

Chapter 20

1And Abraham traveled from there to the land of the south, and he dwelt between Kadesh and between Shur, and he sojourned in Gerar. **2**And Abraham said about Sarah his wife, "She is my sister," and Abimelech the king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. **3**And God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and He said to him, "Behold you are going to die because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a married woman." **4**And Abimelech had not come near to her, and he said, "O Lord, will You kill even a righteous nation?" **5**Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she, even she said, 'He is my brother.' With the innocence of my heart and with the purity of my hands have I done this." **6**And God said to

him in a dream, "I too know that you did this with the innocence of your heart, and I too have withheld you from sinning to Me; therefore, I did not let you touch her. **7**And now, return the man's wife, because he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and [you will] live; but if you do not return [her], know that you will surely die, you and all that is yours." **8**And Abimelech arose early in the morning, and he summoned all his servants, and he spoke all these words in their ears; and the men were very frightened. **9**And Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us, and what have I sinned against you, that you have brought upon me and upon my kingdom a great sin? Deeds that are not done, you have done to me."

10And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you see, that you did this thing?" **11**And Abraham said, "For I said, 'Surely, there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife. **12**And also, indeed, she is my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. **13**And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her: This is your kindness, which you shall do with me: whither we come, say about me, 'He is my brother.'" **14**And Abimelech took flocks and cattle and menservants and maidservants, and he gave [them] to Abraham, and he restored to him his wife Sarah. **15**And Abimelech said, "Here is my land before you; wherever it pleases you, you may dwell." **16**And to Sarah he said, "Behold I have given a thousand pieces of silver to your brother; behold it is to you a covering of the eyes for all who are with you, and with all you shall contend." **17**And Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his handmaids, and they gave birth. **18**For the Lord had shut every womb of Abimelech's household, because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.



Chapter 21

1And the Lord remembered Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did to Sarah as He had spoken. **2**And Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. **3**And Abraham named his son who had been born to him, whom Sarah had borne to him, Isaac. **4**And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. **5**And Abraham was a hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born to him. **6**And Sarah said, "God has made joy for me; whoever hears will rejoice over me." **7**And she said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children, for I have borne a son to his old age!" **8**And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. **9**And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, making merry. **10**And Sarah said to Abraham, "Drive out this handmaid and her son, for the son of this handmaid shall not inherit with my son, with Isaac." **11**But the matter greatly displeased Abraham, concerning his son. **12**And God said to Abraham, "Be not displeased concerning the lad and concerning your handmaid; whatever Sarah tells you, hearken to her voice, for in Isaac will be called your seed. **13**But also the son of the handmaid I will make into a nation, because he is your seed." **14**And Abraham arose early in the morning, and he took bread and a leather pouch of water, and he gave [them] to Hagar, he placed [them] on her shoulder, and the child, and he sent her away; and she went and wandered in the desert of Beer sheba. **15**And the water was depleted from the leather pouch, and she cast the child under one of the bushes. **16**And she went and sat down from afar, at about the distance of two bowshots, for she said, "Let me not see the child's death." And she sat from afar, and she raised her voice and wept. **17**And God heard the lad's voice, and an angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What is troubling you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the lad's voice in the place where he is. **18**Rise, pick up the lad and grasp your hand upon him, for I shall make him into a great nation." **19**And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water, and she went and filled the pouch with water and gave the lad to drink. **20**And God was with the lad, and he grew, and he dwelt in the desert, and he became an archer. **21**And he dwelt in the desert of Paran, and his mother took for him a wife from the land of Egypt. **22**Now it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phicol his general said to Abraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you do. **23**And now, swear to me here by God, that you will not lie to me or to my son or to my grandson; according to the kindness that I have done with you, you shall do with me, and with the land wherein you have sojourned." **24**And Abraham said, "I will swear." **25**And Abraham contended with Abimelech about the well of water that the servants of Abimelech had forcibly seized. **26**And Abimelech said, "I do not know who did this thing, neither did you tell me, nor did I hear [of it] until today. "**27**And Abraham took flocks and cattle, and gave them to Abimelech, and they both formed a covenant. **28**And Abraham placed seven ewe lambs by themselves. **29**And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What are these seven ewe lambs, which you have placed

Reinforces the Sarah giving birth at an old age and the no warm and fuzziness between Sarah and Hagar. God promises Hagar that her son will be the father of a great nation.

by themselves?" **30**And he said, "For these seven ewe lambs you shall take from my hand, in order that it be to me for a witness that I dug this well." **31**Therefore, he named that place Beer sheba, for there they both swore. **32**And they formed a covenant in Beer-sheba, and Abimelech and Phicol his general arose, and they returned to the land of the Philistines. **33**And he planted an eishel in Beer-Sheba, and he called there in the name of the Lord, the God of the world. **34**And Abraham dwelt in the land of the Philistines for many days.

