

## Opening Illustration: Story of Jonathan . . . “Listen”, God is Speaking.

### Read:

#### Psalm 128

#### Blessed Is Everyone Who Feels the Lord

Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord,  
who walks in his ways!

<sup>2</sup> You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands;  
you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.

<sup>3</sup> Your wife will be like a fruitful vine  
within your house;  
your children will be like olive shoots  
around your table.

<sup>4</sup> Behold, thus shall the man be blessed  
who fears the Lord.

<sup>5</sup> The Lord bless you from Zion!  
May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem  
all the days of your life!

<sup>6</sup> May you see your children's children!  
Peace be upon Israel!

#### Proverbs 1:7

**The fear** (the “Awe” – He really is REAL) **of the Lord** is **the beginning of knowledge**; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

#### James 2:18

You believe that God is one; you do well. **Even the demons believe and shudder!**

#### Proverbs 8:13

**The fear of the Lord** is hatred of evil.

#### Psalm 25:14

**The friendship of the Lord** is for those who **fear him**, and he makes known to **them** his covenant.

#### Psalm 33:8

Let all **the earth fear the Lord**; let all **the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!**

#### Psalm 33:18

Behold, **the eye of the Lord** is on those who **fear him**, on those who hope in his steadfast love,

**The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom**; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever!

#### Psalm 128:1

Blessed is everyone who **fears the Lord**, who walks in his ways!

#### Proverbs 29:25

**The fear of man** lays a snare, but whoever trusts in **the Lord** is safe.

### Illustration:

Brandon Shirkey's Insights of: The story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). It's amazing how you've heard and read through a story a hundred times, and each time the Word of God comes alive in a different, yet new and exciting way (Hebrews 4:12). The part of the story that struck me the most was Jesus' words to Zacchaeus in **verse 9** - *"This day is salvation come to this house,..."* Now Zacchaeus did not pray the Sinner's Prayer. He did not openly profess Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God who came to forgive him of his sins. He did not even get baptized (at least not yet). And yet, after Zacchaeus says, *"Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold"*, Jesus tells everyone present *"This day is salvation come to this house."*

It begs the question - what exactly is it that leads to Zacchaeus' salvation in this encounter? I propose it is simply this:

1. Zacchaeus believed God (he eagerly sought out Jesus and addressed him as "Lord")
2. Zacchaeus obeyed God (specifically when Jesus told him to come down from the tree and welcome him into his house)
3. Zacchaeus was fully repentant in that he chose God's ways over his own making right all those he had wronged

When we believe God, obey God, and then choose to walk in His ways over our own, per this encounter with a publican, a sinner, Jesus teaches us that it brings salvation. This week, let us choose the same and eagerly receive the salvation that is freely ours if we will so boldly and confidently pursue it.

## Last Week’s Reading Review: This Week:

Week 5 - CHAYEI SARAH (Life of Sarah)  
Genesis 23:1–25:18; 1 Kings 1:1–31; Matthew 2:1–23

### Genesis 23:1-2

#### Sarah’s Death and Burial

Sarah lived 127 years; these were the years of the life of Sarah. <sup>2</sup> And Sarah died at Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went in to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

The numerical value of the opening term “*Life of Sarah*” of this Reading adds up to the sum of **37**, which is the same as the difference between the age of Sarah when she gave birth to Isaac at 90 years old and her death at 127.

**These 37 years were surely some of the best years of Sarah’s life as she raised the child that she and Abraham had hoped and prayed for most of their adult lives.**

#### **The Life of Sarah is not about her death, therefore, but about her legacy.**

Life’s pleasures are many and varied, but they can be divided into two general categories: the satisfaction of a personal need or desire, or the achievement of a certain impact on the lives of others. The first category offers many gratifying moments; but nothing can equal the fulfillment that comes when you make a difference in others’ lives, when the world becomes different—better, smarter, holier—because of something you’ve done.

The first category ceases with the interruption of physical life. Once you’re dead and buried, there are no more strolls in the park. But your impact on the world continues. If you taught something to some- one, that person is now teaching it to someone else. If you acted kindly to someone, that person still feels good about it, is a better person for it, and is acting more kindly to others. If you made the world a bet- ter place, that improvement is now being built upon to make the world an even better place.

So does “life as we know it” extend beyond death? That depends on what you know life as. If life, to you, is getting the most you can of its resources for yourself, you have a limited time in which to get as much as you can, and then the fat lady sings and the curtain falls. If life, to you, is making a difference in the lives of others, you’re going to live forever . . .

