Why have you come to me,  
since you hate me,  
and have sent me away from you?”  
(Genesis 26:27;)**

**Gen 26:27;** ““Why have you come to me, since you hate me,  
and have sent me away from you?”

**Let's face it, the situation was unusual.**  
When he was in very close contact with Abimelech  
and the Philistines, the **blessing of God**  
**on Isaac** was present. **(26:12;)**

The response of the people of the land  
was envy and animosity.  
They asked Isaac to leave their country.

**Now they were willing to come all this way  
simply to enter into a treaty with Isaac.**

**What brought about  
this change of heart and mind?**

**Gen 26:27;** ““Why have you come to me, since you hate me,  
and have sent me away from you?”

**Isaac's conduct while with them  
was such that his testimony was far from best.**

**He lied about his wife, passing her off as his sister.**

**The Philistines could not imagine  
that his prosperity was the result of divine blessing,  
but rather they attributed it to just good luck.**

**Now that Isaac's priorities were changed  
and his life operating along spiritual guidelines,  
the blessing of God was evident.**

**Gen 26:27;** ““Why have you come to me, since you hate me,  
and have sent me away from you?”

**The covenant which God had made with Abraham  
was understood, at least in a practical way,  
to have passed on to his son.**

**Abimelech realized that the hand of God  
was upon Isaac and that a favourable relationship  
with him was highly desirable:**

**“And they said, “We see plainly that the LORD has been  
with you; so we said, ‘Let there now be an oath between us,  
even between you and us, and let us make a covenant  
with you, that you will do us no harm, just as we have  
not touched you and have done to you nothing but good,  
and have sent you away in peace.**

**You are now the blessed of the LORD””**

**Genesis 26:28-29;**

## **The Witness of the Well. Gen 26:32-33;**

**Surely the right place for Isaac to be was Beersheba.**

**First, God had spoken in such a way  
as to confirm the decision of Isaac,  
a divine witness to the wisdom of this move.**

**Then, Abimelech and two of his officials  
witnessed in a backhanded fashion  
to the blessing of God in Beersheba.**

**Finally, there is the witness of the well.  
The place where God wants us to be  
is also the place of provision.**



**The Witness of the Well. Gen 26:32-33;**

**What was once Isaac's first concern was now his last, but water was still essential for his survival with such large herds.**

**God would not let His servant do without that which he needed to prosper, and so the efforts expended in digging the well were blessed and water was struck.**

**The place of God's presence is also the place of God's provision. The word Beersheba means "well of the oath."**

**This city is still called Beersheba today.**

**This is also where Abraham entered into a covenant with Abimelech.**

## **Regret Due to Esau's Marriages. Gen 26:34-35;**

**When Esau was 40 years old  
he married 2 Hittite women. (26:34-35;)**

**They were a source of grief  
to Isaac and Rebekah.**

## **Regret Due to Esau's Marriages. Gen 26:34-35;**

**Serving God does not guarantee  
a trouble free life and one of rose strewn paths.**

**There were still heart aches for Isaac and Rebekah;  
Esau was the source of  
much of their sorrow and grief:**

**“And when Esau was forty years old  
he married Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite,  
AND Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite;  
and they made life miserable for Isaac and Rebekah.  
Genesis 26:34-35;**

## **Regret Due to Esau's Marriages. Gen 26:34-35;**

**These verses help us to realize that even when we are in a right relationship with God, troubles will still be a part of our experience.**

**These trials may be the result of our own sinfulness or that which is common to mankind.**

**These verses provide the backdrop to the drama of chapter 27;**

## **Some lessons we can draw from chapter 26**

**God has much to teach us  
when we see that Isaac's life was a replay  
of his father's experiences with God.**

**God made a covenant with Abraham;  
He confirmed it with Isaac.**

**Abraham lied about his wife to Abimelech;  
Isaac repeated this sin before another Abimelech.**

**Abimelech sought a treaty with Abraham,  
seeing that the hand of God's blessing  
was upon him; so, years later,  
Abimelech did likewise with Isaac.**

**The similarities seem to go on and on.**

**Some lessons we can draw from chapter 26**

**This should tell us something vital to our own Christian experience. There is a process, a long and extensive one, which God employs to bring a person first to Himself then to maturity.**

**It really begins when that individual enters into a covenant relationship with God.**

**For Abraham and Isaac the covenant was the Abrahamic covenant.**

**For Christians today it is the new covenant instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ when He shed His blood on the cross of Calvary in order to provide for our forgiveness of sins and for our salvation:**

## **Some lessons we can draw from chapter 26**

**Everyone must begin his relationship at this very place, the place of personal relationship with God through acceptance of the covenant He has offered.**

**From this beginning we embark upon a spiritual voyage that is, in many ways, very similar to that of previous saints.**

**When we are able to look back over our lives from the vantage point of eternity, I suspect that we will be amazed how similar the path has been for us compared to that of others before and after us.**

**There are no shortcuts in the sanctification process.**

## **Some lessons we can draw from chapter 26**

**As parents this is a very significant truth.**

**Our children must walk in our footsteps if they are to be a part of the kingdom of God.**

**Our children must begin at the point we did.**

**They must come to a personal relationship with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Then they must be allowed to make the same mistakes we did in order that they may come to a more mature faith and trust in the God who has called them through the gospel.**



## **Some lessons we can draw from chapter 26**

**We can best help our own children by making certain that our footsteps are such that we would want our children to walk in them.**

**If Isaac's experience was, to some degree, a reflection of his father's life, what a frightening thought that is.**

**If our children's lives are to mirror our own, what a major responsibility we have as parents to walk a path of obedience and submission to the will of God.**

## **Some lessons we can draw from chapter 26**

**What about the way in which God dealt with the sins of Abraham and his son Isaac.**

**We might be disappointed and rather distraught by the thought that God did not come down on these men harder for their unchivalrous deception concerning their wives.**

**We would have expected God to confront them sharply for their sin.** If we had been an elder in their church, We would have strongly urged disciplinary action.

**Why, then, did God not respond more forcefully?**

## **Some lessons we can draw from chapter 26**

**We can slowly begin to understand the reason.  
Deception is sin, and God hates the lying tongue.  
(cf. Proverbs 6:17;)**

**But lying here was a symptomatic sin and not the root sin.  
God did not smash the red warning light (deception)  
because He was concerned  
about getting to the root of the problem.**

**The root sin, was unbelief or lack of faith.  
In each case of deception,  
Abraham and Isaac lied out of fear  
(cf. 12:11 13; 20:11; 26:7;)**

**This fear was the product  
of an inadequate concept of God.**

## Some lessons we can draw from chapter 26

They did not grasp the sovereignty  
or the omnipotence of God  
in such a way as to believe that God could  
protect them under any and every circumstance.

Having solved the problem of too little faith,  
the sin of deception will not be an issue any longer.

We sometimes become preoccupied  
with “**symptom sins**,” rushing about trying,  
as someone said to hammer down  
those things that pop up in the seaside Arcades.

**Some lessons we can draw from chapter 26**

**While sin should always be taken seriously,  
many of our sins will be dealt with  
by an adequate conception of who God really is.**

**The fundamental sin is that of unbelief,  
not only for those who are unsaved  
but also for those who are truly saved**

**Genesis**  
**25:19; to 26:35;**  
**Esau and Jacob.**  
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**Next in the series:-**  
**Genesis 27:01 to 28:1-10;**  
**Conspiracy of Isaac and Esau.**