



Genesis 25-26

"Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim. And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoeth, and Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah." (Gen.25:1-4). We follow the line of Keturah just to the second generation. Just enough to let us observe that these names Midian, Sheba and Dedan are names that are prominent as far as the Arab heritage is concerned. It would seem that a part of the Arab people came from this union of Abraham with Keturah.

"And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. 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." (Gen.25:5-6).

The scripture says that he sent the sons of Keturah towards the east and the Jews to the present day feel that this was a tremendous mistake. They felt that he should have sent Isaac to the east, because, in going to the east the descendants of Sheba and Dedan inhabit Saudi Arabia and the Jews feel that if Isaac had gone eastward they would have no problems today; since, they would own the oil resources of the world.

It is interesting that Keturah is classified as a concubine of Abraham. Another interesting thing is that when God heals someone, He does it well. When Abraham was a hundred years old, he was impotent, but, God restored his capacities and his wife Sarah had a son. Now, he is approximately a hundred forty years old when he takes Keturah as his wife and he has six more sons. God has done a wonderful healing job on Abraham.

The "son of promise" was Isaac and in verse five, it says that Abraham gave all that he had to him. He gave gifts to the sons of the concubines, but, Isaac is the heir. The children of faith are the heirs of God. While Abraham was still living, he sent the other sons away from Isaac, probably to stop any rivalry that might arise between them.

"And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years. 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." (Gen.25:7-8).

This "gathered to his people" must have a spiritual connotation as Sarah was the only one who preceded him in death and was buried at Machpelah. It could refer to the place that later became known as "the place of comfort in Abraham's bosom" or the place of waiting for the fulfillment of the promises of God. Gathering with those people of faith who were waiting for the fulfillment of God's promise of redemption through Jesus Christ.

Psalm One tells us that, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day an night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Ps.1:1-3). As you look at Abraham's life, surely this Psalm is applicable to him. His leaf did not wither, he was a hundred and seventy-five years old when he died and whatever he did, God prospered him. In the 91st Psalm as it talks about dwelling in the secret place of the most high, God responds to the Psalmist and tells all the things He will do for him, because, he chose Him. In verse sixteen, God promises, "With long life will I satisfy him..." Abraham had made his place of refuge the eternal living God and as a result God blessed him.

"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; the field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth; there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife." (Gen.25:9-10). Though earlier there was a breach between Isaac and Ishmael, they were brought together in the burying of their father, Abraham.

"And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahai-roi." (Gen.25:11).

Remember that this well was named by Hagar. It is the well that she spotted when she was about to die. It is the well of the "God who sees."

Isaac seemed to like the solitude of the wilderness and dwelt here in the Negev Desert by the well Lahai-roi. He had been there when Rebekah was returning to be his bride. It was evidently an area that was special to Isaac and after the death of his father, he went down there to dwell.

We are given a short look at the descendants of Ishmael. God had promised Abraham that He would bless Ishmael and make a nation of him. Ishmael had twelve sons that became twelve tribes and were the progenitors of the Arab people.

"Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham: 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, And Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa, Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations. And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, and hundred and thirty and seven years; and he gave up the ghost and died; and was gathered unto his people. 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." (Gen.25:12-18).

Now, if Abraham's being gathered to his people means gathered in death with those saints that were awaiting the promises of God; the indication here is that Ishmael also believed in the God of his father, Abraham. There is no reason to doubt that Ishmael, indeed, had faith.

Up to this point, the record keeping may have been done by Isaac and now entering into a new section of the book, it was probably taken over by Jacob.

"And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son; Abraham begat Isaac. And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-aram, the sister to Laban the Syrian. And Isaac entreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived." (Gen.25:19-21).

It was considered a cultural curse, in those days, not to be able to bear children. Rebekah had not been able to conceive and Isaac pleaded with the LORD and the LORD heard his prayer and Rebekah conceived.

"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. 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." (Gen.25:22-23).

Rebekah was having a pretty miserable pregnancy and there was a lot of activity in her womb. These little guys were fighting within her and so she asked the LORD what was wrong. The LORD told her there would be two different people come from her and the one would be stronger than the other. Paul uses this as a classic example of divine election: How that when they were still in the womb, God chose Jacob.

Divine Election is a subject that we, sometimes, try to skirt because we don't fully understand it. A lot of people draw false conclusions from Divine Election. If Divine Election were never brought up in the scriptures, it would still be a logical presumption from the foreknowledge of God. The fact that God has foreknowledge puts Him in a different category than us; so, we can't begin to know how God thinks.

God not only has foreknowledge but is also omniscient and knows everything. Anything that can ever be known, God already knows. From the beginning God has known everything. If God is ever going to know who is going to be saved then He has always known, because, He can't learn anything new. "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son..." (Rom.8:29).

The Divine Election is never spoken in scripture apart from the foreknowledge of God. God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world means that He chose us because of his foreknowledge or omniscience. We can't put ourselves in God's place in the capacity of thinking and so we have problems with understanding these characteristics of God. We know so little and everyday we are learning, but it is not so with God.