. . . The true Chayei Sarah comes to light in the events following her death, when the eternity of her life is revealed.

*Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, www.therebbe.org; adapted by Yanki Tauber, editor@chabadonline.com*

### Genesis 23:3-20

<sup>3</sup> And Abraham rose up from before his dead and said to the Hittites, <sup>4</sup> “I am a sojourner and foreigner among you; give me property among you for a burying place, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.”

The Believer (“Jew” – see meaning of Jew above) is a “resident” in the world, for the Torah instructs him **not escape the physical reality but to inhabit it and elevate it.** Virtually all the divine commandments of the Torah are physical actions involving physical objects, in keeping with the Believer’s (“Jew’s” – see meaning of Jew above) **mission to make a “dwelling for G-d in the material realm” by sanctifying the everyday materials of everyday life.**

At the same time, the Believer (“Jew” – see meaning of Jew above) feels himself a “stranger” in the material world.

His true home is a higher, loftier place the world of spirit, the world of holiness and G-dliness from which his soul has been exiled and to which it yearns to return. Indeed, **it is only because the Believer (“Jew” – see meaning of Jew above) feels himself a stranger in the world that he can avoid being wholly consumed and overwhelmed by it, and maintain the spiritual vision and integrity required to elevate it and sanctify it as an abode for the divine presence.**

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

**Trans:** no coincidence that the first purchase of God’s land is not a land to build a life on, but an existing grave site that today we know as “*the Apple of God’s Eye*” Zechariah 2:8, an “*Everlasting Possession*” Genesis 17:8 for God’s People, a land that His people will “*never be uprooted out of*” Amos 9:15, “*The Promised Land*” Genesis 12:7, literally and figuratively, “*A Shadow*” Colossians 2:16-17 of a Real Thing in Heaven, Everlasting Life (created in the image and likeness of God – Genesis 1:27).

## And the Week Before:

**“Is anything too hard for the Lord?”** Genesis 18:14

VAYERA (And He Appeared) Genesis 18:1–22:24; 2 Kings 4:1–37; Luke 1:26–38, 24:36–53

**“The Lord APPEARED** to Abraham near the great trees of **Mamre** while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day.” Genesis 18:1

**Circumcision is the sign of the covenant between God and Abraham and His descendants forever.**

**Deuteronomy 10:16 1**

<sup>16</sup> **Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer.**

**CIRCUMCISION:** a spiritual interpretation was imposed upon the procedure when the Israelites were instructed to circumcise their hearts (Deuteronomy 10:16 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.). This demand required them to recognize that, in addition to bearing the physical mark of covenant membership, they were also under obligation to manifest specific spiritual qualities of commitment and obedience to the Lord's will. Jeremiah (Jeremiah 4:4 Circumcise yourselves to the Lord . . . because of the evil of your deeds.) made precisely the same demands upon his contemporaries because of their evil deeds, which were the very opposite of what God required. For him, circumcision entailed consecration to the Lord and to the high moral ideals of the covenant, of which holiness was representative (Leviticus 11:44 For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.). A true covenant member would be motivated by love of God (Deuteronomy 6:5) and one's neighbor (Leviticus 19:18). **A simple definition of the meaning of Circumcision is the emotional, physical, and spiritual separation of this world to God's ways, emotional, physical, and spiritually, or in thought, action, and word:**

**Romans 12:1-2**

**A Living Sacrifice**

<sup>1</sup>I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a **living sacrifice**, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup>**Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind**, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

**This Week:**

**Week 6 - TOLDOT (Generations – a person's deeds and achievements)  
Genesis 25:19–28:9; Malachi 1:1–2:7; Romans 9:6–29**

**“Pitchfork Perfect Prayer”**

*“And these are the **generations** (toldot - a person's deeds and achievements) of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac.”  
Genesis 25:19*

**READ: Genesis 25:19–28:9 & Romans 9:6-29**

In our last Torah Reading, **Isaac**, the son of Sarah and Abraham, **carried on the legacy of his parents' faith and obedience to Adonai**. After his mother died, Abraham sent his servant to bring home a wife for Yitzchak from among Abraham's kinsmen.

At the well where the women of the town would soon appear, the servant prayed for God's help in locating the perfect wife for Yitzchak. Just then, Rivkah (Rebecca) arrived and provided water for him and his camels. Isaac was 40 when he married her.

