

Genesis 25 - Abraham & Keturah; Death of Abraham; Ishmael; Birth of Esau & Jacob; Esau Sells His Birthright

II. Epilogue: Patriarchal history (Gen 11:10—50:26)

- (1) Life of Abraham (Gen 11:10—25:11)
 - (B) Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12:1—25:11)
 - (c) Transition of covenant from Abraham to Isaac (Gen 22:20—25:11)
 - (iv) Final years of Abraham's life (25:1-11)
 - (a) Abraham marries Keturah and the birth of the Midianites (25:1-4)
 - (b) Inheritance of Isaac (25:5-6)
 - (c) Death of Abraham (25:7-8)
 - (d) Burial of Abraham (25:9-11)
 - (2) Life of Isaac (Gen 25:12—26:35)
 - (A) Family of Ishmael distinguished (25:12-18)
 - (B) Family of Isaac (25:19-34)
 - (a) Birth of Esau and Jacob (25:19-28)
 - (b) Selling of Esau's birthright (25:29-34)

Genesis 25

- (iv) Final years of Abraham's life (25:1-11)
 - (a) Abraham marries Keturah and the birth of the Midianites (25:1-4)
- 1 Now Abraham took another **wife**, whose name was **Keturah**.
- 1 Now Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah.
- 1 Abraham had taken another wife whose name was Keturah.
- 1 Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah.
 - "...wife" - in 1 Chr 1:32, Keturah is listed as Abraham's concubine
 - When Abraham married Keturah is unknown, but the verb "took" and the adjective "another" suggest it was after Sarah's death
 - Abraham was 137 years old when Sarah died; he lived another 38 years after her death (v7-8)
 - "...Keturah" - perfume or incense;
- 2 She bore to him **Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah**.

2 She bore to him Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and Ishbak and Shuah.

2 She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.

2 And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah.

- Keturah bore Abraham six sons:

- "...Zimran" - located on the west Arabian Coast; identified with the Amereni Tribe of interior Arabia
- "...Jokshan" - located in South Arabia
- "...Medan" - located South of Eilat on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Aqaba
- "...Midian" - Northwest Arabia and South Sinai (Cf. Gen 37:28; Ex 2:15–3:1; 18:1; Num 25:16–18; Joshua 13:21; Judges 6:1–7:25)
- "...Ishbak" - located in the Edomite country of what is now Southern Jordan
- "...Shuah" - located in the Syro-Arabian Desert; home of Bildad the Shuhite (Job 2:11)

— Thus, Abraham had six more sons, for a total of eight sons

— This was in fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham that he would become great since so "many nations" look to him as their ancestor

— The six sons of Keturah fathered six tribes or nations, and some of the other sons fathered other nations [Note that Arabian tribes are not descended from Ishmael (Hagar), but the concubine Keturah]

— This also shows that the vitality that was restored to Abraham when he was 99 was permanent and not temporary in that he was able to produce six more children after age 137

3 Jokshan fathered **Sheba** and **Dedan**. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim.

3 Jokshan became the father of Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim and Letushim and Leummim.

3 Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan. Dedan's sons were the Asshurites, Letushites, and Leummites.

3 And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim.

- "...Sheba" - Southwest Arabia
- The Semitic Sheba replaced the Hamitic Sheba of 10:7; these were the Sabaeans of Job 1:15 and the Sheba of Job 6:19
- "...Dedan" - located in Southwestern Arabia
- "His people replaced the Hamitic Dedan of 10:7. Sheba and Dedan are mentioned together in Is 21:13; Jer 25:23; 49:8; Ezek 25:13.
- The three sons of Dedan are listed as tribes rather than individuals; all were located in Northern Arabia

4 The sons of Midian were **Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah**. All of these were the sons of Keturah.