Some think God is unfair in His sovereign election, but if you're not a Christian and wonder why God hasn't chosen you; ask Jesus Christ into your life and see if God has chosen you. Jesus told his disciples that they didn't choose Him, but He chose them. The minute you receive Jesus Christ into your life, you discover the glorious truth that God chose you. No one that has come to God through Jesus Christ has been turned away.

Jesus said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37). If you say you don't want to come to Christ and would rather get by on your own merits, then I would have to say that you weren't chosen. You're in a bad way, but don't blame God. All you have to do is surrender to Jesus Christ and you will find that you've been chosen in Him. So, in a strange mystical way, I've been chosen by God and yet my choice is also mystically involved. There is a human responsibility side to it. We are called but we must respond and yet I can't respond unless the Spirit works within me.

Another interesting thing about being chosen in Christ and this is quite logical for us to figure out. If we had the capacity of choice with the same omniscience that God has, knowing everything in advance, and you went to the racetrack; would you pick a loser? Having this knowledge you could pick all winners. So doesn't it make sense that God picks only winners and no losers? This sovereignty of God in choice and election is demonstrated when Rebekah prayed unto the LORD. While the twins were still in the womb, God declares that one would be stronger than the other and that the elder would serve the younger.

"And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau." (Gen.25:24-25). Esau in the Hebrew literally means "hairy."

"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." (Gen.25:26). The twins had been fighting in Rebekah's womb and now as they are being delivered the one grabs hold of the heel of his brother. He is named Jacob which translated in Hebrew is "heelcatcher" or "supplanter." Isaac, married at forty is now sixty years old. Rebekah was barren for twenty years.

"And the boys grew; and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents." (Gen.25:27). Even though they were twins, they were extremely diverse. One is a hairy, rugged outdoor man and the other is in a sense a mother's boy.

"And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison; but Rebekah loved Jacob. And Jacob sod pottage; and Esau came from the field, and he was faint; 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." (Gen.25:28-30). Jacob liked to cook and one day Esau came from the field and Jacob was cooking a red stew. Esau asked Jacob to feed him some of the pottage and from this he inherited the nickname Edom which means red.

"And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die; and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him; and he sold his birthright unto Jacob." (Gen.25:31-33). It could be that Jacob said this in jest, just testing him, but

when Esau agreed; Jacob took advantage of it.

"Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way; thus Esau despised his birthright." (Gen.25:34). Esau just ate and went his way not caring anything about his birthright. Later on he regrets it.

In Hebrews we read, "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." (Heb.12:16-17). Esau didn't seek repentance diligently with tears, he sought the blessing diligently with tears.

It is interesting that many in the lineage of Christ were not the first born. Seth was not the first born, Jacob was not the first born and also Isaac and David. The blessing didn't always follow the birthright, which went to the eldest son.

"And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham, and Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar." (Gen.26:1). This is about a hundred years after Abraham experienced a famine in the land. Isaac went to Abimelech in Gerar, where Abraham had gone earlier. The Philistines were living on the coastal plain where there was more rain than they had in the Negev, where Isaac lived.

"And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of." (Gen.26:2). When Abraham first came into the land, he went down to Egypt when there was a famine. It could be that Isaac was on his way to Egypt when the LORD appeared to him and told him not to go. He told him to dwell in the land that he would tell him of. You're dealing with two Hebrew words in verses two and three. One is "sojourn" which means to stop over and stay temporarily and "dwell" which means to settle down and make yourself at home. "Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father." (Gen.26:3) This is the first time that the LORD has spoken to Isaac and when He speaks to him, He reiterates the promises that He made to Abraham.

"And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen.26:4). From your seed will come the Messiah, Jesus Christ. So, the LORD affirms the promises that He gave to Abraham and are now passed on to Isaac. And why did He do it? We get our answer in verse five.

"Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." (Gen.26:5). Abraham was obedient to God and kept all the commandments, statutes and laws of God, four hundred years before the law was given.

"And Isaac dwelt in Gerar." (Gen.26:6). God told Isaac to "sojourn" in Gerar and here is Isaac settling down and dwelling in Gerar. This is an act of disobedience on Isaac's part.

"And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister; for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon." (Gen.26:7).

Isaac disobeyed God by settling down in the area of Gerar and the next thing we find him doing is lying. This sin was actually provoked by his disobedience in dwelling in the land instead of sojourning as the LORD told him to do. There are places, where you as a child of God, have no business going. If you go there, you are only exposing yourself to temptation. Isaac had no business dwelling in Gerar and as a result of his dwelling there, the men of the area began to ask about his wife. Isaac lied and said she was his sister because he was afraid.

Fear is a sign of the lack of faith. He had the same lapse of faith as his father Abraham. He feared that they might kill him in order to get his wife. Proverbs says, "The fear of man bringeth a snare; but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe." The fear of man was a trap and Isaac fell into it and was caught.