**Genesis 25:19–28:9**

**The Birth of Esau and Jacob**

<sup>19</sup> These are the **generations** of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham fathered Isaac,<sup>20</sup> and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife.<sup>21</sup> And Isaac **prayed** to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren. And the Lord granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

**Prayer Brings Blessings**

*“Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The LORD answered his **prayer**, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant.” Genesis 25:21*

In this week's Reading, we discover that Rebekah is barren; in fact, according to Jewish tradition, she was born without a womb. **She is one of seven women in the Torah who have difficulty conceiving but finally come to bear children by the grace of God**, in this case, in answer to her husband's prayer.

**Barren Women in the Bible**

*Here is a list of barren women in the Bible*

1. **Sarah, Abraham's first wife**  
But Sarai was barren; she had no child. **Genesis 11:30, 16:1-2**
2. **Rebekkah, Isaac's wife**  
Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren. **Genesis 25:21**
3. **Rachel, one of Jacob's wives**  
Rachel was barren. **Genesis 29:31**
4. **Manoah's nameless wife, Samson's mother (these were the parents of the famous judge Samson)**  
There was a certain man ... whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren. **Judges 13:2**
5. **Samuel's mother, Hannah.**  
Elkannah ... had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah.... The Lord had shut up her womb. **1 Samuel 1:1-5**
6. **Elisabeth, John the Baptist's mother**  
They had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren. **Luke 1:7**

7. **Mary** – Lk 2:25-38 – the mother of Jesus – salvation [v.30], Gentiles saved and glory of Israel “thy people” [v.32], fall and rising again [v.34], redemption [v.38].

#### God-assisted Pregnancies

Each of the six “barren” women (listed above) later became pregnant with God's help.  
(All of the resulting babies were boys.)

1. **The Lord visited Sarah and she conceived a son -- Isaac.**  
The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age. ... And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. **Genesis 21:1-3**
2. **Isaac intreated the Lord and Rebekkah delivered twins -- Esau and Jacob.**  
Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. ... Behold, there were twins in her womb. ... Esau and Jacob. **Genesis 25:21-25**
3. **God remembered Rachel and opened her womb -- Joseph.**  
And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb. And she conceived, and bare a son ... And she called his name Joseph. **Genesis 30:22-24**
4. **And angel appeared twice to Manoah's nameless wife -- Samson.**  
The angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. ... the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her. ... And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson. **Judges 13:3-24**
5. **Elkanah knew Hannah; the Lord remembered her; and Samuel was born.**  
Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her ... Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, **1 Samuel 1:19-20**
6. **Zecharias prayed and an angel visited Elisabeth -- John the Baptist**  
The son, and thou shalt call his name John. **Luke 1:13**
7. **Mary – an angel visited Mary - Jesus**  
The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. **Luke 1:26-38**

**Conclusion:** In the birth of these seven men and in the prophecies accompanying their birth we see the rebirth and restoration of Israel.

#### What the Bible Says About Barren Women

**If you obey God, you won't have any barren women (or animals).**

If ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them ... there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. **Deuteronomy 7:12-14**

Ye shall serve the LORD your God, and ... there shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren. **Exodus 23:26**

**Barren women should sing and rejoice.**

Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. **Isaiah 54:1 – Prophecy of the Coming Messiah**

It is traditionally believed that **he prayed for 19 years**. Moreover, it is also believed that he **prayed in unity with Rebekah**.

**What a lesson for us today! Just because we pray once and do not receive an answer does not mean we should stop praying! God wants us to bring our requests to Him in the unity of faith.**

The Hebrew expression used in **Genesis 25:21** for **prayer** (**atar** עָטַר), which can also mean **to dig**, is related to the Hebrew word for **pitchfork** (**eter**). The Talmud (Jewish Oral Law) explains the connection: “As a pitchfork turns the sheaves of grain from one position to another, so does the prayer of the righteous turn the HEART of the Holy One and/or the HEART of the Prayer, blessed be He/he, from the **attribute of anger** to the **attribute of mercy**.”

Jacob's **prayer** penetrated the foundation of heaven, and just as grain is turned over with a pitchfork, so too was God's judgment of barrenness upon Rebekah “*turned over*” and **reversed by God's mercy because of prayer**.

Of course, the Bible makes it clear that we are to be fruitful and multiply; however, though seed is sown, **it is God who opens the womb**.