One specific omission from our *machzor*[1] that I want to lift up now for consideration is the conclusion of the traditional Torah reading for the first morning of Rosh Hashanah. We read [past tense] this morning Genesis 21: 1-21, the story of the birth and weaning of Isaac, the rivalry between Isaac's mother Sarah and Ishmael's mother Hagar, and God's promise that, though the Jewish people would descend from Isaac, yet Ishmael would also become a great nation.

However, the traditional reading found in Reconstructionist, Conservative and Orthodox machzorim continues through the end of Genesis 21. In this section, Genesis 21: 22-34, the Torah portrays our patriarch Abraham as a diplomat negotiating a treaty with a potentially hostile neighboring people, namely the Philistines of Gerar, under their King Abimelekh:

Why is this story part of the traditional Torah reading for the first day of Rosh Hashanah? I suppose the prosaic answer would be that we just want to keep going to the end of chapter 21 so that we can pick up tomorrow with the binding of Isaac story that starts immediately thereafter at the start of Genesis chapter 22. However, I'd like to think that this story has more significance than being just "filler."

That episode ends amicably, but surely Abimelekh hasn't forgotten it when he approaches Abraham in the last section of the traditional first day of Rosh Hashanah Torah reading.

We see so many instances in the world in which differing religious and cultural beliefs and traditions can cause conflict. And so, the story of potential adversaries Abraham and Abimelekh establishing peaceful relations through diplomacy is a counter-narrative to the narrative of violent religious fanaticism that mars our contemporary world.

In an earlier incident, recounted in Genesis chapter 20, Abraham and Sarah had gone to Gerar seeking food in the midst of a famine. Abraham nearly brought a plague upon the Gerarites because of his mistaken belief that the Gerarites would murder him if they knew that Sarah was his wife and not his sister. As the story plays out, Abraham ends up admitting to Abimelekh that he, Abraham, had erroneously assumed that "surely there is no fear of God in this place, and

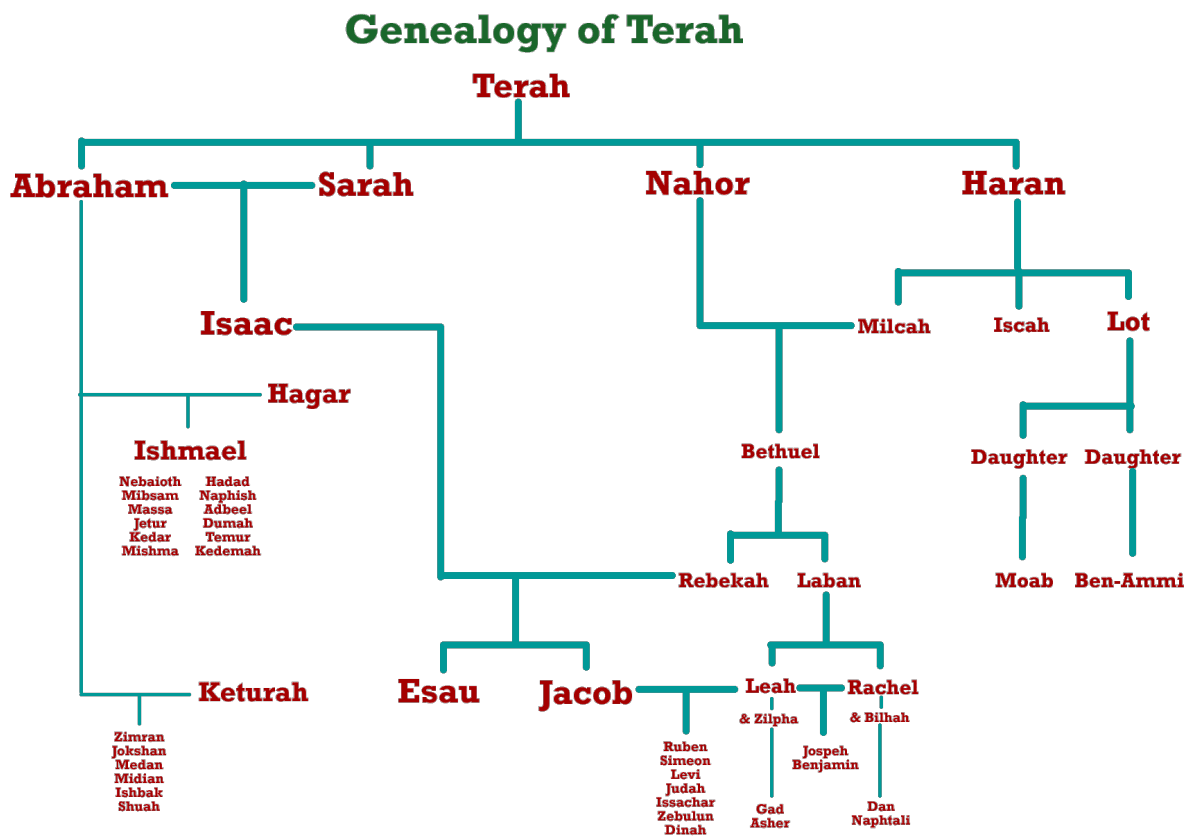
Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year, it begins 10 days of penitence and ends at Yom Kippur.

