

**The Wider Family Of Abraham (Gen. 25:1-6)**

*1 Abraham again took a wife, and her name was Keturah. 2 And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. 3 Jokshan begot Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim. 4 And the sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.*

*5 And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. 6 But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east.*

What can we know about Keturah and her children?

- First, it's not completely clear when this marriage took place.
- We have no idea of her background. Her name may mean "incense."
- What was her status? Moses calls her a **wife** but later she is referenced as a **concubine**. Her sons are handled differently in terms of inheritance.
- How was Abraham so fertile?

**Who are these sons of Keturah?**

- The most notable of them is probably Midian. They are usually not viewed favorably, except for Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, and his wife, Zipporah.
- We see the negative side of them rather early, when they sell Joseph down into Egypt. There was much war with Israel across the centuries.
- Midian also seems to have given his name to the region south of Israel, in Arabia. It's very possible that Mount Sinai, where Moses received the Law, is actually located in the Land of Midian in Arabia, and not in the Sinai Peninsula.

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- The other notable people named here are Sheba and Dedan.



**Where did the sons of Keturah go?**

Moses tells us that Abraham was careful to send these men away. Most of them went down into what we call Arabia today. And so God’s Word was certainly fulfilled to Abraham, when he said Abraham would be the father of many nations.

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**Abraham Dies (Gen. 25:7-11)**

*7 This is the sum of the years of Abraham’s life which he lived: one hundred and seventy-five years. 8 Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people.*

*9 And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, 10 the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth. There Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife. 11 And it came to pass, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac dwelt at Beer Lahai Roi.*

- This episode comes out of chronological order. Abraham died around 1900 B.C.
- The Hebrew says he was **full**: contented and satisfied. He died placing the future of his family and his longer posterity into the hands of the Lord.
- Abraham was *gathered to his people*. This means he has joined his ancestors in the underworld, where the dead were believed to reside (in *Sheol*).
- God was blessing Isaac in such a way that others could see he was blessed, and that he was blessed as Abraham had been blessed.
- Again, he was dwelling at the Well of the Living One Who Sees Me. So this is a hint to us that the blessing of Isaac comes from his being aware of God’s Presence, seeking His Presence, and trusting in His Providence.

**The Generations of Ishmael and Isaac (Gen. 25:12-20)**

*12 Now this is the genealogy of Ishmael, Abraham’s son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah’s maidservant, bore to Abraham. 13 And these were the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, 14 Mishma, Dumah, Massa,*

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15 Hadar, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. 16 These were the sons of Ishmael and these were their names, by their towns and their settlements, twelve princes according to their nations. 17 These were the years of the life of Ishmael: one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people. 18 (They dwelt from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt as you go toward Assyria.) He died in the presence of all his brethren.

19 This is the genealogy of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham begot Isaac. 20 Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah as wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian.

- These references to generations work like internal chapter divisions in Genesis. In Hebrew, these are called *toledoth*, and there are ten of them.
- Moses refers to these two sons as *the son of Abraham*, which emphasizes to us that these two men had Divine promises of blessing.
- Ishmael lived in the presence of all his brothers, which had been prophesied about him back in Chapter 16.
- Moses now tells us that Isaac was 40 when he married Rebekah. We also see for the first time the word Syrian, or Aramean. Aram included modern Iraq.

### **Barrenness And Worry (Gen. 25:21-22)**

21 Now Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. 22 But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If all is well, why am I like this?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.

- Isaac has a very different spiritual temperament from his father Abraham. Isaac responded by praying.

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- We don't know what Moses means when he says she went to inquire of the Lord. It seems to indicate that she went to a person like a prophet.

### **The Birth of the Twins (Gen. 25:23-28)**

*23 And the LORD said to her:*

*“Two nations are in your womb,  
Two peoples shall be separated from your body;  
One people shall be stronger than the other,  
And the older shall serve the younger.”*

*24 So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb. 25 And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau. 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.*

*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.*

- So now we see that the Lord spoke to her and uncovered the mystery.
- **Esau** means he is hairy. Moses is contrasting for us the **wild** and the **mild!**
- Jacob is *Ya'akov*, which is related to the name for the heel of your foot. It is connected to the idea of deceiving or supplanting someone.
- Jacob seems to have been a well-known name at this time in Mesopotamia, and it may have meant that *El has protected him*.
- We also find out that Isaac was 60 when this happened, and so he and Rebekah had been struggling with barrenness for as much as 20 years.

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- The parents seem to have played favorites, and favoritism would become a major problem in this family.

**Esau Sells His Birthright To Jacob (Gen. 25:29-34)**

*29 Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. 30 And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." Therefore his name was called Edom. 31 But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day." 32 And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" 33 Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. 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.*

- This story reveals the character of two disreputable people. For Jewish people, Esau has always symbolized the Gentile world, driven by the lusts of the flesh.
- Esau picked up a new name and he became the father of the Edomites.
- Jacob on the other hand was grasping and conniving.
- The birthright probably represented the main share of the inheritance. It also included leadership of the family, and perhaps being the heir of the promises.
- Believers absolutely **must** value the inheritance that God has given us and not let sin keep us from despising it, and thus losing it!

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