*“Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with their enemies in the gate.” Psalm 127:3–5*

Sarah, Abraham's wife, came up with her own solution for her barrenness — she suggested a surrogate mother — Hagar. In her own efforts, she received Ishmael. Hannah, another barren woman, went to the Temple and cried out to the Lord for a child and she received the prophet Samuel.

Rebekah did neither. Instead, she **turned to her husband who was her spiritual covering to entreat the Lord on her behalf**, and God answered Isaac’s **prayers** for the miraculous gift of new life. Rebekah found herself pregnant with not just one child — but twins — **a double portion!**

The focus of this Reading is not really curses, but  **blessings**.

The Hebrew word for blessed (**baruch**) is significant in this Reading: out of 106 verses, baruch appears 34 times!

This word, baruch, comes from **brachah** (blessing), but with a small change in vowel, it becomes **breicha** — **a wellspring of water or even a pool:**

ברך *berekh* 'knee' (Strong's #1290) "**to kneel, bless, praise, salute**", because of the idea of kneeling or being low to receive blessing, compare the Arabic, *baraka*, Syriac and Ethiopic, which are all similar.

Another similar sounding word, which appears to be related, is פָּרַק *pāraq* (Strong's #6561) 'to break'. It is an onomatopoeic word sounding like the cracking of a tree branch as it breaks either underfoot or ripping from an ageing tree. Gesenius thinks that בָּרַךְ *bārakh*, therefore, relates to the 'breaking' of the knees, and hence to kneel.

**Genesis 24:11** records how Abraham's servant, in search of a bride for Isaac, brought his master's camels to a well frequented by local women and there "**he made his camels kneel down**". **The Arabic use of the verb also includes making one's camel kneel**, an odd process of first bending one pair of knees, sending the rider forwards, then collapsing the back knees, sending the rider backwards, finally coming to rest with both knees folded underneath and the rider able to dismount. Indeed, as with Abraham's servant, the desert bedu virtually lived on his camel only dismounting to sleep, eat or drink, **and the word for a pool of water where camels 'kneel' to drink, the discovery of which, in the desert, was a 'blessing'**, was called a בִּרְכָה *b'rēkhāh* 'pool, pond' (Strong's #1293).

<https://www.studylight.org/language-studies/hebrew-thoughts.html?article=551>

**Perfect Picture of REPENANCE (stop doing is your way and start doing it God's way)**

**Conquering Evil is not done by physically defeating Evil, but rather by Elevating it or Blessing it.**

**Luke 6:27-28**

**Love Your Enemies**

<sup>27</sup>“But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,<sup>28</sup>  **bless (call for inspiration – rivers flowing in barren heights and deserts into pools of water – Isaiah 41:18) those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.**

**Matthew 5:43-48**

**Love Your Enemies**

<sup>43</sup>“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’<sup>44</sup> But I say to you, **Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,** <sup>45</sup>so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.<sup>46</sup> For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?<sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your brothers,<sup>[1]</sup> what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?<sup>48</sup> **You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**

**1 John 3:8**

Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. **The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.**

**Genesis 25:22-23**

<sup>22</sup> The children struggled together within her, and she said, “If it is thus, why is this happening to me?” So she went to inquire of the Lord. <sup>23</sup> And the Lord said to her,

**“Two nations are in your womb,  
and two peoples from within you shall be divided;  
the one shall be stronger than the other,  
the older shall serve the younger.”**

Jacob and Esau fighting in the womb “over the inheritance of the two worlds” (i.e., the material world, and the “world to come”).

Esau we know desires the materialism of the physical world and shuns everything that is G-dly and spiritual, while the reverse is true of Jacob.

**So what were they fighting over?**

The “World to Come” is not a reality that is disconnected from our present existence.

Rather, it is the result of our present-day efforts in dealing with and perfecting the material world.

The world is the culmination of all positive achievements of history, the era in which the yield of mankind’s every good deed will come to light. In other words, our present world is the means and the World to Come is the goal. *This is the deeper significance of Jacob’s claim on the World to Come, and Esau’s preference for the present world.* Jacob sees perfection as the only desirable state of man, while Esau sees the struggle with imperfection as desirable in and of itself.

Yet both Jacob and Esau **recognize the necessity for both of “the two worlds,”** for the process and its outcome. The “perfectly pious” man also requires the material world as the vehicle that leads to ultimate perfection (creating a place where God dwells). And the “conqueror” also sees perfection as the goal to which his efforts lead. For although his purpose in life is defined by the process itself, a process, by definition, must have a goal.

