

The Families of Ishmael and Isaac

Genesis 25:25 And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau. 1

This would be the linguistic basis for calling Esau's country "Edom" (cf. v. 30).¹

Genesis 25:26 Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

Genesis 25:27 So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents. :28 And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob. 1

The difference between the two sons manifested itself in several areas: 1) as progenitors—Esau of Edom and Jacob of Israel; 2) in disposition—Esau a rugged, headstrong hunter preferring the outdoors and Jacob a plain, amiable man preferring the comforts of home; and 3) in parental favoritism—Esau by his father and Jacob by his mother. These were the ingredients for conflict and heartache!¹

Esau Sells His Birthright

Genesis 25:29 Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary.

Genesis 25:30 And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." Therefore his name was called Edom. 1

In a play upon words to forever recall that Esau was born red and hairy (v. 25) and had sold his birthright for red stew, he was also named Edom, i.e., "Red."¹

Genesis 25:31 But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day." 1

A double portion of the inheritance (Dt 21:17) and the right to be family chief and priest (Ex 4:22).¹

Genesis 25:32 And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?"

Genesis 25:33 Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. 2

Esau foolishly agreed. "No food except the forbidden fruit was as dearly bought as this broth." The prophecy of verse 23 is partially fulfilled in verses 29–34. 12

God does not condone Jacob's wheeling and dealing, but one thing is apparent—Jacob valued the **birthright** and a place in the godly line, while Esau preferred the gratification of his physical appetite to spiritual blessings. 22

Genesis 25:34 And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.¹

The final evaluation of the verbal tussle and bartering which took place between the twins, all of which was indicative of prior discussions or arguments sufficient for Jacob to conclude how little Esau valued it. He became, therefore, known as irreligious, i.e., "a godless person" (Heb 12:16).¹

Isaac and Abimelech

Genesis 26:1 There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar. 2

Once again the land of promise forced the beneficiaries of the covenant to move so as to escape the effects of a famine. **Abimelech**. Most probably a Philistine dynastic title, with this being a different king from the one who had met Abraham (chap. 20). 12

Philistines. This tribe of people who originally sailed the Mediterranean Sea became fierce enemies of Israel when they settled along the SW coast of Palestine. Friendly to Isaac, they were forerunners of hostile descendant enemies. 22

Genesis 26:2 Then the Lord appeared to him and said: “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you.

Genesis 26:3 Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father.

Genesis 26:4 And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; **:5** because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.” **:6** So Isaac dwelt in Gerar.

Genesis 26:7 And the men of the place asked about his wife. And he said, “She is my sister”; for he was afraid to say, “She is my wife,” because he thought, “lest the men of the place kill me for Rebekah, because she is beautiful to behold.”

Genesis 26:8 Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked through a window, and saw, and there was Isaac, showing endearment to Rebekah his wife.

Genesis 26:9 Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, “Quite obviously she is your wife; so how could you say, ‘She is my sister’?” Isaac said to him, “Because I said, ‘Lest I die on account of her.’ ”

Genesis 26:10 And Abimelech said, “What is this you have done to us? One of the people might soon have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us.”

Genesis 26:11 So Abimelech charged all his people, saying, “He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.”

Genesis 26:12 Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the Lord blessed him.

Genesis 26:13 The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; **:14** for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So the Philistines envied him.

Genesis 26:15 Now the Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father’s servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, and they had filled them with earth. **1**

Water was so precious in that desert land that wells were essential. Plugging someone’s well was ruinous to them and constituted serious aggression, often leading to war. Isaac could have retaliated, but he did not; rather he dug new wells (vv. 16–19).¹

Genesis 26:16 And Abimelech said to Isaac, “Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we.”

Genesis 26:17 Then Isaac departed from there and pitched his tent in the Valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. **:18** And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. He called them by the names which his father had called them.

Genesis 26:19 Also Isaac’s servants dug in the valley, and found a well of running water there. **:20** But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac’s herdsmen, saying, “The water is ours.” So he called the name of the well Esek, because they quarreled with him.

Genesis 26:21 Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also. So he called its name Sitnah.

Genesis 26:22 And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, because he said, “For now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.” **:23** Then he went up from there to Beersheba. **1**