

NOON BIBLE STUDY: GENESIS 25

GENESIS 25:1-6 - ABRAHAM REMARRIES

GENESIS 25 OPENS UP WITH A NEW CHAPTER IN THE LIFE OF OUR HERO ABRAHAM. A NEW WIFE (KETURAH) AND NEW KIDS TOO! THAT BEING SAID, ISAAC IS ABRAHAM'S NUMBER ONE SON ON EVERY LEVEL. TO MAKE THIS CLEAR, THE TEXT SAYS "ABRAHAM GAVE ALL THAT HE HAD TO ISAAC" (V. 5). THAT DOESN'T MEAN ABRAHAM WAS UNKIND TO HIS OTHER SONS (HE GAVE GIFTS TO THEM PER V. 6)

ABRAHAM'S SECOND "WIFE" IS PROBABLY SIMILAR TO HAGAR IN THE SENSE THAT THEY WERE "CONCUBINES". ESPECIALLY SINCE THIS WAS A CULTURAL DETAIL OF THEIR TIME, ALL OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF THIS RELATIONSHIP IS NOT CLEAR. THANKFULLY, THE ESV STUDY BIBLE GIVES US SOME DETAILS:

"CONCUBINES" PROBABLY REFERS TO HAGAR AND KETURAH, WHO BOTH BORE ABRAHAM CHILDREN, ALTHOUGH NEITHER WOMAN SHARES THE STATUS OF SARAH, + ABRAHAM'S FIRST WIFE. THE TERM "CONCUBINE" (HB. PILEGESH) MAY GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT NO FORMAL RELATIONSHIP EXISTED BETWEEN ABRAHAM AND THESE WOMEN. YET SINCE THEIR SONS ARE PUBLICLY RECOGNIZED AS ABRAHAM'S CHILDREN, SOME TYPE OF FORMAL RELATIONSHIP EVIDENTLY EXISTED. IN JUDG. 19:9, THE FATHER OF A MAN'S CONCUBINE IS DESIGNATED AS HIS "FATHER-IN-LAW," SUGGESTING THAT A FORM OF MARRIAGE HAS TAKEN PLACE BETWEEN THE MAN AND THE WOMAN. BUT THE SONS OF HAGAR AND KETURAH ARE CLEARLY DISTINGUISHED FROM ISAAC (SEE ALSO 1 CHRON. 1:28—34).

GENESIS 25:7-11 - ABRAHAM DIES

ABRAHAM IS DESCRIBED AS "AN OLD MAN SATISFIED WITH LIFE (V. 8)." THAT'S QUITE THE DESCRIPTION. WE'LL LOOK AT THE BEAUTY OF THIS MORE LATER. ABRAHAM DIED AND IS BURIED IN THE SAME PLACE SARAH WAS, THE PLACE HE HAD MET WITH THE LORD. ISHMAEL, ABRAHAM'S SON THROUGH HAGAR REAPPEARS FOR HIS FATHER'S BURIAL.

AS THE FINAL VERSES OF ABRAHAM'S LIFE ARE WRITTEN THERE IS A TRANSITION OF THE FOCUS OF GENESIS ON TO ISAAC. "GOD BLESSED ISAAC (V. 11)" IS A COMMON PHRASE WE HAVE SEEN SPOKEN OF ABRAHAM, AND NOW ISAAC PICKS UP THE MANTLE OF BLESSING AND BEING BLESSED BY THE LORD.

GENESIS 25:12-18 - THE FAMILY OF ISHMAEL, SON OF ABRAHAM

"BEFORE PROCEEDING TO RECOUNT IN DETAIL THE EVENTS ASSOCIATED WITH ISAAC'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY, A SHORT SECTION IS DEVOTED TO NAMING THE 12 SONS OF ISHMAEL, WHO BECAME CHIEFTAINS OF TRIBES IN ARABIA. THIS INFORMATION CONFIRMS THAT GOD'S PROMISE IN 17:20 WAS FULFILLED." (ESV STUDY BIBLE, GENESIS 25:12-18)

GENESIS 17:20 - "AS FOR ISHMAEL, I HAVE HEARD YOU; BEHOLD, I WILL BLESS HIM, AND WILL MAKE HIM FRUITFUL AND WILL MULTIPLY HIM EXCEEDINGLY. HE SHALL BECOME THE FATHER OF TWELVE PRINCES, AND I WILL MAKE HIM A GREAT NATION.