In reality he was following an established pattern which had been set by his father a hundred years earlier. In the same place, with the same conditions, Abraham had the same lapse of faith. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the sons. Here is the son, Isaac, committing the same sin as his father. Like father, like son. Abraham's lie was half true because Sarah was the daughter of Abraham's father, but they had a different mother. Isaac's statement, because Rebekah was not his sister, was a lie with no truth in it.

It is interesting to note that Esau and Jacob did not make this journey to Gerar with their father and mother. They were pretty well grown at the time and were probably left behind to take care of the flocks. It is logical to assume that Rebekah is at least sixty years old at this point and still so beautiful that the men of the area are inquiring about her. Isaac's estimation was that she was beautiful to behold. We should always esteem our wives to be beautiful.

"And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife. And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife; and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her. And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? One of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us." (Gen.26:8-10).

The story of Abraham a hundred years earlier probably has been handed down to the people. When Abraham said Sarah was his sister, Abimelech took her to his tent and God caused a plague to come among them that closed all the wombs of the women and they couldn't have children. Now, this is a different Abimelech that Isaac is dealing with. Abimelech is just the title of the ruler. Knowing of the previous incident, Abimelech rebukes Isaac, "What have you done to us?" It is tragic when a man of God is rebuked by the world. Our standards should always be higher than those of the world. The Bible says that they who bear the vessels of the LORD must be holy.

"And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death." (Gen.26:11). He made it a capital offense for anyone who touched Isaac or Rebekah because of knowing what happened when Abraham was among them.

"Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him." (Gen.26:12). So, Isaac is settling down a little bit more. He probably leased some land, planted it and God gave him a bumper crop.

"And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great. For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants; and the Philistines envied him. For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth. And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we." (Gen.26:13-16).

The Philistines were actually from the island of Crete. They had begun to settle there on the southerly shores of present day Israel and because they were Philistines, the land was called Palestine. Later the Philistines moved in mass from Crete after a tremendous volcanic eruption. At the time of Saul, the Philistines were a formidable force and a tremendously powerful people. Goliath, who David fought, was a Philistine. In the early years, they were always a nemesis to Israel. When Joshua came to conquer the land, the Philistines were strong and inhabited the coastal plains and were a powerful foe to Israel.

"And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham; and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them." (Gen.26:17-18). So, Isaac began to dig the wells that his father had originally dug and he called them by the historical names that Abraham had called them.

"And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water. And the

herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him." (Gen.26:19-20). Esek in the Hebrew language means "quarrel," so it became the well of quarrel.

"And they digged another well, and strove for that also; and he called the name of it Sitnah." (Gen.26:21). Sitnah means "hatred" or "enmity."

"And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not; and he called the name of it Reboboth; and he said, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." (Gen.26:22). The name of this well means "spaciousness." I've finally gotten far enough away.

"And he went up from thence to Beer-sheba. And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father; fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake." (Gen.26:23-24).

Now God speaks to Isaac again. He first spoke when Isaac left the land and now the first night that he is back God speaks to him again. It is almost like God was waiting for him to get back on track. We find this is true in our own life when we get off track, suddenly we don't hear the voice of God. We don't feel the presence of God in our lives. It isn't that God has moved, but that we have moved from the place of blessing. The moment Isaac came back to Beer-sheba God spoke to him. He said do not fear for I am with you. That is always the answer which dispels fear, the presence of God with you. David said in the Twenty-third Psalm, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me..." "Fear not for I am with you." What words of strength and comfort.

"And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants digged a well. Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phichol the chief captain of his army. And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you? (Gen.26:25-27). Isaac doesn't greet them too cordially.

"And they said, We saw certainly that the LORD was with thee; and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee; That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace; thou art now the blessed of the LORD." (Gen.26:28-29).

They wanted to make a treaty with Isaac that they wouldn't hurt him and that he wouldn't hurt them. Obviously you've been blessed of the LORD and we don't want any trouble with you. "And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink. And they rose up betimes in the morning, and sware one to another; and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace." (Gen.26:30-31).

Earlier a similar thing happened to Abraham. After he left and was so blessed of God, the king came and wanted to make a treaty with him. This also took place at Beer-sheba. Abraham rebuked them because he had dug wells and Abimelech's servants had taken them for themselves. Abimelech said he knew nothing about it and so Abraham gave him seven ewe lambs as a witness that he had dug the well and so, they made a covenant there at Beer-sheba. Isaac seemed to be a much milder man than his father because he didn't confront them with the wells, but sent them away in peace.

"And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water." (Gen.26:32). This was an important discovery in a place like Beer-sheba, which is on the edge of the desert. Water is essential for any crops or survival in that area, so it was really exciting news.

"And he called it Shebah; therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba unto this day." (Gen.26:33). This was written many years ago, but to the present day the area is still called Beer-sheba. The name has been passed down through the years and today you can go to Beer-sheba there on the Negev Desert.

"And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite." (Gen.26:34). Esau married two wives from among the people

they dwelled with, the Hittites.