To the Jacobs of the world, the material world is but a tool, a means to an end. To its Esaus, man’s material involvements and the struggles they entail are what life is all about. **A futuristic vision of perfection is necessary,** but only as a reference-point that provides reason and direction to the “real” business of life.

The tension between them over their differing visions of the “two worlds” is not a negative thing. It is the result of two world views, both positive and necessary, **both indispensable components of man’s mission in life.**

*Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, www.therebbe.org; adapted by Yanki Tauber, editor@chabadonline.com*

#### **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**

<sup>13</sup> The end of the matter; all has been heard. **Fear God** (knowledge of God – the “Awe” of God) and **keep his commandments** (obedience towards God), for this is the whole duty of man. <sup>14</sup> For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

#### **Genesis 25:24-28**

<sup>24</sup> When her days to give birth were completed, behold, there were twins in her womb. <sup>25</sup> The first came out red, all his body like a hairy cloak, so they called his name Esau. <sup>26</sup> Afterward his brother came out with his hand holding Esau’s heel, so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

<sup>27</sup> When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. <sup>28</sup> Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

*“And the boys grew; and **Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents.**”*  
Genesis 25:27

The twin boys grew up with distinctive character traits, which are reflected in their names.

Yaacov (Jacob’s Hebrew name) is related to the word **eikev** means the heel of the foot. He was so named because he grabbed his brother’s heel at birth.

This shows **Jacob’s tenacity to win the birthright and carry forward the spiritual blessings that God promised to his father Abraham.**

Esau, however, was named Esav, from the Semitic root, **seir**, meaning thick-haired. He was also nicknamed **Adom**, the Hebrew word for red, since he was born “red and hairy.” Adom is also related to **adamah** (land) and **dam** (blood) which conveys Esau’s love of living off the land, hunting and thirst for blood.

While Jacob had a quiet and seemingly spiritual-minded nature, Esau had a carnal one, as shown in the way **he so easily trades something of eternal spiritual value (his birthright) for something that satisfies his physical hunger (a bowl of lentils).** To him, they were equal.

#### **Genesis 25:29-34**

##### **Esau Sells His Birthright**

<sup>29</sup> Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. <sup>30</sup> And Esau said to Jacob, “Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!” (Therefore his name was called Edom.<sup>[d]</sup>) <sup>31</sup> Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright now.” <sup>32</sup> Esau said, “I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?” <sup>33</sup> Jacob said, “Swear to me now.” So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. <sup>34</sup> Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

##### **Birthright Bring Blessings**

#### **Genesis 26:1-4**

##### **God’s Promise to Isaac**

<sup>26</sup> Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines. <sup>2</sup> And the Lord appeared to him and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. <sup>3</sup> Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father.

##### **Inheriting the Blessing**

During the saga of Jacob and Esau, a famine came over the Land. **Although Abraham went down to Egypt for food at times of famine, the Lord instructed Isaac to stay.**

“The Lord appeared to Isaac and said, ‘Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live.’” (Genesis 26:2)

Like Abraham, Isaac obeyed the Lord and, indeed, was blessed by God for it.

“Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father.” (Genesis 26:3)

**This shows us the wisdom of seeking the Lord for solutions to our problems and not necessarily repeating what our father before us did, or what seems the logical answer.** God may ask us to stay in a situation when everything and everyone is telling us to get out—fast!

If God is instructing us to stay, then even in a famine we can “bloom where we are planted.”

**As the jealous and hateful spirit of Esau rises up in Jerusalem and Israel at large, there is a temptation to think we here in Israel should escape and “go down to Egypt” or perhaps to the US or Canada.**

But if the Spirit of God tells us to stay, then we can know that He will protect us and establish the oath He swore unto our forefathers to give us this Land.

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD." (Isaiah 55:8)

#### Genesis 26:4-18

<sup>4</sup>I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, <sup>5</sup>because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.”

#### Isaac and Abimelech

<sup>6</sup>So Isaac settled in Gerar. <sup>7</sup>When the men of the place asked him about his wife, he said, “She is my sister,” for he feared to say, “My wife,” thinking, “lest the men of the place should kill me because of Rebekah,” because she was attractive in appearance. <sup>8</sup>When he had been there a long time, Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out of a window and saw Isaac laughing with<sup>[e]</sup> Rebekah his wife.<sup>9</sup> So Abimelech called Isaac and said, “Behold, she is your wife. How then could you say, ‘She is my sister?’” Isaac said to him, “Because I thought, ‘Lest I die because of her.’” <sup>10</sup>Abimelech said, “What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us.” <sup>11</sup>So Abimelech warned all the people, saying, “Whoever touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.”

