

# CHAPTER 25

## INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS 25

This chapter contains an account of Abraham's marriage with another woman, and of the children he had by her and of their posterity (<sup>-0251</sup>Genesis 25:1-4); of Abraham's disposal of his substance; and his sons, (<sup>-0255</sup>Genesis 25:5,6); of the years of his life, his death and burial, (<sup>-0257</sup>Genesis 25:7-11); of the children of Ishmael, and of the years of his life, and of his death, (<sup>-0252</sup>Genesis 25:12-18); and of the sons of Isaac the fruit of prayer, and of the oracle concerning them before they were born, and of their temper and disposition, conduct and behaviour, (<sup>-0259</sup>Genesis 25:19-34).

**Ver. 1.** *Then again Abraham took a wife*, etc.] Three years after the death of Sarah, and when his son Isaac was married, and he alone, and now one hundred and forty years of age:

*and her name [was] Keturah*; who she was, or of what family, is not said. An Arabic writer <sup>f1343</sup> says she was a daughter of the king of the Turks; another <sup>f1344</sup> of them calls her the daughter of King Rama; and another <sup>f1345</sup> the daughter of Pactor, king of Rabbah; but there were then no such people in being. Very probably she was one of Abraham's handmaids born in his house, or bought with his money, perhaps the chief and principal of them. The Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem say she is the same with Hagar, and so, Jarchi; but this is rejected by Aben Ezra, since mention is made of Abraham's concubines, (<sup>-0256</sup>Genesis 25:6); whereas it does not appear he ever had any other than Hagar and Keturah, and therefore could not be the same; and besides, the children of Hagar and Keturah are in this chapter reckoned as distinct. Cleodemus <sup>f1346</sup>, a Heathen writer, makes mention of Keturah as a wife of Abraham's, by whom he had many children, and names three of them. Sir Walter Raleigh <sup>f1347</sup> thinks, that the Kenites, of whom Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, was, had their name from Keturah, being a nation of the Midianites that descended from her.

**Ver. 2.** *And she bare him Zimran*, etc.] That Keturah should bear children who probably, was a young woman, is not strange; but that Abraham,

whose body forty years before this was dead should now have any bore to him, may seem difficult to account for, and only can be attributed to the fresh vigour his body was endued with at the generation of Isaac; and which still continued for the fulfilment of the promise to him of the multiplication of his seed. But if the notion of a late learned bishop<sup>f1348</sup> is right, there will be no need to have recourse to any thing extraordinary; which is, that Abraham took Keturah for his concubine, about twenty years after his marriage with Sarah, she being barren, and long before he took Hagar; though not mentioned till after the death of Sarah, that the thread of the history might not be broken in upon; and there are various things which make it probable, as that she is called his concubine, (~~1020~~1 Chronicles 1:32), which one would think she should not be, if married to him after the death of Sarah, and when he had no other wife, and seeing before he died he had great grandchildren by her, and the children of her are reckoned down to the third generation; whereas there are only mention of two generations of Hagar, as in (~~1020~~Genesis 25:1-4,12-16); and therefore seems to have been taken by him before Hagar, and even when he was in Haran, and the children by her are thought to be the souls gotten there; nor does it seem very probable that he should take a wife after the death of Sarah, when he was one hundred and forty years of age, and was reckoned an old man forty years before this; and Dr. Lightfoot<sup>f1349</sup> is of opinion, that Abraham married her long before Isaac's marriage, or Sarah's death; and if this was the case, the difficulty of accounting for Abraham's fitness for generation vanishes. The first son of Keturah, born to him, was called Zimran, from whence came the Zamareni, a people in Arabia Felix mentioned by Pliny<sup>f1350</sup>; and hereabout the sons of Keturah settled, being sent by Abraham into the east country, even into Arabia, which lay east of the place where he then was; and very probably Zabram; or it may be rather Zamram, a royal city in the country of the Cineaedocolpites, a part of Arabia Felix, as placed by Ptolemy<sup>f1351</sup>, may have its name from this man: five more of Abraham's sons by Keturah follow,