GENESIS 25:19-21 - THE FAMILY OF ISAAC, SON OF ABRAHAM

IN CONTRAST TO THE QUICK LISTING OF ISHMAEL'S FAMILY, THE TEXT DOESN'T SPEND A LOT OF INK ON ISAAC'S STORY, SIMPLY BECAUSE IN OUR JOURNEY THROUGH GENESIS, ISAAC'S STORY IS JUST GETTING STARTED. (AND GENESIS' FOCUS IS ON ISAAC'S LIFE, NOT ISHMAEL'S, BECAUSE HE IS THE HEIR OF THE ABRAHAMIC PROMISE.) HE HAS JUST GOTTEN MARRIED TO REBEKAH (GENESIS 24 TOLD THAT STORY) AND NOW, AS A RESULT OF AN ANSWERED PRAYER, REBEKAH IS PREGNANT.

IT'S INTERESTING THAT THE TEXT DOESN'T SPEND A LOT OF TIME TALKING ABOUT REBEKAH'S BARRENNESS. THAT WAS A MAJOR FOCUS OF ABRAHAM AND SARAH'S STORY AS THEY WAITED FOR THE PROMISED CHILD AND YET WITH ISAAC AND REBEKAH, WE GET A QUICK VERSE (25:21) THAT MENTIONS THE FACT THAT REBEKAH WAS BARREN BUT WITHIN THE SAME VERSE WE LEARN THAT SHE'S NOT ANYMORE BECAUSE ISAAC PRAYED.

CERTAINLY THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT FOR THIS COUPLE. CERTAINLY THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN ANXIETY OVER WHAT SEEMED TO BE THE INABILITY TO BECOME PREGNANT AS THE MONTHS AND YEARS PASSED. WE KNOW THE STRESS THIS SITUATION BROUGHT UPON ABRAHAM AND SARAH'S LIFE AND YET ALL WE GET IS A QUICK MENTION IN REGARDS TO REBEKAH.

IN FACT, WE WILL READ IN A MOMENT (V. 26) THAT WHEN REBEKAH FINALLY GIVES BIRTH, ISAAC IS 60 YEARS OLD! THAT CONFIRMS THAT THEY WERE UNABLE TO HAVE CHILDREN FOR 20 YEARS! WHAT DOES ALL OF THIS MEAN? WELL, IT WOULD SEEM THAT THE SCRIPTURE'S FOCUS IS NOT ON THE STRUGGLE TO GET PREGNANT (AS IT WAS WITH ABRAHAM AND SARAH), BUT ON THE CHILD(REN) REBEKAH WILL BEAR.

GENESIS 25:22-23 - A PROPHECY ABOUT THE CHILDREN

DURING REBEKAH'S PREGNANCY, THE CHILDREN INSIDE OF HER HAD A LOT OF TURMOIL. SHE WONDERED WHY AND ASKED THE LORD ABOUT IT. THE LORD SENT A WORD THAT PROPHETICALLY SPOKE TO THE STRUGGLE THAT THE TWO CHILDREN AND THEIR DESCENDANTS AFTER THEM WOULD HAVE. HERE'S HOW THE NLT TRANSLATES THIS WORD:

GENESIS 25:23 AND THE LORD TOLD HER, "THE SONS IN YOUR WOMB WILL BECOME TWO NATIONS. FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, THE TWO NATIONS WILL BE RIVALS. ONE NATION WILL BE STRONGER THAN THE OTHER; AND YOUR OLDER SON WILL SERVE YOUR YOUNGER SON."

WE'LL SEE AS GENESIS UNFOLDS AND THE STORY OF THE TWO SONS IS TOLD EXACTLY HOW THIS PLAYED OUT. BUT THIS WAS QUITE THE FIRST THING TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR YET TO BE BORN CHILDREN! (AND YOU THOUGHT YOUR KIDS HAD SEASONS OF BICKERING AND CONFLICT!)

