

## Genesis Chapter 25 - Commentary By Mike Wells

### Chapter 25 Overview:

Abraham's gets remarried, then passes away and is buried in verses 1-10. Then we see the blessing of God on Isaac and the descendants of Ishmael in verses 11-18. This is followed by the birth of Esau and Jacob in verses 19-26. Next, we see how different the character of Esau and Jacob is in verses 27-28. And finally, we see that Esau despises and sells his birthright in verses 29-34.

**Genesis 25 : 1-4** – *1 Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. 2 And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. 3 And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim. 4 And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.*

- Abraham remarried following Sarah's death.
- His new wife's name was Keturah.
- She bore six additional sons to Abraham
- Of these six sons, the only one to which there is any significant biblical record is Midian.
- They all were the start point of the various tribes that became the essence of the Arabian peoples to this day.

**Genesis 25 : 5** - *Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac.*

- Remember, Isaac was the son of promise.
- He became heir of all.

**Genesis 25 : 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.*

- The reference to the "*concubines which Abraham had*" in all likelihood refers to Hagar and Keturah. (Concubine is a woman who cohabits with a man without being legally married to him.)
- To their sons he gave gifts and sent these sons (noted in verses 2-4) "*eastward, unto the east country.*"
- That likely refers to the region generally known today as Arabia.
- He intended a clear line of segregation and demarcation between them and Isaac.
- Abraham, in remarrying, may have stepped out of God's perfect will and into the realm of His permissive will.
- Those sons which became a significant part of the Arabian peoples would be a thorn in the side of Israel and thereby the descendants of Isaac.

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

- Abraham died “*in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people.*”
- Abraham was 175 years old when he died
- The final phrase beautifully describes the death of a saint.
- We will be someday gathered to our people who have already gone on before to heaven.
- A similar description will be made of other men of God in the bible

**Genesis 25 : 9-11** - *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 of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife. 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 and Ishmael buried Abraham in the family burial site in the cave of Machpelah which Abraham had purchased years before upon the death of Sarah.
- Isaac continued to live by the well and God blessed him there.

**Genesis 25 : 12-18** – *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, according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam, 14 And Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa, 15 Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah: 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. 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. 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.*

- The lineage of Ishmael is noted.
- Ishmael’s offspring were the beginnings of the various Arabic peoples.
- Ishmael had twelve sons which became princes in their respective nations (i.e., tribes).
- This notes the fulfillment of the prophecy made to Abraham concerning Ishmael in **Genesis 17 : 20** - *And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.*
- Ishmael died at the age of 137.
- Similar to Abraham, it is noted that he was “*gathered unto his people.*”
- The sons of Ishmael came to live “*from Havilah unto Shur.*”
- To this day the descendants of Ishmael populate the Middle East, largely in the Arabian peninsula and ranging from the borders of Egypt to the region of Shur (Syria).

**Genesis 25 : 19-20** – *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 to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister to Laban the Syrian.*

- The word translated as **generations** (hdltwt *towledah*) means ‘**descendants.**’
- Note, that Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah.

**Genesis 25 : 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.***

- In verse 26, we learn that Isaac and Rebekah had no children until they had been married for twenty years.
- No doubt, it caused issues and concern for both Isaac and Rebekah.
- Isaac therefore “*entreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren.*”
- Isaac took the problem to the Lord and asked God to give them children.
- It was a clear example of faith.
- He no doubt knew that God had promised his father Abraham a numberless amount of offspring through Isaac.
- Isaac knew that is God’s promise was true then he must have children.
- So he reminded God of His promise.
- That is faith.
- Rebekah his wife soon conceived as promised

**Genesis 25 : 22-23 – *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. 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.***

- God told Rebekah that she would have twins.
- The record of the unborn children struggling in her womb shows that the children were in conflict even while still in their mother’s womb.
- Due to the struggle in her womb, Rebekah inquired of the Lord, “*Why am I thus?*”
- She certainly did not have an easy pregnancy.
- God’s answer to her is “*two nations are in thy womb.*”
- They would become two distinctly different peoples (“*two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels*”).
- In addition God said, “*the one people shall be stronger than the other people.*”
- Finally God says, “*the elder shall serve the younger.*”
- Esau the first born would indeed be under control by Israel (Jacob) in the long run.
- That absolutely will be the case when Christ returns in the Millennium as well.

**Genesis 25 : 24-26 - *And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. 25 And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. 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.***

- Indeed, Rebekah had twins.
- The first to be delivered Esau was reddish in color.
- The redness referred to the red hair on baby Esau..
- The name *Esau* literally means ‘*hairy.*’
- When the second baby was born, he grabbed his brother’s heel.
- The name *Jacob* literally means ‘*heel holder*’ and also came to mean ‘*supplanter.*’
- **Supplanter** has the sense of trickery, cheating, or defrauding.
- Jacob was not above any of that in his lifetime.

**Genesis 25 : 27-28 - *And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. 28 And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.***

- As the twins grew, Esau became a skilled hunter and outdoorsman.
- Jacob stayed close to home “*dwelling in tents.*”
- The word translated as **plain** (Mt *tam*) has a sense of thought ranging from ‘**complete,**’ to ‘**handsome,**’ to ‘**decent.**’
- While Esau was the outdoorsman, Jacob stayed at home and was more domestic
- Isaac favored Esau for the game he brought home.
- You could say that Esau was daddy’s boy
- Rebekah favored Jacob
- You could say that Jacob was momma’s boy.

**Genesis 25 : 29-34 - *29 And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint: 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. 31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. 32 And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? 33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. 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.***

- The time frame is not noted, however, it may well be concluded that both Esau and Jacob had become young men.
- The famine noted later in Genesis 26:1 likely had already commenced.
- Apparently, Esau had moved out and was living off the land.
- However, because of the famine, he could not find food and returned home exhausted.
- The word translated as **faint** (Pye *ayeph*) has the sense of being ‘exhausted.’
- Esau’s request for food from his brother was in desperation, he was starving.
- Jacob had “*sod pottage*” which means, he had boiled soup, or perhaps a stew or chili.
- Jacob saw an opportunity to profit at his brother’s expense.
- Perceiving his brother was apparently desperate, he made him a proposition: “*Sell me this day thy birthright.*”
- The ancient, middle-eastern custom of the birthright meant the firstborn would be heir of most of his father’s estate when he died.
- The birthright also transferred leadership of the clan to the son that held it.
- Jacob was not above trying to trade for this privilege from his brother, even when his brother was under duress.
- As far as Esau was concerned, he was sick and weak to the point of dying.
- Therefore, he saw no loss in selling it.
- So, Jacob forced Esau to swear the birthright over to him in return for food.
- Esau therefore ate, drank, rose up and went his way.
- In so doing, he “*despised his birthright.*”