*and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah:* some think that the first of these is the same with Cahtan, whom the Arabs call the father of their nation; but that Cahtan rather seems to be Joktan the son of Eber, (see ~~1020~~Genesis 10:25). Philostorgius<sup>f1352</sup> speaks of a nation in his time, called Homerites, who were a people that sprung from Keturah, and inhabited Arabia Felix, and who used circumcision on the eighth day: and Bishop Patrick observes from Theophanes, a chronologer of the ninth

century, that the Homerites, who lived in the interior parts of Arabia, descended from Jectan, which he conjectures should be read Jochshan, though perhaps he is no other than the Joktan before mentioned. From Medan and Midian sprung the Midianites, so often mentioned in Scripture; their posterity seem to be confounded together, for the same people are called Medanites and Midianites, (<sup><03728></sup>Genesis 37:28,36); from these men the towns in Arabia might have their names, as the Modiana and Madiana of Ptolemy<sup>f1353</sup>: as for Ishbak, there is no tracing of his name anywhere, unless, as Bishop Patrick observes, some footsteps of it are to be found in Bacascami, a town of the Zamareni, who descended from his brother Zimran, and in the people Backliitae, both mentioned by Pliny<sup>f1354</sup>; though Junius think that Scabiosa Laodicea, in Laodicene of Syria, has its name from him; which seems not likely. The name of Shuah or Shuach may be traced in Socacia, Soaca, and Socheher, cities placed by Ptolemy<sup>f1355</sup> in Arabia Felix: though some think the posterity of this man are those whom the geographers call Sauchites, Sauchaeans, and Saccaeans, who settled in Arabia Deserta, and from whom Bildad the Shuhite, (<sup><8011></sup>Job 2:11), descended; which is not improbable. But others have been of opinion, that the town of Suez, which Pliny calls Suaza, had its name from this Shuah, situate at the extremity of the Red sea<sup>f1356</sup>.

**Ver. 3.** *And Jokshan begat Sheba and Dedan*, etc.] Bochart<sup>f1357</sup> is of opinion, that the posterity of this Sheba are the same with the Sabeans who inhabited at the entrance of Arabia Felix, not far from the Nabathaeans; and who, by Strabo<sup>f1358</sup>, are mentioned together as near to Syria, and used to make excursions on their neighbours; and not without some colour of reason thought to be the same that plundered Job of his cattle, (<sup><8015></sup>Job 1:15). From Dedan came the Dedanim or Dedanites, spoken of with the Arabians in (<sup><2013></sup>Isaiah 21:13); Junius thinks Adada in Palmyrene of Syria had its name from this man, and in which country is the mountain Aladan or Alladadan. Bochart<sup>f1359</sup> more probably takes Dedan, a city in Idumea, to derive its name from him. There is a village called Adedi in the country of the Cassanites, a people of Arabia Felix, which Ptolemy<sup>f1360</sup> makes mention of, and seems to have some appearance of this man's name:

*and the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim*; these names being plural are thought not to be proper names of men, but appellatives, descriptive of their places of abode, or of their business: hence the Targum of Onkelos represents them as such that dwelt in camps, in tents, and in islands; and the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem call them

merchants, artificers and heads of the people: however, Cleodemus<sup>f1361</sup> the Heathen historian is wrong in deriving Assyria from Asshurim, whom he calls Ashur; since Assyria and Assyrians are so called from Ashur, the son of Shem, (<sup><0112></sup>Genesis 10:22).