GENESIS 25:24-28 - ESAU AND JACOB ARE BORN

AT LAST THE TWO SONS ARE BORN. ESAU IS THE FIRST BORN AND HE IS RED AND VERY HAIRY. THE SECOND IS NAMED JACOB AND HE CAME OUT OF THE WOMB LITERALLY HOLDING HIS BROTHER'S HEEL! (HIS NAME *JACOB* REFLECTS THIS INCIDENT).

"THE NAME "JACOB" (CF. ESV FOOTNOTE) NOT ONLY RESEMBLES THE HEBREW TERM FOR "HEEL" ('AQEB) BUT ALSO HAS THE CONNOTATION OF "DECEIVER." TO GRASP SOMEONE BY THE HEEL WAS APPARENTLY A FIGURE OF SPEECH MEANING "TO DECEIVE." THE MOTIF OF DECEPTION APPEARS IN A NUMBER OF EPISODES ASSOCIATED WITH JACOB. ISAAC WAS SIXTY YEARS OLD. THE TWINS ARE BORN 15 YEARS BEFORE THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM, WHICH IS RECORDED IN VV. 7—8. OCCASIONALLY IN GENESIS, FOR SPECIFIC REASONS, SOME EVENTS ARE NARRATED OUT OF CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER, AS HERE." (ESV STUDY BIBLE, GENESIS 25:26)

V. 28 - GENERATIONAL DYSFUNCTION UNFOLDS - THIS SEEMS LIKE A SIMPLE STATEMENT THAT EASY TO OVERLOOK - BUT THIS IS NOT A GOOD THING TO READ. THE PARENTS HAD "FAVORITES". THIS QUICK VERSE WILL ACTUALLY BECOME SOME OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE GENERATIONAL DYSFUNCTION THAT WILL BEGIN TO CONTAMINATE THIS FAMILY. ESAU IS A HUNTER AND JACOB'S A PEACEFUL MAN. MORE ON THIS TO COME.

GENESIS 25:29-34 - AN EARLY AND TELLING STORY OF ESAU AND JACOB

CULTURALLY THIS IS A BIG DEAL. TO HAVE A "BIRTHRIGHT" MEANS YOU HAVE THE FAVORED HEIR STATUS OF YOUR FAMILY. IT'S THE RIGHTS THAT BELONG TO THE FIRST BORN, IN THIS CASE, BELONGING TO FIRST BORN ISAAC. THIS STORY DESCRIBED A FAMISHED ESAU SO DESPERATE FOR FOOD THAT HE CONFESSES HE "IS ABOUT TO DIE" (*DRAMATIC MUCH THERE ESAU?*). JACOB, WHO HAD ALREADY BEEN FORESHADOWED AS A LITTLE BIT OF A DECEIVER TAKES ADVANTAGE OF HIS DESPERATE BROTHER TO TRADE A BOWL OF LENTIL STEW FOR ALL OF THE RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF THE FIRST BORN SON!

CLEARLY THAT STATUS WAS NOT SOMETHING THAT WAS IMPORTANT TO ESAU. HE'S WILLING TO GIVE IT AWAY ALL BECAUSE HE IS HUNGRY. JUST AS CLEAR IS THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO JACOB - HE'S QUICK TO ASK FOR IT WHEN HE SEES THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF. ESAU, THE SKILLED HUNTER WHO COULD HAVE EASILY GOTTEN AND PREPARED HIMSELF SOMETHING TO EAT, *SWEARS* (A BIG AND SERIOUS MOVE IN THEIR CULTURE) TO GIVE THE BIRTHRIGHT TO JACOB AND JACOB THEN SCOOPS THE LENTILS IN A BOWL FOR HIS BIG BROTHER.

ESAU CLEARLY DOESN'T CARE OR REALIZE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BEING THE FIRST BORN GRANDSON OF ABRAHAM! AND WITH THIS QUICKLY MOVING INCIDENT BETWEEN THE BROTHERS ESAU AND JACOB, THINGS BEGIN TO SHIFT, JUST AS THE PRENATAL PROPHECY FORETOLD.

