

Gen 25:1-5 Abraham again took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. Gen 25:3 Jokshan begot Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim. And the sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah. And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac.

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

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

Gen 25:6-10 But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east. This is the sum of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: one hundred and seventy-five years. Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth. There Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife.

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Keturah is called Abraham's concubine. Verse 6 seems to confirm this. Thus she was a *lesser wife*, one who did not enjoy the full privileges of a wife in the home. Once again God records marital irregularities that He never approved. – Believers Bible Commentary

Ishmael comes for the funeral because, after all, Abraham is his father. So Isaac and Ishmael together bury Abraham. Then Isaac goes down to live at the place where he first met Rebekah.- McGee

Genesis 25 - Jacob and Esau

Gen 25:11-18 *And it came to pass, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac dwelt at Beer Lahai Roi. Now this is the genealogy of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maidservant, bore to Abraham. And these were the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadar, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These were the sons of Ishmael and these were their names, by their towns and their settlements, twelve princes according to their nations. These were the years of the life of Ishmael: one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people. (They dwelt from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt as you go toward Assyria.) He died in the presence of all his brethren.*

Abraham breathed his last at one hundred and seventy-five years of age and became the second person to be buried in the cave at Hebron. The twelve sons of Ishmael listed in verses 12-16 fulfilled God's promise to Abraham: "He shall beget twelve princes" (Gen_17:20). With the death of Ishmael, Isaac moves to center stage in the narrative. – Believers' Bible Commentary

In verses Gen_25:12 to Gen_25:18 we have the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bore unto Abraham. The list of them is given here. I call to your attention again the fact that the Holy Spirit uses this method in the Book of Genesis. The rejected line is given first and then set aside and not mentioned anymore. Then the line that is leading to Christ is given and followed. So, it is after the line of Ishmael is given that we come to the line of Isaac. – McGee

The Birth of Esau and Jacob

Gen 25:19-22 *This is the genealogy of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham begot Isaac. Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah as wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian. Now Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. 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.*

It is interesting that Rebekah, like Sarah, was barren. But Isaac pled with God on her behalf, and now she is pregnant with twins. The struggle of these two boys, which began before their birth, represents the struggle which still goes on in the world today. There is a struggle between light and darkness, between good and evil, between the Spirit and the flesh. Every child of God knows something of this struggle which Paul sets before us in the seventh chapter of Romans.

Rebekah didn't understand the struggle which was going on within her, and she went to the Lord with the question, "Why am I thus?"- McGee

Gen 25:23-25 *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." So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau.*

God makes the statement to her that the elder shall serve the younger. She should have believed it, and her younger son should have believed it. The name *Esau* means "red" or "earth-colored." Because he is born first, he is considered the elder. But the elder is to serve the younger. - McGee

Gen 25:26-27 *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 she bore them. So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents.*

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Isaac and Rebekah had been married for about twenty years before the children were born. The older one was Esau, and they called him "Red," if you please. Jacob took hold on Esau's heel; so they called him Jacob, meaning the usurper, because he was trying to become the elder or to take his place—but God had already promised that to him.

Now we will look at these two boys as they grow up in this home. Here they are, twins, but no two boys were ever more different than these two. They not only struggled in the womb, but they are against each other from here on out. They have absolutely different viewpoints, different philosophies of life. Their thinking is different, and their attitudes are different. At the beginning, I must confess, Esau is more attractive than Jacob. But we learn that one can't always judge by the outward sign. We must judge by what takes place on the inside. We learn that in this particular case.

"The boys grew." This fellow Esau was a cunning hunter, the outdoor boy, the athletic type. He is the one we would call the all-American boy today. He went in for sports. He went in for everything that was physical, but he had no understanding or capacity or desire for spiritual things. He was only interested in that which was physical. He represents the flesh.

Jacob was a plain man. I think that you can make of that anything you want to. He lived indoors. He was mama's boy and was tied to her apron strings. You will notice that he did what she told him to do. Jacob is really a mama's boy.

And this boy Esau is papa's boy—McGee

Gen 25:28 And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Here is the problem in the home. You feel that under these circumstances they are going to have trouble, and they are. When one parent is partial to one child and the other parent is partial to the other child, you have trouble. That is exactly what took place here.

Isaac loved him because he ate of his venison. Esau went out hunting, and he always got something when he went hunting. He brought home the venison. Isaac liked that, and he liked this outdoor type of boy. Rebekah loved Jacob because he was a mama's boy.

As I have said before, at this juncture the boy Esau is much more attractive than Jacob. He seems to be a more wholesome boy. The boy Jacob is cunning; he tries to be clever. The fact of the matter is that he doesn't mind stooping to do things that are absolutely wrong. (And God will deal with him for this.) The interesting thing is that although Esau was very attractive on the outside, down underneath he really had no capacity for God whatever. If ever there was a man of the world, he is that man. He is just a physical man and that is all. That is all that he lived for.