Chapter 22

1And it came to pass after these things, that God tested Abraham, and He said to him, "Abraham," and he said, "Here I am." **2**And He said, "Please take your son, your only one, whom you love, yea, Isaac, and go away to the land of Moriah and bring him up there for a burnt offering on one of the mountains, of which I will tell you." **3**And Abraham arose early in the morning, and he saddled his donkey, and he took his two young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for a burnt offering, and he arose and went to the place of which God had told him. **4**On the third day, Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. **5**And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder, and we will prostrate ourselves and return to you." **6**And Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering, and he placed [it] upon his son Isaac, and he took into his hand the fire and the knife, and they both went together. **7**And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father, and he said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" **8**And Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And they both went together. **9**And they came to the place of which God had spoken to him, and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and he bound Isaac his son and placed him on the altar upon the wood. **10**And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife, to slaughter his son. **11**And an angel of God called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham! Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." **12**And he said, "Do not stretch forth your hand to the lad, nor do the slightest thing to him, for now I know that you are a God fearing man, and you did not withhold your son, your only one, from Me." **13**And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and he saw, and lo! there was a ram, [and] after [that] it was caught in a tree by its horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. **14**And Abraham named that place, The Lord will see, as it is said to this day: On the mountain, the Lord will be seen. **15**And an angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven. **16**And he said, "By Myself have I sworn, says the Lord, that because you have done this thing and you did not withhold your son, your only one, **17**That I will surely bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand that is on the seashore, and your descendants will inherit the cities of their enemies. **18**And through your children shall be blessed all the nations of the world, because you hearkened to My voice." **19**And Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beer sheba; and Abraham remained in Beer sheba.

We all know this story. According to a book Kitty gave me there are at least three chosen of this event. Christians see it as a father sacrificing his son like Jesus. Jewish tradition sees this as the binding of Isaac or the son's response represents the people of Israel's response to their ordeals. Like the Jews, Isaac did not choose his fate but was chosen. Muslim tradition says it was Ishmael whom Abraham took to Moriah and willingness of both father and son to bow to Allah's will. In the Muslim story Ishmael knows what is going on. All three traditions might agree this raises some of the most difficult questions ever posed.

20And it came to pass after these matters, that it was told to Abraham saying: "Behold Milcah, she also bore sons to Nahor your brother. **21**Uz, his first born, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel, the father of Aram. **22**And Kesed and Hazo and Pildash and Jidlaph, and Bethuel. **23**And Bethuel begot Rebecca." These eight did Milcah bear to Nahor, Abraham's **24**And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, had also given birth to Tebah and Gaham and Tahash and Maacah.brother.



Chapter 23

1And the life of Sarah was one hundred years and twenty years and seven years; [these were] the years of the life of Sarah. **2**And Sarah died in Kiriath arba, which is Hebron, in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to eulogize Sarah and to bewail her. **3**And Abraham arose from before his dead, and he spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, **4**"I am a stranger and an inhabitant with you. Give me burial property with you, so that I may bury my dead from before me." **5**And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, **6**"Listen to us, my lord; you are a prince of God in our midst; in the choicest of our graves bury your dead. None of us will withhold his grave from you to bury your

Sarah dies and a burial plot is negotiated.

dead.” **7**And Abraham arose and prostrated himself to the people of the land, to the sons of Heth. **8**And he spoke with them, saying, "If it is your will that I bury my dead from before me, listen to me and entreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar. **9**That he may give me the Machpelah (double) Cave, which belongs to him, which is at the end of his field; for a full price let him give it to me in your midst for burial property.” **10**Now Ephron was sitting in the midst of the sons of Heth, and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the sons of Heth, of all those who had come into the gate of his city, saying, **11**"No, my lord, listen to me. I have given you the field, and the cave that is in it, I have given it to you. Before the eyes of the sons of my people, I have given it to you; bury your dead.” **12**And Abraham prostrated himself before the people of the land. **13**And he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "But, if only you would listen to me. I am giving the money for the field; take [it] from me, and I will bury my dead there.” **14**And Ephron replied to Abraham, saying to him, **15**"My lord, listen to me; a [piece of] land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is it between me and you? Bury your dead.” **16**And Abraham listened to Ephron, and Abraham weighed out to Ephron the silver that he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, accepted by the merchant. **17**And so the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, facing Mamre, was established (as Abraham's possession). [This included] the field and the cave that was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, which were within its entire border around. **18**[It was] to Abraham as a possession before the eyes of the sons of Heth, in the presence of all who had come within the gate of his city. **19**And afterwards, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, facing Mamre, which is Hebron, in the land of Canaan. **20**And the field and the cave within it were established to Abraham as burial property, [purchased] from the sons of Heth.

