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## Sowing the Word

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A well in Beersheba

**Genesis 25-26**

**March 25th, 2009**

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So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped *them* to understand the reading.

(Nehemiah 8:8)

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## **Helpful Study Resource:**

*Explore the Book* by J. Sidlow Baxter

## **Commentary:**

The commentary used with permission throughout  
this booklet is:

**With the Word Bible Commentary**

**by Warren W. Wiersbe.**

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# Outline

## Genesis Outline

I. Creation (1-2)

II. The Fall of Mankind (3)

III. Early History of Mankind – First Thousand Years (4-5)

IV. Noah and the Flood (6-10)

V. Tower of Babel (11)

**VI. Abraham (12-25:18)**

VII. Isaac (25:19-27)

VIII. Jacob (28-36)

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## Detailed Outline For This Week

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B. Abram Splits From Lot (13)

C. Abram Rescues Lot – Meets Melchizedek (14)

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K. Abraham's Great Sacrifice (22)

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M. Abraham Seeks a Wife For Isaac (24)

**N. Abraham dies – Isaac has kids (25)**

- The Closing Years of Abraham (25:1-11)

- \* Abraham's remarries (25:1): Abraham marries Keturah.

- \* Abraham's last sons (25:2-4): Keturah bears him 6 sons

- \* Abraham's fortune (25:5-6)

- \* Abraham's dies (25:7-11): He dies at the age of 175

- The Genealogy of Ishmael (25:12-18)

- The Genealogy of Isaac (25:19-34)

- \* Prayer for kids (25:19-21): Isaac pleads with God for Rebekah

- \* Prophecy in the womb (25:22-23): God exalts Jacob over Esau

- \* Its Twins! (25:24-26) Esau and Jacob born
- \* The birthright (25:27-34): Esau despises and sells his birthright

## VII. Isaac (26-27)

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#### Isaac in Gerar (26:1-16)

- \* Famine in the land (26:1)
- \* God forbids Egypt with promises (26:2-6)
- \* Isaac lies about Rebekah (26:7) – like Abram did
- \* Abimelech confronts Isaac over (26:8-11)
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- \* Abimelech asks Isaac to leave (26:15-16)

#### Isaac in the Valley (26:17-22)

- \* Isaac digs the old wells (26:17-18)
- \* Isaac digs, quarrels over new wells (19-22)

#### Isaac in Beersheba (26:23-35)

- \* God confirms covenant with Isaac (26:23-25)
- \* Abimelech makes peace with Isaac (26:26-31)
- \* A new well (26:32-33)
- \* Esau's poor marriages (26:34-35)

# Notes for Booklet

## Chapter 25 Highlights and Helps by Pastor Jim

### An interesting prophetic picture

As we come to chapter 25, we have a continuing and fascinating prophetic picture held before us. First – a quick review of what we have seen:

Gen 22 – The sacrifice of Isaac – foreshadowing the Cross amazingly

Gen 23 – The death of Sarah – foreshadowing Israel's rejection of Christ

Gen 24 – A gentile bride for Isaac – foreshadowing the bride of Christ, the Church

Gen 25 – Abraham remarries.....

The question for you and I, is what (if any) picture is in this remarriage of Abraham. I hold before you that I believe it is a picture of Israel restored. I think this is a picture of Israel in the Millennium – the wife of Abraham, as a picture of the wife of God.

Consider that at the end of chapter 24, we see a foreshadowing of the rapture, when the unnamed servant (picturing the Holy Spirit), departs with the bride to present her to His father. In similar fashion, at the rapture, the Spirit will depart from the earth bringing the bride of Christ to heaven, to present her to Christ. Time wise, that would place us in the tribulation and following, the Millennium. Prophetically, God tells us that this is when He will again work with the nation of Israel. Keturah becomes a fascinating picture of this season of time.

Jon Courson has this to say in his commentary: *I believe the names of the sons born to Abraham and Keturah parallel the prophetic picture of the people of Israel. You see, when the church is taken up in the Rapture, the veil will be lifted from the eyes of the Jewish people, and all of Israel will be saved at the end of the Tribulation. Then, she will play a primary role as God rules and reigns from Jerusalem in the millennial kingdom (Revelation 20). What a glorious time that will be! Nature will be restored to what it was originally meant to be: the mountains shall sing; the trees of the field shall clap their hands; the lion will lie down with the lamb. Not only will nature react, but, also, a complete disarmament by all nations and people will result in swords being turned into plowshares and spears into pruninghooks (Isaiah 2).*