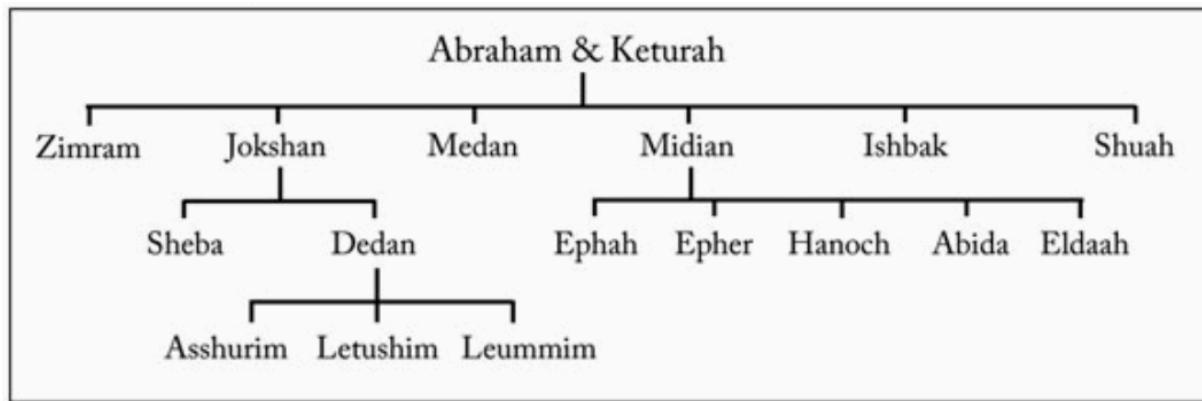
4 The sons of Midian were Ephah and Epher and Hanoch and Abida and Eldaah. All these were the sons of Keturah.

4 Midian's sons were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All of these were Keturah's descendants.

4 And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abida, and Eldaah.

- "...Ephah" - also mentioned in 1 Chr 2:46

- This list is parallel to 1 Chr 1:32-33



(b) Inheritance of Isaac (25:5-6)

5 Now Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac;

5 Now Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac;

5 Abraham gave everything he owned to Isaac.

5 And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac.

- This shows a direct contrast between Isaac and all other sons Abraham fathered

— Isaac was the promised covenant son, so Isaac became the heir of all things

6 but to the sons of his **concubines**, Abraham gave **gifts** while he was still living, and **sent them away** from his son Isaac eastward, to the land of the east.

6 but to the sons of his concubines, Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and sent them away from his son Isaac eastward, to the land of the east.

6 While he was still alive, Abraham gave gifts to his concubines and sent them to the east country in order to keep them away from his son Isaac.

6 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.

- "...concubines" - Hagar and Keturah

- "...gifts" - these were one-time, probably sizable, costly presents; they are one-time parting gifts in place of the ongoing inheritance that was given to Isaac

- "...sent them away" - *shalach*, means it was a deliberate sending away from his son and from the Promised Land because they were not part of the covenant
- Giving gifts and sending them away, while at the same time confirming Isaac's heirship, ensured that Isaac was the rightful heir without competition from his half brothers
- The effect of sending them away created distance between Isaac and Abraham's other sons, since Isaac was to inherit the Land
- Eliezer informed Rebekah's relatives that all of Abraham's estate was Isaac's (24:36)
- "...while he yet lived" - Abraham wisely did this prior to his death to ensure there would be no disputes as to what was to go to Isaac and what was to go to his other sons

(c) Death of Abraham (25:7-8)

- 7 These are all the years of Abraham's life that he lived, 175 years.
- 7 These are all the years of Abraham's life that he lived, one hundred and seventy-five years.
- 7 Abraham lived for 175 years,
- 7 And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years.
- This toldot (The Toldot of Terah, 11:27–25:11) ends with the death and burial of Abraham
- This was a fulfillment of God's promise to him (15:15), that he would be buried at a good old age
- Isaac was 75 years old at Abraham's death; Jacob and Esau were 15 years old; thus, Abraham was able to see his grandchildren from Isaac

This again shows that Genesis was not written in strict chronological sequence. It is basically chronological, but not strictly chronological, because sometimes one story comes to an end, then the text goes back earlier into history to begin a new story, as in the case of the account of Jacob and Esau.