Abraham is old and wants a wife for Isaac.

Chapter 24

1And Abraham was old, advanced in days, and the Lord had blessed Abraham with everything. **2**And Abraham said to his servant, the elder of his house, who ruled over all that was his, "Please place your hand under my thigh. **3**And I will adjure you by the Lord, the God of the heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose midst I dwell. **4**But you shall go to my land and to my birthplace, and you shall take a wife for my son, for Isaac.” **5**And the servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman will not wish to go after me to this land. Shall I return your son to the land from which you came?” **6**And Abraham said to him, "Beware, lest you return my son back there. **7**The Lord, God of the heavens, Who took me from my father's house and from the land of my birth, and Who spoke about me, and Who swore to me, saying, 'To your seed will I give this land' He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. **8**And if the woman will not wish to go after you, you will be absolved of this, my oath; only do not return my son back there.” **9**And the servant placed his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and he swore to him concerning this matter. **10**And the servant took ten camels of his master's camels, and he went,

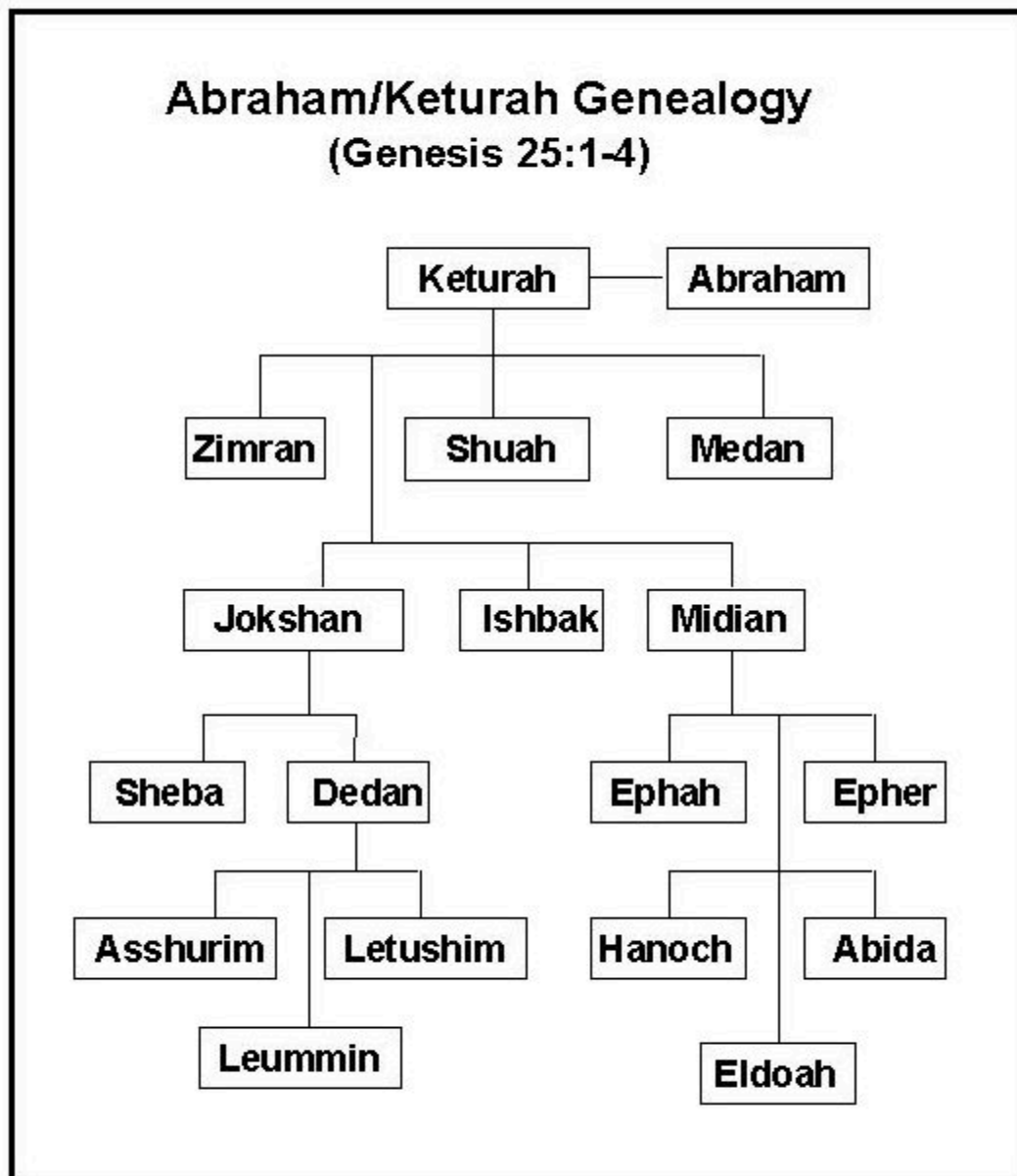
and all the best of his master was in his hand; and he arose, and he went to Aram naharaim, to the city of Nahor. **11**And he made the camels kneel outside the city beside the well of water, at eventide, at the time the maidens go out to draw water. **12**And he said, "O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, please cause to happen to me today, and perform loving kindness with my master, Abraham. **13**Behold, I am standing by the water fountain, and the daughters of the people of the city are coming out to draw water. **14**And it will be, [that] the maiden to whom I will say, 'Lower your pitcher and I will drink,' and she will say, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels,' her have You designated for Your servant, for Isaac, and **15**Now he had not yet finished speaking, and behold, Rebecca came out, who had been born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, and her pitcher was on her shoulder. through her may I know that You have performed loving kindness with my master." **16**Now the maiden was of very comely appearance, a virgin, and no man had been intimate with her, and she went down to the fountain, and she filled her pitcher and went up. **17**And the servant ran toward her, and he said, "Please let me sip a little water from your pitcher." **18**And she said, "Drink, my lord." And she hastened and lowered her pitcher to her hand, and she gave him to drink. **19**And she finished giving him to drink, and she said, "I will also draw for your camels, until they will have finished drinking." **20**And she hastened, and she emptied her pitcher into the trough, and she ran again to the well to draw water, and she drew for all his camels. **21**And the man was astonished at her, standing silent, [waiting] to know whether the Lord had caused his way to prosper or not. **22**Now