

February 13, 2011

The Passing of the Torch

Genesis 25 – 26

Genesis 25:1-6

- 1 “Abraham *had taken* another wife”- at some point in the previous narrative (11:27 – 25:1)
“Keturah”- v6 would indicate she is a concubine wife
5 This verse is in keeping with the servant’s words in 24:36
6 “sent them away”- once more indicating that Isaac is the sole inheritor of the Promised Land

Genesis 25:7-11

- 8 “and was gathered to his people”- This is a clear statement of belief in an afterlife
9 “Isaac and Ishmael his sons”- ages 75 and 90 respectively
9-10 same location given in the details of chapter 23
11 Beer-lahai-roi- where the angel of YHWH spoke to Hagar (Gen 16)

Genesis 25:12-18

- 12 “These are the generations of Ishmael”- This is the 7th of 10 *Toledoths* in Genesis
16 villages- word indicates a town often surrounded by walls
Encampments- word indicates a more nomadic community
18 Havilah to Shur- the barren Sinai Peninsula
“he settled over against all his kinsmen”- in keeping with the prophecy of 16:11-12

Genesis 25:19-26

- 19 “These are the generations of Isaac”- the 8th of 10 *Toledoths* in Genesis
20 “Isaac was 40 years old when he took Rebekah”- this gives the age that was not given last week
21 “she was barren”- I see a common theme developing! Where have we seen this before? Where will we see it in the future?
“YHWH granted his prayer”- YHWH is the one in ultimate control of having children or not
22 “She went to inquire of YHWH”- possibly speaking with Abraham who was a prophet (20:7)
23 “The older shall serve the younger”- this is contrary to ancient Near Eastern custom
Question to keep in mind... Did Rebekah tell Isaac about this prophecy?

Genesis 25:24-34

- 25 Came out red- in Hebrew, red sounds like “Edom” which is Esau’s alternate name
26 Jacob- the name means “he takes by the heel” which was an Hebrew idiom meaning “to cheat”
Jacob was 60 years old, married for 20 years before having children
27 Esau was a man’s man, Jacob was a bit of a sissy.
28 Isaac loves his son Esau because the way to an old man’s heart is through his stomach
But Rebekah loved Jacob- perhaps because of the promise in 25:23
29 stew- a regular part of the ancient Near Eastern diet
“Esau... was exhausted”- did he not catch any food of his own?
30 “red stew”- a brown-red lentil soup
“his name was called Edom”- again, a reference to the Edomites, a problematic people
31 the birthright- firstborn privileges such as a double portion of the inheritance, leadership over the family, and carrying the blessing of the covenantal promise
32 Esau is clearly being overdramatic, showing disregard for his birthright and the covenant promise attached to it (Heb 12:16). He cares more for his belly than the Promise

34 Bottom line- Esau despised his birthright- the promise to Abraham, the family leadership, et. al!
TLSB- Tertullian- "To you [false teachers] your belly is god, and your lungs a temple, and your paunch a sacrificial altar, and your cook the priest, and your fragrant smell the Holy Spirit, and your condiments spiritual gifts, and your belching prophecy... If I offer you a paltry lentil dyed red... forthwith you will sell all your 'primacies.'"

Genesis 26:1-5

1 "there was a famine... besides the former famine"- 12:10 forced Abram to Egypt
"Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech"- Abraham was 95 when he met with Abimelech, this is at least 45 years later. "Abimelech" is likely a dynastic title or a common given name
3-5 We have no account of Abraham laying hands on Isaac and passing on the blessing, so YHWH himself appears to Isaac to handover the same blessing

Genesis 26:6-11

7 "She is my sister"- Like father, like son. Isaac fears for his life and does not trust YHWH
8 "Isaac laughing with Rebekah his wife"- a pun with Isaac's name that politely shows Isaac and Rebekah engaging in some kind of flirting or intimate interaction only appropriate for married folk
10 Abimelech shows thoughtfulness and awareness of the guilt the whole people would incur

Genesis 26:12-25

15 stopped and filled the wells- ancient nomadic groups did this to drive away enemies
18 This is an important reclamation of his father's possession of the land
22 "We shall be fruitful in the land"- both in the economic sense and as a family
24 YHWH renews the Abrahamic covenant with Isaac for a second time
25 "he built an altar there"- in keeping with Abraham's faithfulness, Isaac makes these little worship sites where they call on the name of YHWH. *Luther: For wherever mention is made of the erection of an altar and the building of a tabernacle, there the establishment of a little church is pointed out – a church in which people came together to teach and hear the Word of God, to pray, to praise God, and to sacrifice."*

Genesis 26:26-35

26 Phicol- the same name as in Genesis 20 indicates this is likely an official title or a family name
28 What has changed between the wealthy Isaac living in Gerar and the wealthy Isaac living in Beersheba that would make Abimelech and company acknowledge YHWH's presence?
29 "The blessed one of YHWH"- a clear acknowledgement of the blessing in v 24
30-31 The oaths are coupled with a feast known as a "Meal of Friendship"
33 Beersheba- almost identical with Genesis 21:22-34
34 Esau takes two Hittite wives, going against the practice Abraham wished for Isaac