THERE'S A LOT TO UNPACK ABOUT THE LIFE OF ISAAC AND HIS TWO SONS ESAU AND JACOB. BUT AS WE END I WANT TO LOOK BACK AT THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM. THOUGH IT SEEMED TO COME AND GO PRETTY QUICKLY IN THE TEXT, THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM IS A VERY SIGNIFICANT MOMENT - NOT JUST HISTORICALLY, BUT THEOLOGICALLY. ABRAHAM WAS THE ONE GOD COVENANTED WITH AS THE FIRST MAJOR STEP TOWARDS WORLDWIDE AND HUMANITY-WIDE REDEMPTION. HE PROMISES HIM BLESSING (RATHER THAN THE CURSE UPON HUMANS AFTER ADAM AND EVE SINNED). HE PROMISED HIM A MULTITUDE OF DESCENDANTS (RETURNING TO THE GREAT CALL THAT WAS ON ADAM AND EVE TO BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY). AND THE LORD PROMISED TO GIVE ABRAHAM THE LAND (WHICH HE HAD ORIGINALLY GIVEN TO ADAM AND EVE TO STEWARD). ALL THAT ADAM AND EVE LOST, GOD BEGINS TO GIVE BACK TO ABRAHAM, AND ULTIMATELY ALL THOSE WHO ARE OF FAITH. THERE'S A LOT TO CELEBRATE AND REJOICE IN AS WE READ THOSE POINTS.

BUT AT THE SAME TIME, THE CONTEXT IN WHICH WE ARE CELEBRATING THESE GREAT COVENANTAL PROMISES IS AS WE READ THAT ABRAHAM HAS DIED. HE DIDN'T GET THE PROMISES. WE KNOW FROM OTHER SCRIPTURE THAT ABRAHAM WAS CONTENT TO WAIT ON GOD'S TIMING AND BELIEVED THAT THERE WAS ANOTHER DAY COMING IN THE FUTURE WHERE ALL THAT GOD HAD PROMISED WOULD COME TO PAST. AND SO HE LIVED IN HIS "TODAY" IN LIGHT OF HIS "TOMORROW". THIS IS REALLY THE MODEL OF LIVING BY FAITH AND NOT BY SIGHT FOR ALL WHO FOLLOWED ABRAHAM.

AND THAT BRINGS US BACK TO THE FINAL DESCRIPTION OF ABRAHAM AND HIS LIFE IN GENESIS 25:8:

"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."

ABRAHAM, THE ONE WHO WAS *PROMISED* THE PROMISES BUT NEVER RECEIVED THE PROMISES IN HIS LIFETIME STILL IS DESCRIBED AS LIVING A GOOD LIFE (ESV) AND DIES "SATISFIED WITH LIFE." WE NEED TO PAY ATTENTION HERE.

ABRAHAM LIVED A GOOD AND SATISFYING LIFE THAT WAS NOT DEPENDANT ON HIM GETTING EVERYTHING HE WANTED IN THAT LIFE. LET'S READ THAT AGAIN: **"ABRAHAM LIVED A GOOD AND SATISFYING LIFE THAT WAS NOT DEPENDANT ON HIM GETTING EVERYTHING HE WANTED IN THAT LIFE."**

THAT'S SO IMPORTANT FOR ALL OF US TO GRASP BECAUSE FAR TOO OFTEN WE ARE HAPPY AND SATISFIED AND "GOOD" WITH OUR LIVES (AND GOD BY EXTENSION) WHEN WE HAVE RIGHT AND GOOD THINGS IN OUR LIFE IN LINE. AND YET, THAT'S NOT HOW LIFE THIS SIDE OF GLORY WORKS! AND SO TOO MANY OF US ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH OUR LIVES BECAUSE THE THINGS WE WANT AREN'T FALLING INTO PLACE. OUR SATISFACTION LEVELS ARE TOO TIED TO THINGS GOING WELL - AND IF AND WHEN ANYTHING DOESN'T GO WELL - WE'RE NOT SATISFIED ANYMORE. AND GOD FORBID SOMETHING OR SOMEONE IS STANDING IN THE WAY OF THINGS GOING WELL - THEY THEN BECOME THE OBJECT OF OUR DISPLEASURE AND SATISFACTION.

BUT THAT'S NOT THE WAY OF ABRAHAM.