it came about, when the camels had finished drinking, [that] the man took a golden nose ring, weighing half [a shekel], and two bracelets for her hands, weighing ten gold [shekels]. **23**And he said, "Whose daughter are you? Please tell me. Is there place for us for lodging in your father's house?" **24**And she said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor." **25**And she said to him, "Both straw and fodder are plentiful with us; [there is] also a place to lodge." **26**And the man kneeled and prostrated himself to the Lord. **27**And he said, "Blessed is the Lord, the God of my master, Abraham, Who has not forsaken His loving kindness and His truth from my master. As for me, the Lord led me on the road to the house of my master's kinsmen." **28**And the maiden ran, and she told her mother's house what had happened. **29**Now Rebecca had a brother whose name was Laban, and Laban ran to the man outside, to the fountain. **30**And it came to pass, when he saw the nose ring and the bracelets on his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of his sister Rebecca, saying, "So did the man speak to me, " that he came to the man, and behold, he was standing over the camels at the fountain. **31**And he said, "Come, you who are blessed of the Lord. Why should you stand outside, when I have cleared the house, and a place for the camels?" **32**So the man came to the house and unmuzzled the camels, and he gave straw and fodder to the camels and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. **33**And [food] was set before him to eat, but he said, "I will not eat until I have spoken my words." And he said, "Speak." **34**And he said, "I am Abraham's servant. **35**And the Lord blessed my master exceedingly, and he became great, and He gave him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, man servants and maid servants, camels and donkeys. **36**And Sarah, my master's wife, bore a son to my master after she had become old, and he gave him all that he possesses. **37**And my master adjured me, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell. **38**Instead, you must go to my father's house and to my family, and take a wife for my son.' **39**And I said to my master, 'Perhaps the woman will not follow me?' **40**And he said to me, 'The Lord, before Whom I walked, will send His angel with you and make your way prosper, and you shall take a wife for my son from my family and from my father's house. **41**You will then be absolved from my oath, when you come to my family, and if they do not give [her] to you, you will be absolved from my oath.' **42**So I came today to the fountain, and I said, 'O Lord, God of my master Abraham, if You desire to prosper my way upon which I am going **43**Behold, I am standing by the water fountain. When a maiden comes out to draw [water], I will say to her, 'Please, give me a little water to drink from your pitcher.' **44**And [if] she will say to me, 'You too may drink, and I will also draw water for your camels,' she is the woman whom the Lord has designated for my master's son.' **45**I had not yet finished speaking thus in my heart, and behold, Rebecca came out with her pitcher on her shoulder, and she went

