

GENESIS

Lesson 43

Genesis 25:1-34 — Isaac and Rebekah

Abraham Breathes His Last

¹Abraham had taken another wife, whose name was Keturah. ² She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah. ³ Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan; the descendants of Dedan were the Ashurites, the Letushites and the Leummites. ⁴ The sons of Midian were Ephah, Ephher, Hanok, Abida and Eldaah. All these were descendants of Keturah.

⁵ Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac. ⁶ But while he was still living, he gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them away from his son Isaac to the land of the east.

⁷ Abraham lived a hundred and seventy-five years. ⁸ Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years; and he was gathered to his people. 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 the field Abraham had bought from the Hittites. There Abraham was buried with his wife Sarah. ¹¹ After Abraham's death, God blessed his son Isaac, who then lived near Beer Lahai Roi.

Genesis 25:1-11 [NIV]

It is interesting that after his life with Sarah, Abraham took a second wife, Keturah.

1. Who was Keturah? See 1 Chronicles 1:32.
2. How long were Abraham and Keturah married? (Genesis 23:1, Genesis 25:7)

Abraham lives a long and fruitful life and "breathed his last" at the "good old age" of one hundred and seventy-five years, and he was "gathered to his people." The phrase "gathered to his people" implies something that we who follow Jesus already know. That is, that when our bodies physically die, we, our soul, lives on. We are an eternal creation. Whether we spend that eternity in a resurrected body with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, or in eternal torment in hell itself, is our freewill choice. Physical death is not the death of us, only our physical being until we, like Christ, are resurrected into a perfect eternal body.

Ishmael's Descendants

¹² This is the account of the family line of Abraham's son Ishmael, whom Sarah's slave, Hagar the Egyptian, bore to Abraham. ¹³ These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, listed in the order of their birth: Nebaioth the firstborn of Ishmael, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, ¹⁴ Mishma, Dumah, Massa, ¹⁵ Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah. ¹⁶ These were the sons of Ishmael, and these are the names of the twelve tribal rulers according to their settlements and camps. ¹⁷ Ishmael lived a hundred and thirty-seven years. He breathed his last and died, and he was gathered to his people. ¹⁸ His descendants settled in the area from Havilah to Shur, near the eastern border of Egypt, as you go toward Ashur. And they lived in hostility toward all the tribes related to them.

Genesis 25:12-18

The scriptural text now lists the descendants of Ishmael, known as the Ishmaelites. They become twelve tribal rulers, as recorded earlier when, in Genesis 17:20, God stated to Hagar:

"And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation."

Isaac, Jacob and Esau

19 This is the account of the family line of Abraham's son Isaac. Abraham became the father of Isaac, 20 and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean. 21 Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. 22 The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the Lord.

23 The Lord said to her,

"Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."

24 When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. 25 The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. 26 After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.

27 The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. 28 Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. 30 He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.)

31 Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright."

32 "Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?"

33 But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.

34 Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left.

So, Esau despised his birthright.

Genesis 25:19-34

As we discovered in the previous lesson, Abraham provided a wife for Isaac, i.e., Rebekah, whom he loved. At the end of the previous lesson, I posed the following question:

3. How old was Isaac when he married Rebekah? (See Genesis 25:20.)

We know that Isaac was born when Sarah was 90 years old, and that she died at 127 years of age, making Isaac thirty-seven when she died; and the text tells us that he was forty when he married Rebekah.

I wanted to focus on the fact that Isaac was forty, because something normally gets missed or overlooked when we study this story of Isaac and Sarah. In Genesis 25:21, we read that "Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant." As we continue reading we find that she is pregnant with twin boys who will turn out to be total opposites.

What I don't want you to miss in this passage is a very important question, one that shows us just how committed to both God and his wife Isaac was.

4. How long did Isaac pray for Rebekah before she became pregnant with the twins Jacob and Esau? (Genesis 25:20, 25:26)

We can see from this narrative that not only did Isaac love Rebekah but that he was also faithful in prayer, patiently waiting for the Lord to grant his petition. He knew that God was faithful and would continue the work that He started in his father Abraham with him in order for God's promise to Abraham to be realized. The Patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—were all faithful in their walk with God and looked forward to the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant through them.

5. The Bible has much to say about prayer and the importance of it. Note what each of the verses below says to about prayer:
- a. James 5:16
 - b. Philippians 4:4-7
 - c. Matthew 19:26

Isaac, then, was a man of faith and prayer, and his prayer was answered with the birth of twins, Jacob and Esau.

As we close this lesson, let's remember what God told Isaiah in Isaiah 58:11:

"The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail."

In the next lesson, we observe the arrival of the twins and the beginning of struggle within Isaac's family.

Thanks for studying with us!

In Christ,

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