

# Making Promises

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## Part 1: The Patriarchs

### Review

- God promises to make Abram the father of a great nation, but Abram remains childless.
- Abram considers God's promise trustworthy, and God considered him righteous on the basis of his faith.
- The Lord offers to Abram a sign of his obligation to the covenant that he is offering to Abram by splitting the animals in half, and passing between the animals.
- Abram and Sarai try to fulfill the Lord's promise through several potential heirs before finally giving birth to Isaac.

### Isaac

- Sarah died at Hebron in 2029 BC (**Gen. 23:1–2**). Within three years after her burial in a grave site purchased from **Ephron the Hittite**, Abraham undertook steps to obtain a wife for his son Isaac, who by then was close to **forty** years of age (**Gen. 25:20**).
  - Abraham's servant journeyed to the city of **Nahor** (**Gen. 24:10**). Great care is taken with the patriarchs to find wives within their own clan.
  - Laban agreed that **Rebekah** should be given to Isaac, and so, when all the customary obligations were met, she returned with the servant to Isaac's home in the Canaanite Negev.
- Abraham is now remarried and by his wife Keturah became forefather of other clans, such as Jokshan, **Midian**, and Dedan (**Gen. 25:2–4; 1 Chron. 1:32–33**).
  - The offspring of **Ishmael** settled in the deserts east and south of Edom and, like Israel, developed into a federation of twelve tribes (**Gen. 25:12–18**).
  - The second born son of Ishmael, whom the Biblical text refers to as "**Kedar**," is traditionally the tribal head and ancient ancestor of Muhammed (**Gen. 25:13 cf. Ps. 120:5; Song 1:5; Isa. 21:16–17; 42:11; 60:7; Jer. 2:10; 49:28; Ezek. 27:21**).
  - Their relationship to the Midianites is unclear, but the terms "Ishmaelites" and "Midianites" appear at times to be almost **interchangeable** (**Gen. 37:25, 27–28, 36**).

## Birthright and Blessing

- The concept of **birthright** becomes a particularly important part of the narrative for the remainder of Genesis, and even the rest of the Bible.
  - ◉ The firstborn holds a position of **honor** within the family. The firstborn has **privileged status** (**Gen. 43:33; 49:3**) and the **right of succession** (**2 Chron. 21:3**).
  - ◉ For his birthright, the oldest son receives a **double portion** of the father's inheritance (**Deut. 21:17**). The father's inheritance is divided among the number of sons, and the firstborn always has right to two of these portions. If there are only two sons, the firstborn inherits everything.
  - ◉ Jesus, as God's **only** son, has exclusive rights to the inheritance, but he died and rose again so as to include many more brothers in the inheritance (**Rom 4:13; 8:29; Gal. 3:29; Eph. 1:18; Heb. 11:16**; et.al).
  - ◉ If a man died without any sons, his possessions could be divided amongst **his daughters**, then brothers, then uncles, etc. (**Num. 27:1-11**)
  - ◉ Tablets recovered from **Nuzi** in Mesopotamia have shown that the birthright could be exchanged among members of the same family. The holder of the birthright appears to have been in possession of the household idols, which were small terra-cotta images, presumably of the particular deity worshiped locally. These tokens would reinforce the position and authority of the firstborn.

## Jacob and the 12 Tribes

- Even though Jacob (whose name means "**He grabs the heel**") is the younger of the twins, God tells Rebekah before they are born that "*the older shall serve the younger.*" (**Gen. 25:22-23**)
  - ◉ Esau trades his birthright for a bowl of "red stuff" (lentil stew) at Jacob's offer (**Gen. 25:29-34**), and then loses the blessing from Isaac due to Jacob's deceit of his father. Esau becomes a **parable** for all believers to endure patiently, and never indulge in momentary (and sinful) pleasures (**Heb. 12:16-17**).
- Toward the end of the book of Genesis, it becomes clear in the actions of **Reuben** (**Gen 35:22**), and **Simeon and Levi** (**Gen. 34:25-26; 49:5-7**), that Israel's sons are beginning to adopt the lifestyle of the Canaanites.
  - ◉ Joseph was sent to Egypt not as an act of punishment but as a blessing of **divine providence**, for Yahweh was using him to prepare the way for a period of incubation in which the nation Israel would grow and mature in Egypt and become a suitable servant people (**Gen. 50:19-21**).