down to the fountain and drew water, and I said to her, 'Please give me to drink.' **46**And she hastened and lowered her pitcher from upon her, and she said, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels.' So I drank, and she also watered the camels. **47**And I asked her, and I said, 'Whose daughter are you?' And she replied, 'The daughter of Bethuel the son of Nahor, whom Milcah bore to him.' And I placed the nose ring on her nose and the bracelets on her hands. **48**And I kneeled and prostrated myself to the Lord, and I blessed the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, Who led me on the true path, to take the daughter of my master's brother for his son. **49**And now, if you will do loving kindness and truth with my master, tell me, and if not, tell me, and I will turn to the right or to the left." **50**And Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The matter has emanated from the Lord. We cannot speak to you either bad or good. **51**Behold Rebecca is before you, take [her] and go, and let her be a wife for your master's son, as the Lord has spoken." **52**Now it came to pass when Abraham's servant heard their words, that he prostrated himself on the ground to the Lord. **53**And the servant took out silver articles and golden articles and garments, and he gave [them] to Rebecca, and he gave delicacies to her brother and to her mother. **54**And they ate and drank, he and the men who were with him, and they lodged, and they arose in the morning, and he said, "Send me away to my master." **55**And her brother and her mother said, "Let the maiden stay with us a year or ten [months]; afterwards she will go." **56**But he said to them, "Do not delay me, since the Lord has made my way prosper. Send me away, and I will go to my master." **57**And they said, "Let us call the maiden and ask her." **58**And they summoned Rebecca, and they said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go." **59**So they sent away Rebecca their sister and her nurse and Abraham's servant and his men. **60**And they blessed Rebecca and said to her, "Our sister, may you become thousands of myriads, and may your seed inherit the cities of their enemies." **61**And Rebecca and her maidens arose and rode on the camels, and they followed the man; and the servant took Rebecca and left.

62Now Isaac was on his way, coming from Be'er Lachai Ro'i, and he dwelt in the land of the south. **63**And Isaac went forth to pray in the field towards evening, and he lifted his eyes and saw, and behold, camels were approaching. **64**And Rebecca lifted her eyes, and saw Isaac, and she let herself down from the camel. **65**And she said to the servant, "Who is that man walking in the field towards us?" And the servant said, "He is my master." And she took the veil and covered herself. **66**And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. **67**And Isaac brought her to the tent of Sarah his mother, and he took Rebecca, and she became his wife, and he loved her. And Isaac was comforted for [the loss of] his mother.

Chapter 25

1And Abraham took another wife and her name was Keturah. **2**And she bore him Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and Jishbak and Shuah. **3**And Jokshan begot Sheba and Dedan, and the sons of Dedan were Ashurim, Letushim, and Leumim. **4**And the sons of Midian [were] Ephah and Epher and Enoch and Abida and Elda'ah; all these were the sons of Keturah.



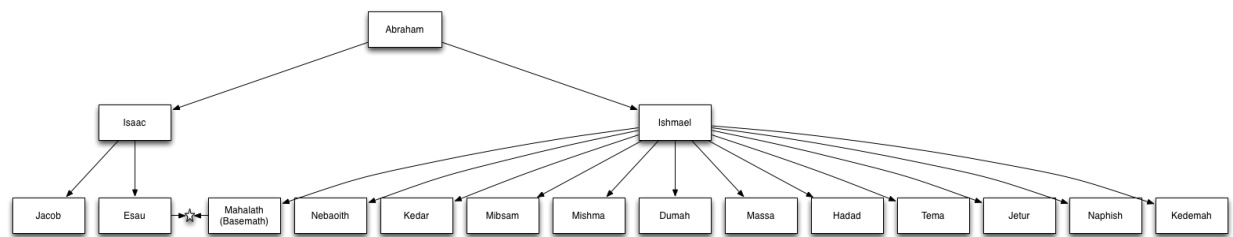
5And Abraham gave all that he possessed to Isaac. **6**And to the sons of Abraham's concubines, Abraham gave gifts, and he sent them away from his son Isaac while he [Abraham] was still alive, eastward to the land of the East. **7**And these are the days of

the years of Abraham's life that he lived: one hundred years and seventy years and five years.

8And Abraham expired and died in a good old age, old and satisfied, and he was gathered to his people. **9**And Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him in the Cave of Machpelah in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which faces Mamre, **10**The field that Abraham had bought from the sons of Heth there Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried.

11Now it came to pass after Abraham's death, that God blessed his son Isaac, and Isaac dwelt near Be'er Lachai Ro'i.