Down underneath in Jacob there was a desire for the things that are spiritual. It took God a long time to rub off all the debris that was on top and to remove all the coverings in order to get down to where the spiritual desire was, but He finally did it. Before we are through with our study of Jacob (and his story goes almost all the way through the Book of Genesis), we will see that he was God's man all along, although he didn't demonstrate it until late in life.

Now we are told of an incident which took place in the home. You can well understand that the partiality shown by both father and mother would cause difficulty and conflict. It could not be called a happy home. — McGee

Esau Sells His Birthright

Gen 25:29-32 Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." Therefore his name was called Edom. But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day." And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

This incident reveals the nature of both of these men. Esau came from the field. He had been outdoors, and he was tired. He was not starving to death as some would imply. No one who had been brought up in the home of Abraham would starve to death. There would always be something for him to eat. The thing was that there was nothing prepared right at that moment but this pottage, this stew, which Jacob had made. Jacob was the indoor boy. Evidently he was a good chef.

“Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red (notice in your King James Version that the word pottage is in italics, meaning that the word has been supplied by the translators); for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom.” Edom means red or earthy just as Esau does. This man asks for some of the stew, and Jacob saw his chance. He is a trickster and a traitor, and he wanted the birthright. He said, “Sell me this day thy birthright.”

Let's stop and look for a minute at the value of the birthright and what it means. It means that the one who had it was the head of the house. It also means that the one who had it was the priest of the family. In this particular family, it means that the one who had it would be the one who would be in the line that would lead to Christ. Do you think that Esau had valued it at all? Jacob knew that he didn't. He attached no importance to it, and he didn't want to be the priest of the family. In fact, that's the last thing that he wanted to be.

In our day, sometimes when a Christian is asked to do something for the cause of Christ, he replies, “Oh, I'm not a preacher; I can't do that!” There are too many folk today who do not want to do that which is spiritual. They don't even want to give the impression that they are interested in spiritual things.

That was Esau. He didn't want to give that impression. If anyone would have called him “deacon” or “preacher,” it would have insulted him. He didn't want the birthright. He didn't care about being in the line that led to Christ. No one could have cared less about being in that line.

Jacob sees this, and he says to him, “I'll tell you what I'll do, if you'll give me your birthright, I'll give you a bowl of stew.” Esau was very happy with the bargain. He said, “I'll be very happy to do it; what profit is the birthright to me? What do I care about the birthright? I'd rather have a bowl of stew.” That is the value which he attached to spiritual things.

Let us remember that Jacob also was wrong in what he did. God had promised, “The elder shall serve the younger.” The birthright is coming to Jacob in God's own time. Jacob can't wait; so he reaches out to take that which God has promised him. He takes it in a clever, tricky fashion. He should have waited for God to give it to him.

This man operated on the principle that he would do what he could for himself. He thought that as long as he could help himself there was no reason to look to God to perform it. He felt thoroughly capable of taking care of his business. At the beginning he really did rather well as far as the world would measure him. But there came a day when God sent this man off to college, and Uncle Laban was the president of the college. It was known as the college of hard knocks, and Jacob was going to learn a few things in the college of hard knocks. But here he is still operating on the principle that he is clever enough to get what is coming to him.- McGee

Gen 25:32-34 And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

“Esau despised his birthright” is the important thing to see at this juncture. So Esau sat down and ate his stew. He had surrendered his birthright because it meant nothing to him. Nothing that was spiritual meant anything to him. Unfortunately, I'm afraid we have church members like that. They have no spiritual capacity and no understanding of spiritual truths. I believe that the mark of a true Christian is one whom the Spirit of God can teach and guide. It is as if a man today had a very valuable heirloom, let's say an old family Bible which had belonged to his grandfather. Another

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grandson wants it and offers to give him a quarter for it. So the owner says, "Give me the twenty-five cents because I was going to throw the old thing away anyway." That is exactly what Esau would have done.

But Jacob is wrong also, and we'll see more of his cleverness and trickery in chapter 27. – McGee

As the firstborn, Esau was entitled to a double portion of his father's possessions—that is, twice as much as any other son might inherit. He also became the tribal or family head. This was known as the birthright. In Esau's case, it would also have included being the ancestor of the Messiah. One day, as Esau was returning from a hunting trip, he saw Jacob cooking some red stew. He asked for some of the red stuff so imploringly that he got the nickname "Red" (Edom), and it stuck to him and to his posterity, the Edomites. When Jacob offered some soup in exchange for Esau's birthright, Esau foolishly agreed. "No food except the forbidden fruit was as dearly bought as this broth." The prophecy of verse 23 is partially fulfilled in verses 29-34. God does not condone Jacob's wheeling and dealing, but one thing is apparent—Jacob valued the birthright and a place in the godly line, while Esau preferred the gratification of his physical appetite to spiritual blessings.

The chapter closes by emphasizing Esau's treatment of his birthright rather than Jacob's treatment of his brother. Esau's descendants were bitter foes of Israel. Their final doom is pronounced in Obadiah. – Believers Bible Commentary