- 8 Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and satisfied *with life*; and he was **gathered to his people**.
- 8 Abraham breathed his last and died in a ripe old age, an old man and satisfied *with life*; and he was gathered to his people.
- 8 then passed away, dying at a ripe old age, having lived a full life, and joined his ancestors.
- 8 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.
- "...gathered to his people" - this cannot refer to his physical interment because he was not put together physically with his people

- Physically his ancestors were in Mesopotamia and his family burial plot was in Haran; Abraham was buried in the Land. Thus, this phrase must be speaking with Abraham's immaterial being (his soul).
- Immediately his soul was gathered to his father's kin (literally) and took up his residence in *Sheol*, the place of departed spirits

[Jesus refers to this abode as "Abraham's bosom" in Luke 16...]

(d) Burial of Abraham (25:9-11)

9 Then his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, facing Mamre,

9 Then his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, facing Mamre,

9 His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, in the field that used to belong to Zohar the Hittite's son Ephron.

9 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;

10 the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth; there Abraham was buried with his wife Sarah.

10 the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth; there Abraham was buried with Sarah his wife.

10 This was the same field that Abraham had bought from the Hittites, where Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried.

10 The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.

- While Isaac and Ishmael together buried their father in the cave where Sarah was buried, Ishmael's presence may have posed a possible threat to Isaac's rights, now that their father was dead

11 It came about after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac lived by Beer-lahai-roi.

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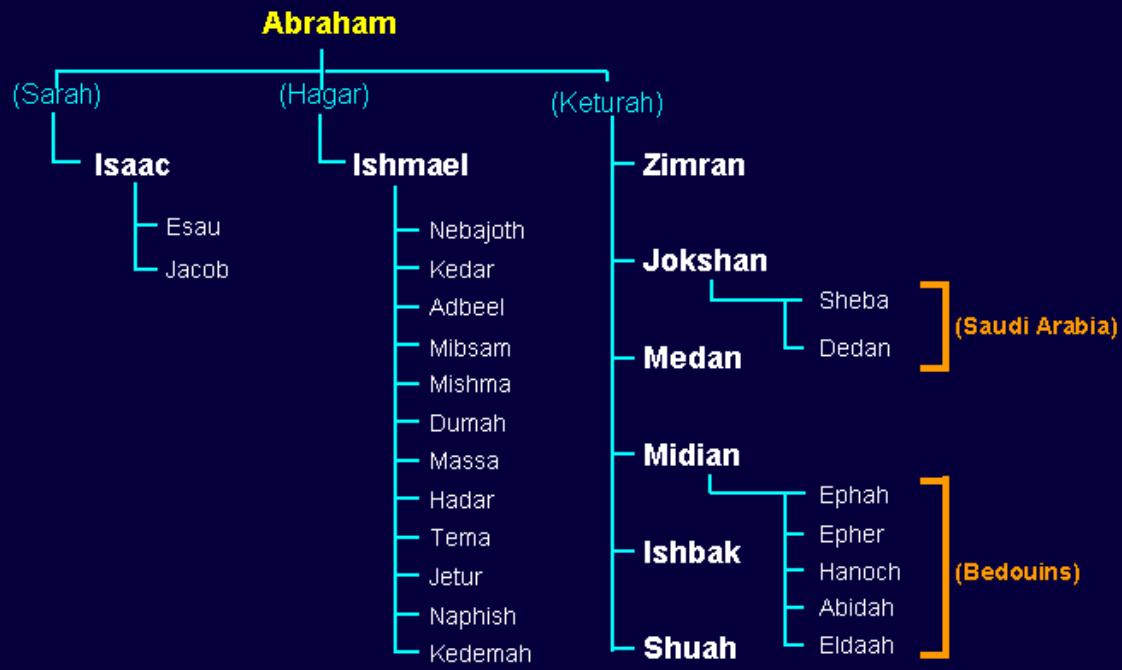
11 After Abraham's death, God blessed his son Isaac, who continued to live near Beer-lahai-roi.

11 And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahairoi.

- Isaac lived in the place where the Angel of Jehovah appeared to Hagar informing her of Ishmael's birth; but Isaac, not Ishmael inherits the Land

The process of Abraham's death is presented in four chronological steps: breathing his last, dying, being gathered to his ancestors, and being buried. The dying precedes being gathered to the ancestors, and the gathering to the ancestors precedes being buried; so being gathered and being buried are not the same. Being gathered implies a reunion in the afterlife.