12Now these are the generations of Ishmael the son of Abraham, whom Hagar the Egyptian, the maidservant of Sarah, bore to Abraham. **13**And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael by their names, according to their births: the firstborn of Ishmael was Nebaioth, and Kedar and Adbe'el and Mibsam, **14**And Mishma and Dumah and Massa, **15**Hadad and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedmah. **16**These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names in their open cities and in their walled cities, twelve princes to their nations.



17And these are the years of the life of Ishmael: one hundred years and thirty years and seven years; and he expired and died and was gathered to his people. **18**And they dwelt from Havilah to Shur, which borders on Egypt, going towards Asshur; before all his brothers he dwelt.

19And these are the generations of Isaac the son of Abraham; Abraham begot Isaac. **20**And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebecca the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to himself for a wife. **21**And Isaac prayed to the Lord opposite his wife because she was barren, and the Lord accepted his prayer, and Rebecca his wife conceived. **22**And the children struggled within her, and she said, "If [it be] so, why am I [like] this?" And she went to inquire of the Lord. **23**And the Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two kingdoms will separate from your innards, and one kingdom will become mightier than the other kingdom, and the elder will serve the younger. **24**And her days to give birth were completed, and behold, there were twins in her womb. **25**And the first one emerged ruddy; he was completely like a coat of hair, and they named him Esau. **26**And afterwards, his brother emerged, and his hand was grasping Esau's heel, and he named him Jacob. Now Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them. **27**And

the youths grew up, and Esau was a man who understood hunting, a man of the field, whereas Jacob was an innocent man, dwelling in tents. **28**And Isaac loved Esau because [his] game was in his mouth, but Rebecca loved Jacob. **29**Now Jacob cooked a pottage, and Esau came from the field, and he was faint. **30**And Esau said to Jacob, "Pour into [me] some of this red, red [pottage], for I am faint"; he was therefore named Edom. **31**And Jacob said, "Sell me as of this day your birthright." **32**Esau replied, "Behold, I am going to die; so why do I need this birthright?" **33**And Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day"; so he swore to him, and he sold his birthright to Jacob. **34**And Jacob gave Esau bread and a pottage of lentils, and he ate and drank and arose and left, and Esau despised the birthright.



From Kitty's book: Isaac's family are one of the most difficult families in the bible. Esau and Jacob are twins but they don't look alike or act like brothers. Jacob deceives Esau, steals his birthright and flees. Esau swears to find and kill Jacob. Twenty years will pass before they see each other again. Isaac and Rebekah clearly are parents who don't mind playing favorites yet they do not communicate with each other. Rebekah is the stronger of the two and talks to God herself, Jacob will get it all. Isaac who loves Esau is outmaneuvered.

Chapter 26

1And there was a famine in the land, aside from the first famine that had been in the days of Abraham, and Isaac went to Abimelech the king of the Philistines, to Gerar.

2And the Lord appeared to him, and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land that I will tell you. **3**Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you, and I will bless you, for to you and to your seed will I give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham, your father. **4**And I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens, and I will give your seed all these lands, and all the nations of the earth will bless themselves by your seed, **5**Because Abraham hearkened to My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My instructions." **6**And Isaac dwelt in Gerar.

Hard to believe but here Isaac tells them Rebecca is his sister.

7And the men of the place asked about his wife, and he said, "She is my sister," because he was afraid to say, "[She is] my wife," [because he said,] "Lest the men of the place kill me because of Rebecca, for she is of comely appearance."