## Patriarchs: Part 7

<b>Genesis 23:1–2</b>	<a href="#">1</a> Sarah lived 127 years; these were the years of the life of Sarah. <a href="#">2</a> 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.
<b>Genesis 25:20</b>	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.
<b>Genesis 24:10</b>	Then the servant took ten of his master’s camels and departed, taking all sorts of choice gifts from his master; and he arose and went to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor.
<b>Genesis 25:2–4</b>	<a href="#">2</a> She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. <a href="#">3</a> Jokshan fathered Sheba and Dedan. The sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim. <a href="#">4</a> The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.
<b>1 Chronicles 1:32–33</b>	<a href="#">32</a> The sons of Keturah, Abraham’s concubine: she bore Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. The sons of Jokshan: Sheba and Dedan. <a href="#">33</a> The sons of Midian: Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the descendants of Keturah.
<b>Genesis 25:12–18</b>	<a href="#">12</a> These are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham’s son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah’s servant, bore to Abraham. <a href="#">13</a> These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, named in the order of their birth: Nebaioth, the firstborn of Ishmael; and Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, <a href="#">14</a> Mishma, Dumah, Massa, <a href="#">15</a> Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. <a href="#">16</a> These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names, by their villages and by their encampments, twelve princes according to their tribes. <a href="#">17</a> (These are the years of the life of Ishmael: 137 years. He breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.) <a href="#">18</a> They settled from Havilah to Shur, which is opposite Egypt in the direction of Assyria. He settled over against all his kinsmen.
<b>Genesis 25:13</b>	These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, named in the order of their birth: Nebaioth, the firstborn of Ishmael; and Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam,
<b>Psalms 120:5</b>	Woe to me, that I sojourn in Meshech, that I dwell among the tents of Kedar!
<b>Song of Solomon 1:5</b>	I am very dark, but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon.
<b>Isaiah 21:16–17</b>	<a href="#">16</a> For thus the Lord said to me, “Within a year, according to the years of a hired worker, all the glory of Kedar will come to an end. <a href="#">17</a> And the remainder of the archers of the mighty men of the sons of Kedar will be few, for the Lord, the God of Israel, has spoken.”
<b>Isaiah 42:11</b>	Let the desert and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits; let the habitants of Sela sing for joy, let them shout from the top of the mountains.
<b>Isaiah 60:7</b>	All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you; the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall come up with acceptance on my altar, and I will beautify my beautiful house.
<b>Jeremiah 2:10</b>	For cross to the coasts of Cyprus and see, or send to Kedar and examine with care; see if there has been such a thing.
<b>Jeremiah 49:28</b>	Concerning Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon struck down. Thus says the Lord: “Rise up, advance against Kedar! Destroy the people of the east!
<b>Ezekiel 27:21</b>	Arabia and all the princes of Kedar were your favored dealers in lambs, rams, and goats; in these they did business with you.
<b>Genesis 37:25</b>	Then they sat down to eat. And looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt.
<b>Genesis 37:27–28</b>	<a href="#">27</a> Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.” And his brothers listened to him. <a href="#">28</a> Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt.
<b>Genesis 37:36</b>	Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.
<b>Genesis 43:33</b>	And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth. And the men looked at one another in amazement.
<b>Genesis 49:3</b>	“Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, and the firstfruits of my strength, preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power.
<b>2 Chronicles 21:3</b>	Their father gave them great gifts of silver, gold, and valuable possessions, together with fortified cities in Judah, but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he was the firstborn.

<b>Deuteronomy 21:17</b>	but he shall acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the unloved, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the firstfruits of his strength. The right of the firstborn is his.
<b>Romans 4:13</b>	For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.
<b>Romans 8:29</b>	For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.
<b>Galatians 3:29</b>	And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.
<b>Ephesians 1:18</b>	having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,
<b>Hebrews 11:16</b>	But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.
<b>Numbers 27:1-11</b>	<a href="#">1</a> Then drew near the daughters of Zelophehad the son of Hopher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh, from the clans of Manasseh the son of Joseph. The names of his daughters were: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. <a href="#">2</a> And they stood before Moses and before Eleazar the priest and before the chiefs and all the congregation, at the entrance of the tent of meeting, saying, <a href="#">3</a> "Our father died in the wilderness. He was not among the company of those who gathered themselves together against the Lord in the company of Korah, but died for his own sin. And he had no sons. <a href="#">4</a> Why should the name of our father be taken away from his clan because he had no son? Give to us a possession among our father's brothers." <a href="#">5</a> Moses brought their case before the Lord. <a href="#">6</a> And the Lord said to Moses, <a href="#">7</a> "The daughters of Zelophehad are right. You shall give them possession of an inheritance among their father's brothers and transfer the inheritance of their father to them. <a href="#">8</a> And you shall speak to the people of Israel, saying, 'If a man dies and has no son, then you shall transfer his inheritance to his daughter. <a href="#">9</a> And if he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. <a href="#">10</a> And if he has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers. <a href="#">11</a> And if his father has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to the nearest kinsman of his clan, and he shall possess it. And it shall be for the people of Israel a statute and rule, as the Lord commanded Moses.' "
<b>Genesis 25:22-23</b>	<a href="#">22</a> 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. <a href="#">23</a> 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."
<b>Genesis 25:29-34</b>	<a href="#">29</a> Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. <a href="#">30</a> And Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!" (Therefore his name was called Edom.) <a href="#">31</a> Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright now." <a href="#">32</a> Esau said, "I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?" <a href="#">33</a> Jacob said, "Swear to me now." So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. <a href="#">34</a> Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.
<b>Hebrews 12:16-17</b>	<a href="#">16</a> that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. <a href="#">17</a> For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.
<b>Genesis 35:22</b>	While Israel lived in that land, Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine. And Israel heard of it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve.
<b>Genesis 34:25-26</b>	<a href="#">25</a> On the third day, when they were sore, two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, took their swords and came against the city while it felt secure and killed all the males. <a href="#">26</a> They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the sword and took Dinah out of Shechem's house and went away.
<b>Genesis 49:5-7</b>	<a href="#">5</a> "Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords. <a href="#">6</a> Let my soul come not into their council; O my glory, be not joined to their company. For in their anger they killed men, and in their willfulness they hamstrung oxen. <a href="#">7</a> Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.
<b>Genesis 50:19-21</b>	<a href="#">19</a> But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? <a href="#">20</a> As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. <a href="#">21</a> So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.