The Descendants of Abraham



TERAH

Haran -Lot -Moab -Ammon <i>-Iscab (daughter of Haran)</i> <i>-Milcah (daughter of Haran, w. of Nahor)</i>	Nahor <i>Milcah (wife of Nahor)</i> Uz Buz Kemuel Hazo Pildash Jidlaph Bethuel <i>Rebekah (wife of Isaac)</i> Laban <i>Leah</i>	<i>Sarai*</i> <i>(daughter of Terah, wife of Abraham)</i> <i>Sarai (wife of Abraham)</i> Isaac <i>Rebekah, wife of Isaac</i> Esau Jacob <i>Leah (wife of Jacob)</i> 1. REUBEN 2. SIMEON 3. LEVI 4. JUDAH 5. ISSACHAR 6. ZEBULUN <i>Dinah</i> <i>Rachel</i> <i>Reuman (wife of Nahor)</i> Tebah Gaham Maacah Tahash	Abram <i>Hagar (Sarah's handmaid)</i> Ishmael <i>Rachel (wife of Jacob)</i> 7. JOSEPH -Ephraim -Manasseh 8. BENJAMIN <i>Bilhah (w. of Jacob)</i> 9. DAN 10. NAPHTALI <i>Zilphah (w. of Jacob)</i> 11. GAD 12. ASHER <i>Keturah (wife of Abraham)</i> Zimran Jokshan Medan Midian Ishbak Shuah
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*Sarah was Abraham's half-sister

(2) Life of Isaac (Gen 25:12—26:35)

(A) Family of Ishmael distinguished (25:12-18)

12 Now these are *the records* of the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's slave woman, bore to Abraham;

12 Now these are *the records* of the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maid, bore to Abraham;

12 Now this is what happened to Ishmael, whom Sarah's Egyptian servant Hagar bore for Abraham.

12 Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham:

13 and these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, in the order of their birth: **Nebaioth**, the firstborn of Ishmael, **Kedar**, **Adbeel**, **Mibsam**,

13 and these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, in the order of their birth: Nebaioth, the firstborn of Ishmael, and Kedar and Adbeel and Mibsam

13 Here's a list of the names of Ishmael's sons, recorded by their names and descendants: Nebaioth was the firstborn, followed by Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam,

13 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,

- "...Nebaioth" - from him came the Nabateans who built the famous cities of Petra and Teman (Cf. Is 60:7)

- "...Kedar" - located in NW Arabia (Cf. Ps 120:5; Is 21:16-17; 42:11; 60:7; Jer 2:10; 49:28-33; Ezek 27:21))

- "...Adbeel" - Northern Arabia

- "...Mibsam" - also mentioned in 1 Chr 4:25

14 Mishma, Dumah, Massa,

14 and Mishma and Dumah and Massa,

14 Mishma, Dumah, Massa,

14 And Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa,

- "...Mishma" - NE Medina; also mentioned in 1 Chr 4:25

- "...Dumah" - located in the Arabian Highlands north of Teman; also mentioned in Joshua 15:52; Is 21:11

- "...Massa" - located NE of Duma; also mentioned in Prov 30:1; 31:1

15 Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah.

15 Hadad and Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah.

15 Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah.

15 Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah:

- "...Hadad" - location unknown; otherwise, the name Hadad only appears of individuals from Edom (36:35-36; 1 Kings 1:14-25; 1 Chr 1:50-51)

- "...Tema" - NW Arabia, NW of Medina, between Dedan and Buzi. Today it is the town of Tema, mentioned in Job 6:19; Is 21:14; Jer 25:23

- "...Jetur" - located in the Trans-Jordan; identified with the Itureans of Luke 3:1; also mentioned in 1 Chr 5:19

- "...Naphish" - located in the Trans-Jordan; also mentioned in 1 Chr 5:19

- "...Kedemah" - location unknown

16 These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names, by their villages, and by their camps; twelve princes according to their tribes.