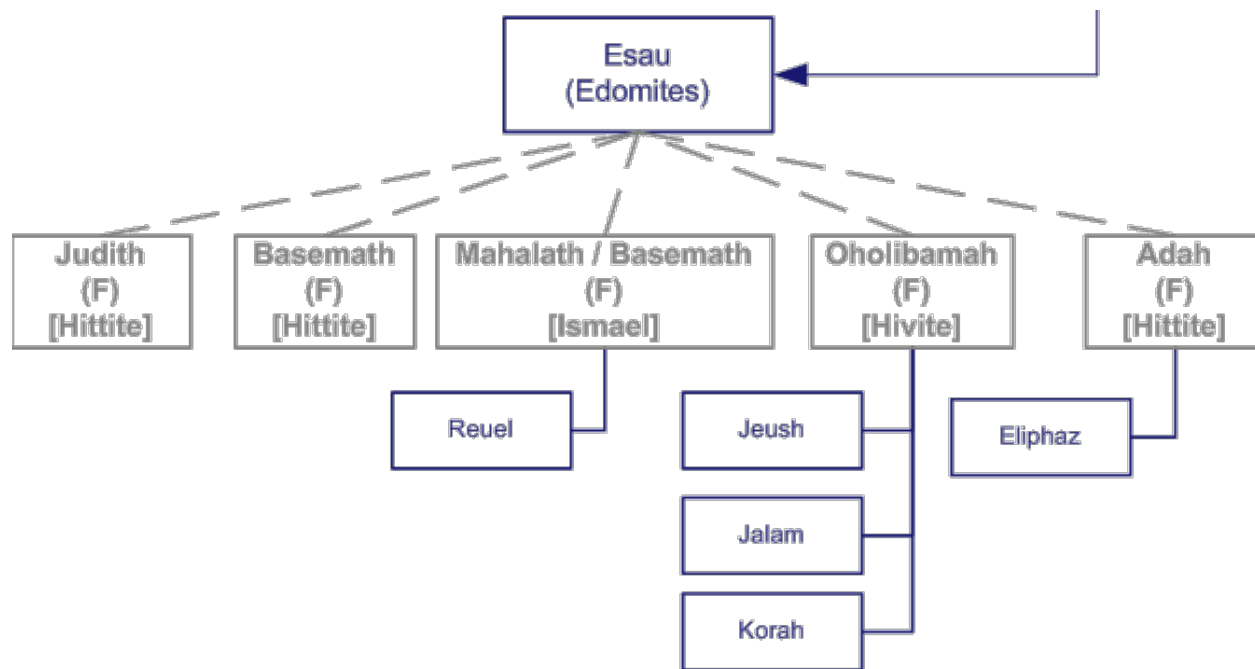
8And it came to pass, when he had been there for many days, that Abimelech, the king of the Philistines, looked out of the window, and he saw, and behold, Isaac was jesting with Rebecca his wife. **9**So Abimelech called Isaac, and he said, "Behold, she is your wife; so how could you have said, 'She is my sister'?" And Isaac said to him, "Because I said, 'Lest I die because of her.' " **10**And Abimelech said, "What have you done to us? The most prominent of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us."

11And Abimelech commanded all the people, saying, "Whoever touches this man or his wife shall be put to death." **12**And Isaac sowed in that land, and he found in that year a hundred fold, and the Lord blessed him. **13**And the man became great, and he grew constantly greater until he had grown very great.

14And he had possessions of sheep and possessions of cattle and much production, and the Philistines envied him. **15**And all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father the Philistines stopped them up and filled them with earth. **16**And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you have become much stronger than we." **17**And Isaac went away from there, and he encamped in the valley of Gerar and dwelt there. **18**And Isaac again dug the wells of water which they had dug in the days of his father, Abraham, and the Philistines had stopped them up after Abraham's death; and he gave them names like the names that his father had given them. **19**And Isaac's servants dug in the valley, and they found there a well of living waters. **20**And the shepherds of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's shepherds, saying, "The water is ours"; so he named the well Esek, because they had contended with him. **21**And they dug another well, and they quarreled about it also; so he named it Sitnah. **22**And he moved away from there, and he dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it; so he named it Rehoboth, and he said, "For now the Lord has made room for us, and we will be fruitful in the land." **23**And he went up from there to Beer sheba. **24**And the Lord appeared to him on that night and said, "I am the God of Abraham, your father. Fear not, for I am with you, and I will bless you and multiply your seed for the sake of Abraham, My servant." **25**And he built an altar there, and he called in the name of the Lord, and he pitched his tent there, and Isaac's servants dug a well there. **26**And Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and a group of his companions and Pichol, his general. **27**And Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, since you hate me, and you sent me away from you?" **28**And they said, "We have seen that the Lord was with you; so we said: Let there now be an oath between us, between

ourselves and you, and let us form a covenant with you. **29**If you do [not] harm us, as we have not touched you, and as we have done with you only good, and we sent you away in peace, [so do] you now, blessed of the Lord.” **30**So he made a feast for them, and they ate and drank. **31**And they arose early in the morning, and they swore one to the other, and Isaac escorted them, and they went away from him in peace. **32**And it came to pass on that day, that Isaac's servants came and told him about the well that they had dug, and they said to him, "We have found water.” **33**And he named it Shibah; therefore, the city is named Beer sheba until this very day.

34And Esau was forty years old, and he married Judith, the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath, the daughter of Elon the Hittite. **35**And they were a vexation of the spirit to Isaac and to Rebecca.



vex·a·tion

vek'sāSH(ə)n/
noun

1. the state of being annoyed, frustrated, or worried. "Jenny bit her lip in vexation"
2. *synonyms:*
3. **annoyance, irritation, exasperation, indignation, anger, crossness, displeasure, pique, bile, disgruntlement, bad mood; informal aggravation** "she stamped her foot in vexation"