<sup>12</sup>And Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. The Lord blessed him, <sup>13</sup>and the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy. <sup>14</sup>He had possessions of flocks and herds and many servants, so that the Philistines envied him. <sup>15</sup>(Now the Philistines had stopped and filled with earth all the wells that his father’s servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father.) <sup>16</sup>And Abimelech said to Isaac, “Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we.”

<sup>17</sup>So Isaac departed from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar and settled there. <sup>18</sup>And Isaac dug again the wells of water that had been dug in the days of Abraham his father, which the Philistines had stopped after the death of Abraham. And he gave them the names that his father had given them.

#### Yeshua Brings the Ultimate Blessing to the Promised Land

“Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died, and he gave them the same names his father had given them.” (Genesis 26:18)

As God tested Abraham’s faith, Isaac likely suffered some post traumatic stress from being tied up by his father and almost sacrificed. But in this Parasha, we see that **Isaac is a man of Godly character with Godly vision who continues to carry on his father’s business** by re-digging the wells Abraham had dug on his way to Beer Sheva.

Why are these wells significant? They were vital sources of water in a harsh, dry desert land. But here we see that these life-giving water holes had been intentionally filled with dirt. **This can only be interpreted as a barbaric act, done to discourage and even endanger life, in order to prevent Isaac from accessing his father’s wells.**

We see similar discouragement from lack of water when the children of Israel camped in the wilderness after their exodus from Egypt. When they finally came to a well, they sang praises to Adonai:

“From there they went to Beer, which is the well where the LORD said to Moses, ‘Gather the people together, and I will give them water.’ Then Israel sang this song: ‘Spring up, O well! ...’” (Numbers 21:16–17)

**Abraham had purposefully named these wells after God, to remind people that He is the source of all life.** It is with joy today that we draw from deep wells of living water.

“With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” (*Isaiah 12:3*)

When Yeshua ministered to the Samaritan woman at a well, He made the bold claim of being the Jewish Messiah. There, He proclaimed Himself to be the source of living waters that leads to eternal life.

“But whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” (*John 4:14*)

The ultimate heirs of blessing are the heirs of the promised Messiah, Yeshua HaMashiach, who became the final sacrifice for all who trust and believe that He is that promise.

### Genesis 26:19-27:29

<sup>19</sup> But when Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of spring water, <sup>20</sup> the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, “The water is ours.” So he called the name of the well Esek,<sup>[1]</sup> because they contended with him. <sup>21</sup> Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that also, so he called its name Sitnah.<sup>[2]</sup> And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth,<sup>[3]</sup> saying, “For now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.”

<sup>23</sup> From there he went up to Beersheba. <sup>24</sup> And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, “I am the God of Abraham your father. Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring for my servant Abraham's sake.”<sup>25</sup> So he built an altar there and called upon the name of the Lord and pitched his tent there. And there Isaac's servants dug a well.

<sup>26</sup> When Abimelech went to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath his adviser and Phicol the commander of his army, <sup>27</sup> Isaac said to them, “Why have you come to me, seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you?” <sup>28</sup> They said, “We see plainly that the Lord has been with you. So we said, let there be a sworn pact between us, between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you, <sup>29</sup> that you will do us no harm, just as we have not touched you and have done to you nothing but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the Lord.”<sup>30</sup> So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. <sup>31</sup> In the morning they rose early and exchanged oaths. And Isaac sent them on their way, and they departed from him in peace. <sup>32</sup> That same day Isaac's servants came and told him about the well that they had dug and said to him, “We have found water.” <sup>33</sup> He called it Shibah;<sup>[4]</sup> therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day.

<sup>34</sup> When Esau was forty years old, he took Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite to be his wife, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite, <sup>35</sup> and they made life bitter<sup>[5]</sup> for Isaac and Rebekah.

### Isaac Blesses Jacob

<sup>27</sup> When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau his older son and said to him, “My son”; and he answered, “Here I am.” <sup>2</sup> He said, “Behold, I am old; I do not know the day of my death. <sup>3</sup> Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me,<sup>4</sup> and prepare for me delicious food, such as I love, and bring it to me so that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die.”