16 These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names, by their villages, and by their camps; twelve princes according to their tribes.

16 These were Ishmael's children, listed by their names according to their villages and their camps. There were a total of twelve tribal chiefs, according to their clans.

16 These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations.

- Ishmael had 12 sons, as God had predicted (17:20); he died at age 137 (v17)

17 These are the years of the life of Ishmael, 137 years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.

17 These are 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.

17 Ishmael lived for 137 years, then he took his last breath, died, and joined his ancestors.

17 And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years: and he gave up the ghost and died; and was gathered unto his people.

- The purpose of recording Ishmael's death here, not in strict chronological sequence, is to continue the author's pattern to dispense with the non-seed line before dealing with the main seed line, in this case Ishmael's half-brother Isaac.

18 They settled from Havilah to Shur which is east of Egypt going toward Assyria; he settled **in defiance of all his relatives**.

18 They settled from Havilah to Shur which is east of Egypt as one goes toward Assyria; he settled in defiance of all his relatives.

18 His descendants settled from Havilah to Shur (that's near Egypt), all the way to Assyria, in defiance of all of his relatives.

18 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.

- His sons lived in the Arabian peninsula: their territory extended from the Euphrates River in the north to the Red Sea in the south, and from the Northern Sinai to the western border of Babylonia.

— Havilah was the southeast border of his territory, located in Northeast Arabia. Shur was the southwest border toward Assyria, giving the northern border.

— Basically, this describes the Arabian Peninsula

— The Ishmaelites lived in hostility toward all their brothers, a fulfillment of God's words to Hagar (16:12)

- "...in defiance of all his relatives" - a mistranslation (?); ISV: "in defiance of all of his relatives"

— In Hebrew, this phrase means "to fall" or "to fall upon"; it has a double meaning here: "to live side by side," but also "to live in a state of hostility" (Cf. Deut 21:16; Job 1:11; 6:28; 21:31)

(B) Family of Isaac (25:19-34)

(a) Birth of Esau and Jacob (25:19-28)

19 Now these are *the records* of the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham fathered Isaac;

19 Now these are *the records* of the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham became the father of Isaac;

19 This is the account of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham fathered Isaac.

19 And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac:

20 and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife.

20 and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife.

20 Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, the Aramean from Paddan-aram and sister of Laban the Aramean.

20 And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister to Laban the Syrian.

21 Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was unable to have children; and the LORD answered him, and his wife Rebekah conceived.

21 Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived.

21 Later, Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, since she was unable to conceive children, and the LORD responded to him—his wife Rebekah became pregnant.

21 And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

- This was after 20 years of marriage, so Isaac finally resorted to making it a special point of prayer

— Not much is known about Isaac's life, but here he prayed, and his prayer was answered

— He did not resort to a concubine, as Abraham did) to produce a seed

- The first section records Isaac's prosperity and Jacob's struggle for the right to it—events within the Land of promise

- Gen 29-32 relate Jacob's blessing in his sojourn out of the land of promise, and Gen 33-35 his return to the land and corruption of the land.

— Rebekah, Isaac's wife, was also his cousin (Cf. 24:15)

— Similarly Nahor had married his niece (11:29)

— Isaac's marriage to Rebekah thus tied him to Abraham's native country and family, and to the Arameans in northwest Mesopotamia (Cf. 24:10), later known as Syria.

The Beginning of the *Olam Eybah*: The “Everlasting Hatred”

22 But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If it is so, why am I in this condition?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.

22 But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If it is so, why then am I this way?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.

22 But when the infants kept on wrestling each other inside her womb, she asked herself, "Why is this happening?" So she asked the LORD for an explanation.

22 And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.

- The struggle in her whom was so fierce, she thought it might take her own life

- She resorted to prayer—a proper response for a meaningful question

23 And the LORD said to her, "Two **nations** are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people will be stronger than the other; And the older will serve the younger."

23 The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger."

23 "Two nations are in your womb," the LORD responded, "and two separate people will emerge. One people will be the stronger, and the older one will serve the younger."

23 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.