**Ver. 4.** *And the sons of Midian*, etc.] The fourth son of Abraham by Keturah; he had five sons next mentioned, who were heads of so many tribes or families in Midian: hence we read of five kings of Midian; (<sup><0108></sup>Numbers 31:8); their names follow,

*Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abidah, and Eldaah*: the two first of these, whom Cleodemus<sup>f1362</sup> calls Aphra and Apher, and makes them to be sons of Abraham by Keturah, when they were his grandsons, he says, from them the city Aphra, and all Africa, had their names, and that these accompanied Hercules into Lybia, he having married a daughter of Aphra. Ephah is mentioned along with Midian in (<sup><2106></sup>Isaiah 60:6); but of the rest no notice is taken in Scripture. Ptolemy<sup>f1363</sup> makes mention both of a mountain, and of a village, near Madiana in Arabia Felix, called Hippos, which perhaps had their name from this man. Some trace of Epher is thought to be in Taphuron which Philostorgius says<sup>f1364</sup> was the metropolis of the Homerites, before mentioned; and Arrianus, as Bishop Patrick observes, expressly says, the metropolis of the Homerites, is called Apha: to which may be added, that Ptolemy<sup>f1365</sup> speaks of a people called Tappharites, near the Homerites. Hanoch, the next son, is thought to have some footsteps of his name in Cane, a mart, which Ptolemy<sup>f1366</sup> places in the country of the Adramites in Arabia Felix, and also in the country of Canauna in Arabia, mentioned by, Pliny<sup>f1367</sup>: near Cananua is placed, by the same writer, the island Devadae, called by Philostorgius<sup>f1368</sup> **διβους**, “Divus”, in which it is supposed there is some trace of the name of Abidah, by an inversion of the two last syllables; and perhaps also in Abissa, which Ptolemy<sup>f1369</sup> places in the country of the Sachalites in Arabia Felix. As for Eldaah, Bishop Patrick thinks there are no remains of this name, unless in the city of Elana, from whence there was a gulf called Elanites, and a people that lived there Elanitae; but one would think there are some traces of it in the cities Alata, Lattha, and Leaththa, all, according to Ptolemy<sup>f1370</sup>, in Arabia Felix:

*all these [were] the children of Keturah*; her children and grandchildren.

**Ver. 5.** *And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac.*] By his last will and testament; not all out of his own hand, while he lived, at least he reserved

somewhat for himself, and for gifts to his other children; so his servant declared to the parents and friends of Rebekah, (<sup><01245></sup>Genesis 24:35); wherefore some render the words here “had given” <sup>f1371</sup>; or the sense is, that he had at that time purposed and promised to give all that he had to Isaac, and now he actually did it.

**Ver. 6.** *But unto the sons of the concubines which Abraham had*, etc.] These were Hagar and Keturah, though they are both called his wives, (<sup><0146B></sup>Genesis 16:3 25:1); yet they were concubines; so Keturah, (<sup><1043D></sup>1 Chronicles 1:32); they were, as some render the word, “concubine wives” <sup>f1372</sup>; they were half wives or secondary ones: the Jewish writers say that they were espoused, but not by writing, as wives were; they were under the lawful wife, when there were any, and a kind of head servants in the family, and their children did not inherit; now the sons of the concubines of Abraham were Ishmael by Hagar, and the six above mentioned by Keturah: to these

*Abraham gave gifts*; money, gold and silver, of which he had plenty: the Targum of Jonathan calls them substance and movable goods; by this it appears, that though he had sent Ishmael away without anything, yet he afterwards remembered him, and gave him a portion with the rest of the children of his, concubines:

*and sent them away from Isaac his son*; that they might not be troublesome to him and his family; and that there, might be no contention among them about inheriting the land of Canaan given to him and his seed: and this Abraham did

*while he yet lived*; or otherwise after his death a separation would not have been easily made; but his authority had weight with them: and they were sent by him

*eastward, into the east country*; into Arabia, and the parts thereabout, which lay east from the place where Abraham was; these are the children of the east, mentioned along with the Midianites, who sprung from Keturah, (<sup><100B></sup>Judges 6:3).