<sup>5</sup> Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game and bring it, <sup>6</sup> Rebekah said to her son Jacob, “I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, <sup>7</sup> ‘Bring me game and prepare for me delicious food, that I may eat it and bless you before the Lord before I die.’<sup>8</sup> Now therefore, my son, obey my voice as I command you. <sup>9</sup> Go to the flock and bring me two good young goats, so that I may prepare from them delicious food for your father, such as he loves. <sup>10</sup> And you shall bring it to your father to eat, so that he may bless you before he dies.” <sup>11</sup> But Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, “Behold, my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. <sup>12</sup> Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be mocking him and bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing.” <sup>13</sup> His mother said to him, “Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, bring them to me.”

<sup>14</sup> So he went and took them and brought them to his mother, and his mother prepared delicious food, such as his father loved. <sup>15</sup> Then Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her older son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. <sup>16</sup> And the skins of the young goats she put on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. <sup>17</sup> And she put the delicious food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

<sup>18</sup> So he went in to his father and said, “My father.” And he said, “Here I am. Who are you, my son?” <sup>19</sup> Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me.” <sup>20</sup> But Isaac said to his son, “How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?” He answered, “Because the Lord your God granted me success.” <sup>21</sup> Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not.” <sup>22</sup> So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, who felt him and said, “The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” <sup>23</sup> And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands. So he blessed him. <sup>24</sup> He said, “Are you really my son Esau?” He answered, “I am.” <sup>25</sup> Then he said, “Bring it near to me, that I may eat of my son's game and bless you.” So he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank.



<sup>26</sup> Then his father Isaac said to him, “Come near and kiss me, my son.” <sup>27</sup> So he came near and kissed him. And Isaac smelled the smell of his garments and blessed him and said,

“See, the smell of my son  
is as the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed!  
<sup>28</sup> May God give you of the dew of heaven  
and of the fatness of the earth  
and plenty of grain and wine.  
<sup>29</sup> Let peoples serve you,  
and nations bow down to you.  
Be lord over your brothers,  
and may your mother's sons bow down to you.  
Cursed be everyone who curses you,  
and blessed be everyone who blesses you!”

**Birthrights come with responsibilities as well as blessings.**

Even though Jacob was not the firstborn, he receives great blessings bestowed upon him by his father Isaac, coupled with the responsibility to lead nations.

*“May God give you heaven’s dew and earth’s richness—an abundance of grain and new wine. May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you.” Genesis 27:28–29*

**Rabbis over the centuries have compared the jealous, hate-filled character of Esau to the perpetual struggle between the descendants of both brothers.**

Jacob’s descendants were birthed out of obedience to his father Isaac, who told him not to marry a Canaanite woman, and he did not.

Esau, on the other hand, married two Canaanite women. One of Esau’s Canaanite offspring was Amalek who became an archenemy of pre-state Israel by attacking Moses and the Israelites while in the wilderness (Exodus 17). They also invaded Israel during the time of the Judges:

*“Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country.” Judges 6:3*

Many try to link the genealogy of Esau and the Amalekites to the modern enemies of Israel. While this might be accurate to some degree, **the truth is that the spirit of Esau and the Amalekites to destroy the heirs of blessing has remained alive among many nations.**

We saw this hatred in modern pre-state Israel during the expulsion of Jews from England (1290), the tortures of the Spanish Inquisition (1478–1834), and the genocide of six million Jews in the Holocaust (1941–1945).

We saw its vibrancy continue as surrounding nations invaded the newly-formed modern Israel in 1948, again in 1967, and **most recently with terrorist groups that vow to claim the land “from the river to the sea” for their own birthright.**

**While half of the Jewish population has been wiped out in recent decades** and specific plans to remove them from the land circulate today, ultimately the Lord will uphold His vows to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants:

*“I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you [Jacob] and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and ... all peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.” Genesis 28:13–14*

**Those who attack God’s everlasting plans through Jacob are, in fact, placing curses over their own land.**

Isaac prayed over Jacob, **“May those who curse you be cursed”** (Genesis 27:29), and God assures us through the Prophet Ezekiel that this curse continues to hold true.