*But wait. There's a dark side—as seen in the sons of Keturah. Zimram means "Song." Jokshan means "Snare." Medan means "Strife." Midian*

*means "Man will leave." Shuah means "From the pit." What begins with a song ends in the pit.*

*You see, Scripture tells us man will live to be 1,000 years old in the millennial kingdom. Consequently, the world's population will mushroom to the point that at the end of the millennial kingdom, there will be multiplied generations that, because they have never known anything else, become bored with peace, love, and prosperity. Thus, perfection will be a Snare to them. Strife and Contention will follow. Although many of them will want to do their own thing and Leave the way of the Lord, they'll not be able to because righteousness will be enforced in the millennial kingdom. But, because God will not force His will on anyone, He will allow Satan to be released from the pit for a short season at the end of the Millennium. Satan will lead a rebellion, before he is cast permanently into the lake of fire along with those who, bored with perfection, choose to follow him.*

### **A Time to Pray**

We have two wonderful places where Isaac and Rebekah turn to the Lord in prayer.

First, we see them unable to have kids. They have been married twenty years and are still barren. Isaac prayed for his wife. This is a good move. God tells us in the book of James that we have not, because we ask not. There are things we will not have in this life, if we do not pray.

Second, while Pregnant, the twins are struggling in her womb. Rebekah knows something is not right, and she goes to the one who can answer all such confusions – she prays and God tells her of the spiritual struggle happening in her womb.

These are two good examples of prayer and the blessing that comes through it – to obtain what we would not have otherwise and to know what we could not know if God did not show us.

### **Esau despises his birthright**

The blessing and spiritual responsibility of the birthright meant nothing to Esau. It tells us in the passage that Esau despises his birthright. It has no value to him. He is willing to sell it for something so small – a bowl of stew. Sadly, others like Esau, value spiritual blessings and responsibilities in the same way. The smallest fleshly benefit and craving robs them of great spiritual blessings. May God rescue us from this.

## Chapter 26 Highlights and Helps by Pastor Jim

### Generational folly

As Isaac enters Gerar, he repeats the sin of his father Abraham and lies about his wife. Abraham did this twice, once in Egypt and once in Gerar. Isaac learned this sin from his dad and repeats it. There is something sad, scary about this for parents – seeing kids repeating our sins. May God rescue families from this, sins learned and passed down. With this, may children learn not to repeat the folly of their parents. When I consider that Isaac should have seen how each time Abraham did this, it was foolish and brought bad consequences – he could have and should have learned not to make the same mistake. On top of this, God had just met with Isaac and reinforced His promises...Isaac had many reasons not to continue in his parents sin...but he still repeated their folly. Yet God in His grace rescued Isaac, as He had done for Abraham

### Isaac's Wells

This chapter is filled with references to Isaac's wells. A well, a source of water, is a spiritual picture for us of sources of Spiritual water. Water as a picture in the Bible is a twofold picture of the Truth of God, His Word – for example it tells us in Eph 5 that Jesus washes us with the water of the Word. Yet, water is also a type of the Holy Spirit. Jesus told us that rivers of living water would flow out of our hearts. So, water is this picture of the Word and the Spirit (and the two go very well together) – places of spiritual refreshment and life. With this understanding, there are at least five key pictures and guidelines for wells in our lives within this chapter.

Old wells dug again (v.18) – one of the great needs in our lives is to mine the truth that previous generations have discovered and learned. There is an arrogance that is so dangerous that does not want to consult history or previous generations for spiritual truth and refreshment. Further, the enemy seeks to stop up these wells, as was recorded for us in this verse. Wise is the Christian that digs the old wells, who searches and digs deep into the wells of previous godly generations and obtains refreshment there.

New wells (v.19-22) - we need to mine the resources of the past, but there is a real danger of almost living in the past – not the present. The need today, is that Christians draw from the past, but also seek fresh, new wells – a present experience with the Spirit and in the

Word. Again the danger is that some only want old wells and others only want new wells, spiritually. Yet the balanced Christian will delight and seek refreshment in the past and the present work of God.

Uncontentious wells (v.20-22) – there is a picture here about staying away from wells that are contentious. There are places that bring only disagreement and argument, and the servant of the Lord is called not to be contentious. Stay away from contentious spiritual wells.

Spacious wells (v.22) – as they move away from contention, Isaac finds rest, a place and calls the well Rehoboth – meaning spacious. It is a picture of us finding our place in life, in the body of Christ and being refreshed by the Spirit and the Word there. May you find your Rehoboth in life.

