# Torah Series - Book of Genesis

## A. Chapters 24:1-26:34 – Enter: Isaac

**Genesis 24:1-9 – Swear to me!**

- Puberty = Adulthood in the Ancient Near East
- Natality (child death rate) was high. Many women died in child birth.
- Polygamy was widespread for these reasons
- Opens with Abraham advanced in age. He is blessed by the Lord in all things. He calls his oldest servant (who rules over all he has - *Note*: Isaac is still too young to run things at this point, hence the servant) to swear an oath regarding a wife for Isaac.
- The servant is instructed to place his hand "**under Abraham's thigh" -** Euphemism for Abraham's genitals! Serious & solemn oath gesture. Swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and earth, not to take a wife for Isaac from the daughters of **the Canaanites** among whom they dwell.
- Instead, the servant must go to Abraham's country and kindred (Aram/Nahor's family) to find a wife for Isaac, **preserving the covenant line** and **avoiding pagan intermarriage**.
- The servant raises a practical concern: what if the woman is unwilling to follow him back to Canaan? Abraham reassures him that the Lord, who took him from his father's house and promised the land to his offspring, **will send His angel** before the servant to make the journey successful.
- If the woman refuses to come, the servant is **released from the oath**; but under no circumstances is he to take Isaac back to the old country—Isaac must remain in the promised land.

**Genesis 24:10-15 – Saddle up the Camels!**

- The servant swears the oath and takes ten **camels** with goods from his master, then journeys to the city of Nahor (in Mesopotamia). This is a significant journey.
- **Contentious Point**: Liberal scholars wrote all these Bible stories off as fake because they believed camels hadn't been domesticated at this time. But archaeology uncovered camel remains within cities!
- He arrives at the well outside the city in the evening, when women come out to draw water, and prays for a **specific sign** from the Lord: the right young woman will offer him a drink and also water his camels.
- The average person wouldn't do this labour intensive task for a stranger. But it parallels Abraham's hospitality & going the extra mile.
- **Rebekah**—daughter of Bethuel (son of Milcah, wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother)—comes out with her jar on her shoulder

**Genesis 24:16-51 – 'Well', that was a quick answer to prayer!**

- Rebekah is described as very beautiful and a virgin.
- She does the exact sign the servant prayed for, bringing him a drink as well as the camels (a big task, no doubt!)
- He gives her gold jewelry as a thank you/start of the 'bridal price' negotiations
- Servant is greeted by **Laban** (Rebekah's brother), shown great hospitality

- The mission from Abraham is retold to Laban as a recap of the events
- **Laban & Bethuel** respond to the servant favourably, allow Rebekah to go
- Important note: vs 50, they worship Yahweh the same God.

**Genesis 24:52-61 – Matchmaker, make me a match!**
- Everyone agrees to this arrangement.
- Costly gifts are given to Rebekah's family
- They ask Rebekah if she wants to go rather than delay. She agrees to go. This illustrates her faithfulness to God's plan, even though it's all rather sudden.
- The family bless her with similar language used of Abraham's promise from God

**Genesis 24:62-67 – '*Camelzon*' Delivery!**
- The camel convoy arrives!
- Sarah has already died; Isaac takes Rebekah to Sarah's tent to consummate the marriage.
- He becomes the new Patriarch, Rebekah becomes the new Matriarch
- There really was no wedding ceremony at this time. The consummation was it!
- The Christian Roman Empire gave rise to the wedding ceremony
- Vs 67 "**He loved her**" - this is a major thing. Love wasn't a guarantee in ancient marriages. It was often contractual/pragmatic/duty bound.
- **Isaac loves Rebekah** means he treats her exceptionally well/better than Abraham treated Sarah.

**Genesis 25:1-6 – Many sons had Father Abraham**
- Abraham's next wife: **Keturah**
- **Abrahamites ahoy!** Family Groups → Clans → Tribes (common ancestry)
- Isaac inherits everything from Abraham. Other sons get gifts and are sent away to settle elsewhere.

**Genesis 25:7-11 – The Death of Abraham**
- 175 years old, "gathered to his people"/rested with his fathers (Shem's genealogy) → *Sheol* (Hebrew realm of the dead). They had a concept of afterlife.
- **Isaac & Ishmael** bury him with Sarah in the cave. There is no enmity between these brothers.
- ***Beer Lahai Roi*** - "The well of the Living One who sees me."