*“Because you have had an ancient hatred, and have shed the blood of the children of Israel by the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, when their iniquity came to an end, therefore, as I live, says the Lord God, I will prepare you for*

**His eye is on every detail of our lives, and He wants us to partner with Him in His purposes.**

Today we see that God has kept His promise to turn the barren places of this land into wellsprings and pools of water:

“I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs.” (Isaiah 41:18)

### Genesis 27:30-40

<sup>30</sup> As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, when Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, Esau his brother came in from his hunting. <sup>31</sup> He also prepared delicious food and brought it to his father. And he said to his father, “Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that you may bless me.” <sup>32</sup> His father Isaac said to him, “Who are you?” He answered, “I am your son, your firstborn, Esau.” <sup>33</sup> Then Isaac trembled very violently and said, “Who was it then that hunted game and brought it to me, and I ate it all before you came, and I have blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed.” <sup>34</sup> As soon as Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry and said to his father, “Bless me, even me also, O my father!” <sup>35</sup> But he said, “Your brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing.” <sup>36</sup> Esau said, “Is he not rightly named Jacob?<sup>[k]</sup> For he has cheated me these two times. He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing.” Then he said, “Have you not reserved a blessing for me?” <sup>37</sup> Isaac answered and said to Esau, “Behold, I have made him lord over you, and all his brothers I have given to him for servants, and with grain and wine I have sustained him. What then can I do for you, my son?” <sup>38</sup> Esau said to his father, “Have you but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father.” And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.

<sup>39</sup> Then Isaac his father answered and said to him:

“Behold, away from<sup>l</sup> the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be, and away from the dew of heaven on high.

<sup>40</sup> By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; but when you grow restless you shall break his yoke from your neck.”

Esau, however, who is the firstborn son receives curses:

*“Your dwelling will be away from the earth's richness, away from the dew of heaven above. You will live by the sword and you will serve your brother.” Genesis 27:39–40*

**Jacob received his father's firstborn blessing because it was pre-ordained according to the will of God who said, “Jacob have I loved; but Esau I hated.” Romans 9:13**

**Question: “Why did God love Jacob and hate Esau (Malachi 1:3; Romans 9:13)?”**

**Answer:** When studying the Bible, it is critically important to always study the context of a particular Bible verse or passage. In these instances, the prophet Malachi and the apostle Paul are using the name “Esau” to refer to the Edomites, who were the descendants of Esau. Isaac and Rebekah had two sons, Esau and Jacob. God chose Jacob (whom He later renamed “Israel”) to be the father of His chosen people, the Israelites. God rejected Esau (who was also called “Edom”) and did not choose him to be the father of His chosen people. Esau and his descendants, the Edomites, were in many ways blessed by God (Genesis 33:9; Genesis chapter 36).

So, considering the context, God loving Jacob and hating Esau has nothing to do with the human emotions of love and hate. Hundreds of years after Jacob and Esau had died, the Israelites and Edomites became bitter enemies. The Edomites often aided Israel's enemies in attacks on Israel. Esau's descendants brought God's curse upon themselves. Genesis 27:29 tells Israel, “May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed.”

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Jacob-Esau-love-hate.html>

### Genesis 27:40–28:9

<sup>41</sup> Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob.” <sup>42</sup> But the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son and said to him, “Behold, your brother Esau comforts himself about you by planning to kill you. <sup>43</sup> Now therefore, my son, obey my voice. Arise, flee to Laban my brother in Haran <sup>44</sup> and stay with him a while, until your brother's fury turns away— <sup>45</sup> until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereft of you both in one day?”

<sup>46</sup> Then Rebekah said to Isaac, “I loathe my life because of the Hittite women.<sup>[m]</sup> If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women like these, one of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me?”

### Jacob Sent to Laban

<sup>28</sup> Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and directed him, “You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women. <sup>2</sup> Arise, go to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel your mother's father, and take as your wife from there one of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. <sup>3</sup> God Almighty<sup>[n]</sup> bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. <sup>4</sup> May he

give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your offspring with you, that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings that God gave to Abraham!”<sup>5</sup> Thus Isaac sent Jacob away. And he went to Paddan-aram, to Laban, the son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.

**Esau Marries an Ishmaelite**

<sup>6</sup> Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan-aram to take a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he directed him, “You must not take a wife from the Canaanite women,”<sup>7</sup> and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and gone to Paddan-aram. <sup>8</sup> So when Esau saw that the Canaanite women did not please Isaac his father, <sup>9</sup> Esau went to Ishmael and took as his wife, besides the wives he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth.

**Next Week's Reading & Location:**

**Week 7 - PARASHA VAYETZE (And He Left)**  
**Genesis 28:10–32:2; Hosea 12:13–14:10; John 4:1–26**

**Upcoming Event:**

**Hanukkah (Jesus' Conception) 2019**  
**Sunday, December 22nd to Monday, December 30th**