Witness wells (v.32-33) – as God brings Isaac to peace with Abimelech, it is a picture of us rightly relating to the world, shinning God's ways and truth well. Isaac names this well the same way Abraham did when he came to such a place with Abimelech – Beersheba. It is a picture of us shinning God's truth and perfection in the world. It is a place of the Word and the Spirit flowing in us, and us blessing the world. May God bring you to Beersheba.

## Q & A With Pastor Phil

### **What was the significance of Esau selling his birthright?**

The account of the births of Jacob and Esau foretells the struggle between these two men that will be revealed in the following chapters. The story is not only about two men who will struggle for supremacy, but about the future of two nations. It is full of drama, parental favoritism and deceitful scheming. While all of this is interesting and offers many practical lessons, the most important thing to observe is the fulfilling of God's word.

### **Rebekah Was Barren**

It is interesting to watch God's plan unfold. His ways are not out ways. We would most likely prepare a course for ourselves that is free of obstacles. God designs a way for us with seemingly insurmountable obstacles. God promised to multiply Abraham's descendants, however his wife was barren and beyond the age of childbearing. Despite this situation, God did the impossible and provided Isaac, the son of promise. Forty years later, Isaac is at a similar place. His wife Rebekah is also barren. Once again, God must move in a powerful way for His plan to unfold. For twenty years, Rebekah was unable to have children.

### **Isaac Prayed**

God could have just as easily given Rebekah children early on. Instead He draws them deeper. No doubt there were times of anguish while they waited. It is here that Isaac pleaded with the Lord and the Lord answered his prayer. It is fascinating to think on God's ways. He is the sovereign Lord of the universe. Nothing is too difficult for Him and He is steadfast in keeping His promises. He is not dependent upon us to ensure that His plans are carried out. Nevertheless, let us be diligent to learn a lesson from Isaac. Though we rest in God's sovereignty, don't let that rest silence our prayers. God purposefully brought Isaac to a place of prayer and He answered Him. Beware of our limited insight that asks the question, "God will do what God will do. Why pray?" In this life we will not fully understand this mystery, but let us be those who pray without ceasing.

### **The Struggle Begins**

Verse 21 says that God granted Isaac's plea and Rebekah conceived. She soon realized however, that all was not well within her. Verse 22 says that the children struggled within her. The Hebrew word that is translated

"struggled" in this verse is a strong one. It literally means to crack in pieces, or to smash or crush. This was indeed an intense struggle. When Rebekah inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered her in verse 23:

*"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."*

Romans 9:10-14 tells us that God chose Jacob even before the twins were born. Before there were any works, God's purposes in election were at work. Neither twin was deserving of blessing. Jacob, although, he valued the birthright, was still prone to manipulation and deceit. The twins in her body would become two nations and the Lord confirms that the younger would be stronger than the older. This went against the natural order which stated that the firstborn would have greater privilege. When the children were born, Esau came first. When his brother came out, he grabbed the heel of Esau. He was named Jacob which means supplanter. As the children grew, Esau became a skillful hunter. Jacob was milder than the rugged Esau and preferred to dwell in tents rather than the field. The struggle was not limited to Jacob and Esau. Their parents also had ambitions for them. Isaac loved Esau, but Rebekah favored Jacob.

### **The Right of the Firstborn**

Esau was the firstborn and therefore, had the birthright. The term denotes the special privileges and advantages that belonged to the firstborn. The firstborn son was to be given a double portion of the inheritance. In addition to greater material possessions, the position also included a special blessing of the father and the place of leadership within the family. When Israel became a monarchy, the firstborn son of the king would be heir to the throne. With this added authority also came responsibility. The firstborn took on the functions of the spiritual leader within the family.

Jesus is the greatest example of having the firstborn birthright. As the only begotten Son of the Father, He is the heir of all things (Heb 1:2) and the head of the church (Col 1:18). It should be noted that in Christ's case, firstborn speaks of preeminence and priority and not of birth since He is without beginning.

The birthright was protected under the Law of Moses. This prevented the father from giving the rights to a younger son (Deut 21:15-17). There are examples in scripture where exceptions were made. Jacob's firstborn son Reuben, would be stripped of his privilege because of his poor character (Gen 49:1-4). Also in the case of Joseph's sons, Ephraim the younger, would receive a greater blessing than Manasseh (Gen 48:15-20). Again,

this goes against the natural order and it gives us great insight into the Lord's ways. He would choose a young David to be king and bypass his older brothers. David's son Solomon, was given the throne by God in place of Adonijah, David's firstborn (1 Kings 2:13,15). There are also examples from history that a birthright could be exchanged. Ancient documents recovered from Nuzi in Mesopotamia have shown that the birthright could be transferred to another member within the family.

