

GENESIS 25

THE PILOT EPISODE OF “DALLAS”

We are moving into a new chapter of the history of the world today as we begin Genesis chapter 25. The torch is being passed from Abraham to Isaac. For the next several chapters the main character will be different. We will have to get to know a new kid on the block. As the Eagles sang, "There's a new kid in town."

The chapter actually digresses backwards several years recounting the sons born to Abraham through his concubines. He was a stranger in a strange land, never truly owning more than his own burial plot, yet he impacted the history of the world. So the first 19 verses of chapter 25 sum up the end of Abraham's and Ishmael's lives bringing us once again to the main story line, that being Isaac and eventually Jacob.

From Genesis 25-27 we have a saga that reads like a bad season of Dallas. Twins are born to Isaac and Rebekah and from that day forward, literally the world hasn't been the same. If you have children you will appreciate the differences between the two boys. I want us to look back at the boys and also the parents to see how things ended up the way they did, but also what we can do to not repeat the same mistakes as the boys or their parents. So let's read chapter 25.

Gen 25:1 Abraham again took a wife, and her name *was* Keturah.

Gen 25:2 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.

Gen 25:4 And the sons of Midian *were* Ephah, Ephher, Hanoch, Abidah, and Eldaah. All these *were* the children of Keturah.

Gen 25:5 And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac.

Gen 25:6 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.

Gen 25:7 This *is* the sum of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: one hundred and seventy-five years.

Gen 25:8 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.

Gen 25:9 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,

Gen 25:10 the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth. There Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife.

Gen 25:11 And it came to pass, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac dwelt at Beer Lahai Roi.

This is often read as Abraham having taken other wives after the death of Sarah. This really isn't the case. He had actually already taken other wives or concubines and had children by them. This was a custom of the culture, but certainly wasn't sanctioned by God. At any rate Abraham made sure that these boys received their inheritance and moved eastward. None of these boys would be around to challenge Isaac for the land in which they dwelt.

Abraham lived to be 175 years old. This is a long time by today's standards, but we can certainly see that the lifespan of man has been shortened drastically after the flood of Noah. It will continue to drop until the time of King David where it reaches a point consistent with what we see today.

Abraham was like us in another way. He was still a stranger in the land in which he dwelt when he died. Even after 175 years, 100 of which he spent in Canaan, he owned nothing more than his own burial plot. He

moved around the countryside and grazed his flocks, but he owned nothing and took nothing with him. At best it can be said that he set up his children to carry on the plan of God.

That is how we need to see ourselves. As you know, if you have been here so far through the book of Genesis. God has a plan. This plan involves us, His people. Abraham was one of those people. In fact he was a major player, but he never really owned any property. What this means is that he understood that his time on this planet was just temporary.

Many people believe that. They think that they will live, die and then it is all over. Abraham, being a follower of God knew better though. He knew that we are really headed towards eternity. He knew that our time on this earth is nothing but a type of training ground. Living 175 years of being a stranger in a strange land was nothing compared to eternity with God. Therefore Abraham's life was not spent on compiling things for this life, though he was wealthy. He accomplished his mission and then set up his children to continue it when he died. We should be about the same business.

This section ends with the statement that Isaac lived at Beer-lahai-roi, the well to the Living one that sees me, a statement that acknowledges that God is watching and guiding the life of Isaac. Abraham has done well passing on his faith to his son.

In verse 12 we read a summary of the history of Ishmael and his sons.

Gen 25:12 Now this *is* the genealogy of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maidservant, bore to Abraham.

Gen 25:13 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,

Gen 25:14 Mishma, Dumah, Massa,

Gen 25:15 Hadar, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah.

Gen 25:16 These *were* the sons of Ishmael and these *were* their names, by their towns and their settlements, twelve princes according to their nations.

Gen 25:17 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.

Gen 25:18 (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.

Ishmael's sons became merchants and Bedouins for the most part. They were however princes, all 12 of them just as was foretold in Genesis 17:20. They were the fathers of the Arab nations, most of them inhabiting the coast of the Arabian Peninsula from the East of Egypt to the borders of Persia or modern day Iran.

Verse 19 then picks back up with the main theme and Isaac who will become the main character for the time until he also passes from the scene handing the torch to his son.

Gen 25:19 This *is* the genealogy of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham begot Isaac.

Gen 25:20 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.

Gen 25:21 Now Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she *was* barren; and the LORD granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

Gen 25:22 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.

Gen 25:23 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."

Gen 25:24 So when her days were fulfilled *for her* to give birth, indeed *there were* twins in her womb.

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

Gen 25:26 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 she bore them.

- This is another toledoth chapter. Remember the toledoth is when the genealogy is handed down to the next in line. This is how Moses was able to get accurate accounts of things that happened before he was alive. We can also narrow down the timeline because we are given the clue that Isaac was 40 years old when he got married and 60 years old when they were born. This places this part of the story in 1837 B.C.
- Rebekah was barren, but Isaac prayed for his wife. That's a good thing!!
- Question: Why are all these women barren if the promise of God is dependent upon them having sons?
- Rebekah conceives but knows something is wrong. She prays to the Lord and asks Him, "Why am I like this?"
- Rebekah has bought into the plan of God also and wants to know why things are going so contrary to plan. This is often the norm for people walking in the will of God.
- God will not share the glory!!
- Two nations?! This will be a division. Once again the elder will serve the younger. This is also contrary to custom. God often works contrary to custom and culture. He will do what it takes to get His man or woman in the right place. This is one way we can know He is in control of our lives. He will move Heaven and Earth to get you where you need to be. So just be patient if you don't get the job. He has something else in mind for you.