**Genesis 25:12-18 – Sons of Ishmael**
- Has **12** sons → 12 Kings → 12 Nations // Blessing to Isaac's line
- He is 137 years old, dies, gathered to his people
- They settle in a different area

**Genesis 25:19-34 – Jacob & Esau**
- Rebekah is **barren**. Women were viewed like farmland. Men gave the seed. If nothing grew, it was due to an infertile land (woman's fault)
- Isaac prays, Rebekah **conceives!**
- Rivalry develops in the womb with twins!
- She prays. God tells her: two **nations**/two **peoples** are within you!

- **Struggle is prophetic**. They will struggle, older serves the younger. → Edom will become a vassal of Israel later on
- **Esau** is born, "Red". **Jacob** is born grabbing his heel
- Esau is a manly man, hunter, rough and rugged.
- Jacob is a 'girly man/momma's boy,' gentle, doing more domestic stuff
- **Favourites**: Jacob → Esau, Rebekah → Jacob
- Esau's descendants called → **Edom** (Reddish colour of the land)
- Esau is starving, so trades his **birthright** to Jacob. Jacob shows his "grasping/ambitious" nature; while Esau shows his **contempt** for the birthright (devalues)

**Genesis 26:1-5 – The Promise Continued**

- **Famine** - primitive agriculture, using flooded river silt to grow. Areas dependent on rain often worshiped storm gods (Syria, Palestine, Greece). Egypt, Mesopotamia, etc., gods were associated to the rivers.
- God appears visually to Isaac. "Don't go down to Egypt" - a river region which would make sense during a famine. Emphasis: **God will take care of you**. Trust Him. Temptation: take care of myself, make deals with pagans, do it my way, etc.
- Isaac inherits the same **promises** from God that He gave to Abraham.
- "because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." - Other than circumcision, there haven't been any laws given at this point. This is later Torah language → anachronism and/or foreshadowing the future

**Genesis 26:6-11 – Super Model Syndrome, Again!**

- A repeated scenario. Isaac does **the same thing** as Abraham. He ignored God's promise to protect and bless him & lied to protect himself and acted in bad faith to the men of Gerar.

**Genesis 26:12-16 – A Bumper Crop!**

- Isaac farms & God blesses him bigly. Becomes super rich & wealthy.
- Philistines fill in the wells to make Isaac's life harder. There's a famine going on, he's doing well, Philistines are jealous. (Cf: Cain & Abel)
- Abimelech, king of a city and the region. Gets nervous about Isaac's wealth & power. Gives them the boot. //Egypt with the Hebrews.

**Genesis 26:17-25 – Wells of Contention**

- Valley of Gerar - region around the city of Gerar.
- Isaac restores the wells of Abraham, digs new ones
- Wells***: Esek*** - contention. ***Sitnah*** - enmity. ***Rehoboth*** - room.
- **God appears** to Isaac again, reiterating the promise. Isaac builds an **altar**. Where God appears, an altar is built, representing God's presence. (Tabernacle, Temple, Church)
- They dig another well.

**Genesis 26:26-34 – Delegation of Peace**

- Abimelech with two witnesses (Ahuzzath & Phicol) come to visit
- Isaac: Why are you here?? You hate me! Abimelech is showing repentance.
- They make a covenant of peace. Immediately: a feast! Eat & drink - a sacrificial feast

- This idea carries on into the Torah. When repentance occurs, there is a sacrifice to celebrate. (Cf. LK 15 Prodigal Son returns). Sacrifice doesn't fix the situation. It is a celebration of the restoration following repentance & reconciliation.
- ***Shibah*** - oath.
- Isaac is just like Abraham. This whole odd chapter drives this point home.
- **Esau** - marries local ~~Hutterite~~ Hittite gals (Judith & Basemath). Fun fact: Basemath's dad is Elon, the first Trillionaire Hittite! 🤣
- This is **bad**. Hittite culture worshipped false gods/sexual immorality. Complete opposite of what Abraham wanted for Isaac. Makes life bitter/filled with anxiety. Esau is not following in the pattern of Isaac.

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