### **The Birthright Despised**

The future of her two sons was revealed by God to Rebekah. Perhaps Jacob was well aware of this as well. Regardless of his exact motivation, Jacob saw the opportunity and baited his brother. In this case Jacob was the greater hunter. Esau came in from the field and was famished and was willing to give Jacob his birthright for some stew. What we discover about Esau is that he valued only carnal and temporal things. He exchanged his future blessings for something that lasted only a few moments. Esau was impulsive and carried by emotion. The spiritual significance of his birthright was of no value to him. He forfeited the covenant promise made to Abraham and his offspring. His lack of spiritual insight is further seen in his marriage to two Canaanite women which became a great grief to his parents.

### **The Warning For Us**

Hebrews 12:16 gives us a stern warning. An example is made of Esau. He is likened to a fornicator and profane person. Esau gratified the appetites of his flesh and sold his birthright for one morsel of food. He lived recklessly and lost what he could not again recover. He found no place for repentance. In contrast, we are to be those who pursue holiness. We must value the eternal blessings and forsake the temporal. How easy it is for us to live only for the pleasures of this world and to undervalue the most important things. Let us be diligent to put aside carnal appetites and walk in light of eternity.

# With the Word Bible Commentary

## Genesis 25

The center of attention now shifts from Abraham to Isaac.

***Isaac the heir.*** God's resurrection power continued to work in Abraham; he married again and begat six more sons. God is not likely to do this for people today, but the spiritual lesson is clear: we should be fruitful even in old age (Ps. 92:14). Abraham distinguished Isaac from his other sons: he gave them generous gifts, but he made Isaac his heir (v. 5; 24:35). God gives good things to unsaved people (Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:17; 17:25), but only those who are His children, through faith in Christ, can claim their inheritance. (See Rom. 8:17; Eph. 3:6; Heb. 1:2.)

***Isaac the orphan.*** Abraham lived by faith and died by faith (Heb. 11:13), and God kept His word (Gen. 15:15). Isaac and Ishmael together mourned their father's death, for death is a human experience that binds all men together. Unsaved relatives share in times of sorrow, but their grief is hopeless without Jesus Christ. Compare Ishmael's death (v. 17) with that of Abraham.

***Isaac the intercessor.*** Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah. For twenty years, they waited for a family that did not come. God blessed Isaac in everything but the thing he wanted most. He and Rebekah knew that God had promised descendants (Gen. 15:5), so Isaac laid hold of the promise and prayed. True prayer lays hold of God's Word (John 15:7) and seeks to accomplish God's purposes.

***Isaac the father.*** God gave them twin boys who were opposite each other in every way. He also gave them a revelation that the younger one, Jacob, would carry on the messianic line. For that reason, you would think that Isaac would have favored Jacob but the physical won over the spiritual. Esau pictures the man of the world who despises the eternal and lives for the temporal.

—Wiersbe, W. W. (1997, c1991). With the word Bible commentary (Ge 25:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

# With the Word Bible Commentary

## Genesis 26

Faith cannot grow apart from trials, and this chapter records several trials that Isaac endured and shows how he responded to them.

**Escape** (1–6). Like Abraham, Isaac started for Egypt (12:10ff.); but God stopped him at the border (10:19) and reassured him. Isaac was blessed because of Abraham (vv. 5, 24). We must never forget our debt to spiritual leaders (and relatives) who have gone before us.

**Deception** (7–14). While in enemy territory, Isaac resorted to the “family lie” that twice got Abraham into trouble (12:10ff.; 20:1ff.). It is sad when the new generation imitates the sins of the old generation. God blessed Isaac in a material way, but we wonder what his spiritual life was like. Did his neighbors trust him after hearing about his lie?

**Surrender** (15–25). Water is a very precious commodity in desert country, and possessing a well is almost the same as having a deed to the land. Instead of defending what his men had done, Isaac moved to new locations. He may have been practicing Romans 12:18.

**Confrontation** (26–35). In contrast to his father Abraham, who dared to declare war, Isaac was a quiet, meditative man who tried to avoid trouble. He boldly faced his neighbors with their bad conduct—and he won! Note that he went the extra mile and entertained the men at a feast. (See Rom. 12:18–21.

—Wiersbe, W. W. (1997, c1991). With the word Bible commentary  
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