Gen 25:24 So when her days were fulfilled *for her* to give birth, indeed *there were* twins in her womb.

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

Gen 25:26 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 she bore them.

- The first-born, Esau was covered with red hair. Esau essentially means rough.
- The second child was then born. Jacob - heel catcher; supplanter - one who takes the place of another.
- Two totally different boys from the same family. Sound familiar?
- How does this figure into God's plan?

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

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

- Daddy's favorite and a momma's boy.
- Not only are the boys different, but we also see that the parents have chosen favorites. At any rate we can see that two distinct personalities have emerged. Look at how this manifests itself in their lives.

Gen 25:29 Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he *was* weary.

Gen 25:30 And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red *stew*, for I *am* weary." Therefore his name was called Edom.

Gen 25:31 But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day."

Gen 25:32 And Esau said, "Look, I *am* about to die; so what *is* this birthright to me?"

Gen 25:33 Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.

Gen 25:34 And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised *his* birthright.

- What is the birthright? It is more than inheriting the family business. It is actually inheriting the position of family priest. Why does Esau not covet or respect this position?
- Esau is in a sense more carnal minded. He is a man's man. He has more testosterone than brains. He cares about hunting and fishing and that is all. Spiritual things are at the back of his mind. He isn't nostalgic or contemplative. For him everything is about the "now." The future doesn't matter.
- Jacob on the other hand is in many ways the polar opposite. He stays around the house with Momma and has learned how to cook a good red stew. Jacob isn't driven by his physical appetites as much as his brother is.
- Esau said he was about to die and then sold his birthright for a bowl of stew.
- In Hebrews chapter 12, verses 12 – 29, we have Paul (or whomever) writing to Christians with a Jewish background. Some of them wanted to return to the Law and the Jewish sacrificial system instead of relying on the grace of God. It is in this passage that we read of Esau. He is used as an example of someone that wasn't spiritually minded.

Heb. 12:12 – 17

12 Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, **13** and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.

14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: **15** looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; **16** lest there be any fornicator or

profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 17 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.

- Esau was not an oger or troll. He would have been a good neighbor. However, he just wasn't interested in spiritual things.
- He is described here as a profane person. In English this literally means, "outside the Temple." In Greek it means, "lower, baser, threshold or by implication, the foot."
- This shows us how a mindset as that of Esau wrongly prioritizes life. Esau was profane, a foot or as low as a threshold. This doesn't mean that he was a degenerate but it shows us that as a worldly person his priorities were inverted. He sought after pleasure and amusement first while spiritual matters weren't even on his radar. This is why he sold his birthright as the family priest in order to feed his belly and fleshly appetites.
- Hebrews therefore uses him as an example of those not relying on the grace of God but on the flesh in order to satisfy themselves in life or even spiritually.
- ***17 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.***
- After having despised the birthright and finding that Jacob had it, Esau then desired to have it back, but he was rejected. (adokimazo)
- He found no place of repentance?
- Two words translated repentance: *metameleomai* and *metanoeo*.
- The former means, "one has regret or remorse for one's actions because of consequences entailed." The latter means "a change of mind consisting of a reversal of moral purpose."
- While Esau regretted what he had done because of the consequences entailed, he couldn't bring himself to acknowledge what he had done was wrong. He wanted to reverse the situation without reversing his moral position.

- He wanted his cake and to eat it also.
- How many of us compromise on valuable things in order to feed our appetites? This could mean our bellies, our eyes or any of our other senses.
- How many times have we placed our spiritual wellbeing in jeopardy for something we felt that we just had to have in the heat of the moment?
- That is what Esau did and it reveals his spiritual status. This was a way of life for him. He would rather hunt and fish than be in church. He would rather beat up somebody than reason with them. He would rather yell and cuss than talk. He wanted what he wanted right then and was willing to do whatever he had to do to get it.
- The mentality that wants what it wants right then is in opposition to the way God would have us.
- In the Bible we read of folks that are promised things by God and have to wait years, decades, even complete lifetimes. Patience is a virtue and tribulation works patience.
- The person that is always going after what he wants rarely asks God what He wants him to have in his life. In the book of Hebrews Esau is referred to as profane. That word in Greek means wicked, or of a baser sort like a foot.

Only by walking in the Spirit can we avoid being in the flesh.

Gal 5:16 I say then: **Walk in the Spirit**, and you shall not fulfill **the** lust of **the** flesh.

Gal 5:17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

Gal 5:18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Gal 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,

Gal 5:20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

Gal 5:21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Gal 5:23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

- in the flesh.

Heb. 12:12 - 29

12 Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.

14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: 15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; 16 lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 17 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.

Heb. 12:25- 29

25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, 26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.” 27 Now this, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a consuming fire.