- From Rebekah's prayer, she received a prophecy given by divine revelation
- "...nations" - *goyim*, indicating both Jewish and Gentile nations
- The two nations are the nations of Israel (the Jewish nation) and Edom (one of many Gentile nations)
- The nation of Israel will be stronger than Edom, and Edom would be enslaved to Israel
- Quoted by Paul in Rom 9:11-13 to describe God's sovereignty in election
- This account of the births of Esau and Jacob is a fitting introduction to the following chapters, for their struggle for supremacy manifested itself even before their births (Cf. Hosea 12:3)
- Two nations, that is, twin progenitors of two nations, were struggling in her womb and the younger would triumph
- Indeed the Israelites (Jacob's descendants) and the Edomites (Esau's descendants) fought continuously (under David, Edomites served Israel: 2 Sam 8:14)
- Note: Isaac knew God's will in the matter (v23)
- God's election of Jacob the younger over Esau the older was against the natural order

Rom 9:11-13:

11 for though *the twins* were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to *His* choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

12 it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER."

13 Just as it is written: "JACOB I HAVE LOVED, BUT ESAU I HAVE HATED."

God's fulfillment of His promise to Abraham was carried out by His election of Jacob (later, the nation Israel). From the outset the birth of the nation of Israel was supernaturally superintended. Paul noted that before the twins' births the younger was chosen over the elder (Rom 9:11-12). God often reverses man's natural order, for His ways are not man's ways.

ByPass of Firstborn

Favored —> First Born

Abel —> Seth / Cain

Shem —> Japheth

Isaac —> Ishmael

Jacob —> Esau

Ephraim —> Manasseh
Judah/Joseph —> Reuben
Moses —> Aaron
David —> all his brothers (Eliab = firsborn)
New Covenant —> Old Covenant
Last Adam (Jesus Christ) —> First Adam (Adam)

Why did God interrupt the concept of the "first born" for all of the patriarchs? To demonstrate Jesus as the "Firstborn" who brings the hopes and promises of the nation to realization. He is the firstborn who redeems the world (Cf. Ex 4:22). He is the firstborn who rules His Kingdom (all creation) as the son of David (Cf. Ps 89:27; 2 Sam 7:12-14). All previous history pointed to Him and waited for Him. The "Firstborn" is the promised Savior Messiah of Israel who rules and reigns over His creation. When Paul called Jesus the "Firstborn" in Colossians, he was declaring Jesus to be the long hoped for Messianic Savior.

24 When her days *leading* to the delivery were at an end, behold, there were twins in her womb.
24 When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.
24 Sure enough, when her due date arrived, she delivered twin sons.
24 And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.

25 Now the first came out **red**, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him **Esau**.
25 Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau.
25 The first son came out reddish—his entire body was covered with hair—so they named him Esau.
25 And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.
— "...red" - *àdmoni*, is related to the word "Edom" (*èdom*) (Cf. 25:30) and "hairy" (*se àr*) is also similar to Seir
— This word is used again only of David (1 Sam 16:12; 17:42)
— "...Esau" - *ésaw*, has a loose connection with the word Seir (*Se iyr*), the early name for Edom to the SE of the Dead Sea, where Esau later lived (32:3; 36:8)
— These names/words were carefully chosen to portray in the lad the nature of Edom, the later archrival of Israel

26 Afterward his brother came out with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so he was named **Jacob**; and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them.

26 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.

26 After that, his brother came out with his hand clutching Esau's heel, so they named him Jacob. Isaac was 60 years old when they were born.

26 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.

- "...Jacob" - *yaàqob*, "may He (God) protect"; similar to *àqeb*, "heel" and *àqob*, "deceitful, sly, insidious"

— Thus, "one who grabs the heel" or "one who trips up"; it is a neutral word, not having either a positive or negative connotation. The context in which it is used determines the connotation.

— At the time the name was given to Jacob, it had a positive connotation, but it eventually lent itself to a negative one (27:36; Jer 9:4)

— Esau was named by his appearance; Jacob was named by his actions

27 When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a **civilized man, living in tents**.

27 When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob was a peaceful man, living in tents.

27 As the boys were growing up, Esau became skilled at hunting and was a man of the outdoors, but Jacob was the quiet type who tended to stay indoors.