ABRAHAM LIVED A GOOD AND SATISFYING LIFE AND DIED FEELING THAT WAY NOT BECAUSE EVERYTHING WORKED OUT AND HE GOT THE THINGS HE WANTED - IT WAS GOOD AND SATISFYING BECAUSE OF HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. THAT IS WHAT MADE HIS LIFE GOOD. THAT IS WHERE HE GOT HIS SATISFACTION. HE DIDN'T HAVE KIDS UNTIL HE WAS 100. HIS WIFE COULD BE A TOUGH PARTNER AT TIMES. HE DIDN'T LIVE IN THE BEST PART OF TOWN. HIS EXTENDED FAMILY WASN'T GRATEFUL FOR HIS HELP. HE DIDN'T ALWAYS GET RESPECT AND HONOR FROM HIS NEIGHBORS. HE DIDN'T GET THE ACCOLADES HE DESERVED WHEN HE WENT TO WORK IN VARIOUS RECORDS. HE DIDN'T HAVE A PERMANENT HOME HE COULD TAKE PRIDE IN. HE DIDN'T ACHIEVE WHAT OTHERS ACHIEVED.

BUT HE WALKED WITH GOD.

AND HE WAS LOVED BY GOD.

AND HE WAS PURSUED BY GOD.

AND HE HAD A HOPE AND A FUTURE
THAT WAS GUARANTEED BY GOD.

AND SO LIFE WAS GOOD AND HE WAS SATISFIED WITH HIS LOT IN LIFE. AND THEN HE DIED. WITHOUT RECEIVING THE PROMISES. BUT GOD HAS SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT THIS KIND OF LIFE, AND THIS KIND OF MAN:

HEBREWS 11:13-16 - ALL THESE (*INCLUDING ABRAHAM*) DIED IN FAITH, WITHOUT RECEIVING THE PROMISES, BUT HAVING SEEN THEM AND HAVING WELCOMED THEM FROM A DISTANCE, AND HAVING CONFESSED THAT THEY WERE STRANGERS AND EXILES ON THE EARTH. 14 FOR THOSE WHO SAY SUCH THINGS MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THEY ARE SEEKING A COUNTRY OF THEIR OWN. 15 AND INDEED IF THEY HAD BEEN THINKING OF THAT COUNTRY FROM WHICH THEY WENT OUT, THEY WOULD HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN. 16 BUT AS IT IS, THEY DESIRE A BETTER COUNTRY, THAT IS, A HEAVENLY ONE. THEREFORE GOD IS NOT ASHAMED TO BE CALLED THEIR GOD; FOR HE HAS PREPARED A CITY FOR THEM.

ABRAHAM *WILL* RECEIVE THE PROMISES. IN FACT, IN THE GREAT KINGDOM BANQUET THAT WILL INAUGURATE THE AGE TO COME, HE'S GOOD A PRETTY GOOD SPOT AT THE TABLE (MATTHEW 8:11). AND SO BECAUSE OF THE DAY THAT WAS COMING AND THE FACT THAT HE HAD A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IN THE PRESENT, ABRAHAM LIVED A GOOD AND SATISFYING LIFE THAT WASN'T DEPENDANT ON HIS CIRCUMSTANCES.

AND PEOPLE WHO LIVE LIVES LIKE THIS AND WHO WALK WITH GOD, AND WHO ACCEPT THAT GOD IS THEIR TREASURE AND REWARD AND PURPOSE FOR LIVING - GOD HIMSELF IS "NOT ASHAMED TO BE CALLED THEIR GOD." IN OTHER WORDS, THESE TYPES OF PEOPLE ARE THE PEOPLE THAT GOD LOOKS DOWN FROM HEAVEN TODAY WITH PRIDE IN. THEY ARE HIS PEOPLE. WHEN THEY SAY THEY ARE CHILDREN OF GOD, HE SMILES. GOD'S NOT ASHAMED TO BE CALLED THEIR GOD. WHAT. A. STATEMENT. AND GOD HAS SOMETHING SPECIAL PREPARED FOR THEM IN THE END.

SO, WHICH IS MORE IMPORTANT TO YOU? EVERYTHING GOING WELL NOW? OR AN ALL SATISFYING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD WHICH LEADS TO GREAT REWARD THEN, AND A GOD IN HEAVEN THAT IS PROUD TO SAY YOU WALK WITH HIM?

CHOOSE THIS DAY WHICH ONE YOU WANT TO LIVE FOR.