27 And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.

- Esau was a skilled hunter, just like Nimrod (10:8-12)

— In the context of Genesis, being a skillful hunter is not a positive statement

- "...a civilized man" - tam, perfect, upright, whole, complete, blameless, without blemish

— It is used of God in Job 22:3; of Noah in 6:9; of Job in Job 1:8; of both God and man in Ps 18:25

— It carries the concept of moral integrity: Job 1:1,8; 2:3; 9:20-22

- "...living in tents" - does not convey the notion that he was a "momma's boy" or a homebody; instead, it means he chose to labor within the family unit and follow his family's profession of being a shepherd, which was true of both Abraham and Isaac

— Taking on the job of a shepherd was not the job of a sissy. In fact, later on there is a vivid description of the suffering Jacob had to undergo being a shepherd, and his courage could be compared to what David exercised as a shepherd to protect his flock from both a lion and a bear.

— Thus, Jacob's choice to be a shepherd led to an ordered and settled life in contrast to that of being a wandering man of the field

Jacob has received a lot of bad press. In many sermons, Jacob is painted very negatively, and attributes are ascribed to Jacob that are not true to the Word of God and do not correspond with God's own evaluation of Jacob. He has been portrayed as "a mamma's boy" while Esau is the hero, a skillful hunter. Furthermore, Esau was a man of the field, meaning he chose to work outside the family unit. It also means that he was a cunning person who forsook loyalty to the family unit and the family covenant. God's evaluation of Esau is negative (Mal 1:2-3; Heb 12:16-17).

Here is the first of several examples where the biblical view of Jacob is opposite from the portrayal of all too many commentators and preachers. While the word *tam* means "perfect," it does not mean sinless perfection; but it has the meaning of righteousness, a man whose heart is right towards God. Neither Job nor Noah were sinlessly perfect, but their hearts were righteous toward God.

- 28 Now Isaac loved Esau because he **had a taste for game**; but Rebekah loved Jacob.
- 28 Now Isaac loved Esau, because he had a taste for game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.
- 28 Isaac loved Esau, because he loved to hunt, while Rebekah loved Jacob.
- 28 And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.
 - "...had a taste for game" - the Hebrew reads, "there was game in his mouth"; so because Esau provided game from his hunting, Isaac preferred Esau
 - By preferring Esau, Isaac effectively ignored the choice of God

(b) Selling of Esau's birthright (25:29-34)

- 29 When Jacob had cooked a stew *one day*, Esau came in from the field and he was exhausted;
- 29 When Jacob had cooked stew, Esau came in from the field and he was famished;
- 29 One day, while Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau happened to come in from being outdoors, and he was feeling famished.
- 29** And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint:

- 30 and Esau said to Jacob, "Please let me have a mouthful of that red stuff there, for I am exhausted." Therefore he was called Edom *by name*.
- 30 and Esau said to Jacob, "Please let me have a swallow of that red stuff there, for I am famished." Therefore his name was called Edom.
- 30 Esau told Jacob, "Let me gobble down some of this red stuff, since I'm starving." (That's how Esau got his nickname "Edom".)
- 30 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.
- The Hebrew literally reads, "Let me gulp down some of this red red"

— The phrase implies an animal-like voraciousness

31 But Jacob said, "First sell me your birthright."

31 But Jacob said, "First sell me your birthright."

31 But Jacob responded, "Sell me your birthright. Do it now."

31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.

- Esau's birthright included four elements:

- (1) Physical benefits - the rights and privileges of the firstborn: among them, a double portion of inheritance (Deut 21:17)
- (2) Spiritual benefits (family priests, Ex 4:22; 1 Chr 5:1-2)
- (3) Being in the Messianic line, because this is the birthright of the Abrahamic Covenant
- (4) The possession of the Land

— Esau did not care anything about the spiritual benefits, and because the spiritual benefits were prominent, he did not particularly care to hang on to the birthright

- Jacob and Esau developed in accord with their initial characteristics

— Esau, "the red man," was overcome by his physical appetite for red stew and sold his birthright

— And Jacob, "the heelgrabber," cunningly overtook his brother and gained the birthright

- It is probable that pottage was made of Egyptian beans, which Jacob had procured as a dainty; for Esau was a stranger to it

— Though Jacob was not perfectly righteous, he was not in this instance deceptive. He was open and obvious, albeit unscrupulous.

— He must be given credit for knowing what was of value and going after it

— Esau, however, was totally "godless" ("profane" [KJV], Heb 12:16)

This passage includes several important wordplays. Esau was a skillful hunter; "a man knowing game" (*sòayid*), a man of the open country, but he could not find game this time. His father loved him because of his own taste for wild game. Thus Esau's nature and occupation were favored by Isaac because of the satisfaction of his palate. Both Isaac and Esau made choices because of this. Jacob was loved by Rebekah, partly because of the oracle which she probably mentioned often. And he was a quiet man, staying among the tents. But ironically Jacob was the craftier hunter, baiting his trap for the hungry "animal." One day he was cooking ("boiling," *wayyazèd*) some stew ("vegetable soup," *nazid*) made of lentils. These words reflect by sound the word for "game" (*sòayid*). But also the verb *zid* ("to boil") speaks of Jacob's presumption, for it means "to be exalted or presumptuous." Thus the boiling soup portrays a man whelming up over his bounds.

32 Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so of **what use then is the birthright to me?**"

32 Esau said, "Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?"

32 "Look! I'm about to die," Esau replied. "What good is this birthright to me?"

32 And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?

- This is a pretty extreme exaggeration; the household of Isaac was very wealthy. If Esau wanted was hungry, he could've gone over to the next tent and be given all the food he could possibly want.

- "...what use then is the birthright to me?" - Esau exercised a faulty logic: there was a lot of profit in the birthright, but the spiritual benefits did not matter to him.

- As the firstborn, Esau had the birthright and Jacob had the stew

— But in the exchange, Esau received the stew and Jacob the birthright

— But Esau despised his birthright, for what could it do for him if he died of starvation?

- Jacob, the second-born, then had the birthright

— The calculating, quiet man who recognized the spiritual value in the birthright manipulated his profane brother into giving it up

— Perhaps knowing the oracle, Jacob had been waiting for this opportunity

Esau is portrayed as emotional: he was fainting and gasping, and then despising. In this instance he was not a skillful hunter; he was more like an animal he had trapped with bait. To live on this base level, to satisfy one's appetites, inevitably leads to a despising of spiritual things. Jacob, though an indoorman, was a better hunter than Esau. He too craved—but something worth craving. Once he had grabbed by the heel; now he pressed the matter harder. But danger lies even in such spiritual ambition. Believers should seek things of spiritual value, but they should avoid the devices of the flesh. After Jacob was later purged of his human expedience, however, he became a capable servant, for his priorities were then correct. [Note oath in 25:33.]

33 And Jacob said, "**First swear to me**"; so he swore *an oath* to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.

33 And Jacob said, "First swear to me"; so he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.

33 But Jacob insisted, "Swear it by an oath right now." So he swore an oath to him and sold his birthright to Jacob.

33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

- "...First swear to me" - this would make the sale legal and official; it was followed by Esau's agreement

34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and got up and went on his way. So Esau **despised** his birthright.

34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

34 Then Jacob gave Esau some of his food, along with some boiled stew. So Esau ate, drank, got up, and left, after having belittled his own birthright.

34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.

- Payment is made and accepted: stew for birthright
- Nothing in this passage implies Jacob took unfair advantage of Esau, and the biblical evaluation faults Esau, not Jacob
- "...despised" - the Hebrew word means "to treat as worthless" or "to hold in contempt"
- It shows that Esau had no spiritual sensitivity to the things of God; he had no desire to be the means of God's program
- Esau did not merely sell his birthright, he despised his birthright

The Coveted Covenant

- Sarah vs Hagar (16:4-6; 21:8-14)
- Isaac vs Ishmael (16:10-12; 21:17-18)
- Jacob vs Esau (25:29-34; 27:41)