**Ver. 7.** *And these [are] the days of the years of Abraham’s life, which he lived*, etc.] Being about to die, an account is given of his age, which was *an hundred threescore and fifteen years*; one hundred and seventy years; so that Isaac was now seventy five years of age, for he was born when

Abraham was an hundred years old, and Jacob and Esau must how be fifteen years of age at this time, since they were born when Isaac was sixty years of age, (<sup>01236</sup>Genesis 25:26); and Ishmael must be eighty nine years old; it may be observed, that as Abraham was seventy five years old when he went from Haran into the land of Canaan, (<sup>01234</sup>Genesis 12:4); he had been just an hundred years a sojourner in this country.

**Ver. 8.** *Then Abraham gave up the ghost*, etc.] Very readily and cheerfully, without any previous sickness or present pain, but through the decay of nature by reason of old age, in a very easy quiet manner:

*and died in a good old age, an old man*; for quantity, in those times few arriving to a greater; for quality, not attended with those inconveniences and disadvantages with which old age generally is, and therefore called evil:

*and full [of years]*; in the original it is only, “and full”; the Targum of Jonathan adds, “of all good”; temporal and spiritual, with which he was filled and satisfied; or he had had enough of life, and was willing to depart, and was full of desires after another and better world:

*and was gathered to his people*; which is to be understood not of his interment, there being only the body of Sarah in the sepulchre in which he was laid; but of the admission of his soul into the heavenly state upon its separation from the body, when it was at once associated with the spirits of just men made perfect. The Arabic writers <sup>f1373</sup> say that he died in the month of Nisan, others say Adar, in the year of the world 3563; but, according to Bishop Usher, he died A. M. 2183, and before Christ 1821.

**Ver. 9.** *And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah*, etc.] Isaac, though the younger brother, is set first, because he was born of the lawful wife of Abraham, the free woman, whereas Ishmael was born of a concubine and a bondwoman; Isaac was heir not only to Abraham’s temporal estate, but of the promise made concerning the Messiah, (not so Ishmael,) and was on all accounts the greater man. It appears from hence, that, though them had been a quarrel between Ishmael and Isaac, and the latter had been persecuted by the former, yet the difference was now made up, and they were reconciled, at least they agreed in this act of showing their last respect to their father; and that, though Ishmael had been expelled his father’s house, yet he was not at any great distance from him, and there was a correspondence between him and his

father; nor was he forgotten by him, as is clear from (<sup><0236></sup>Genesis 25:6); and he retained a filial affection for him; and Jarchi from hence concludes, that he was a penitent and a good man. The place where these two brothers buried their father was the cave of Machpelah,

*in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar the Hittite, which [is] before Mamre;* (see <sup><0238></sup>Genesis 23:8,9,17,19); wherefore very false is the tradition of the Mahometans <sup>f1374</sup>, that Abraham's sepulchre is at Mecca, which they, now show, and stands about twelve paces from the temple there, enclosed with iron rails.

**Ver. 10.** *The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth,* etc.] Of one of them, Ephron, the rest being witnesses of it, (<sup><0236></sup>Genesis 23:16,18,20);

*there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife;* Sarah had been buried there thirty eight years before, which was the reason why his sons buried, him there; if he died in Beersheba, as seems probable, (see <sup><0242></sup>Genesis 24:62,67); from thence to Hebron were sixteen miles <sup>f1375</sup>; so far was he carried to be interred.

**Ver. 11.** *And it came to pass, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac,* etc.] Yet more and more, both with spiritual and temporal blessings; showing hereby, that, though Abraham was dead, he was not unmindful of his covenant, which should be established with Isaac, (<sup><0179></sup>Genesis 17:19 22:17,18):

*and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahairoi;* which was near the wilderness of Beersheba and Paran, where Ishmael dwelt; so that they were not far from one another, (see <sup><0164></sup>Genesis 16:14 21:14,21).

**Ver. 12.** *Now these [are] the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son,* etc.] Or the genealogy of his posterity; and which is given to show that the Lord was not unmindful of his promise made to Abraham, concerning the multiplication of his seed, (<sup><0160></sup>Genesis 16:10 17:20):

*whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham;* (see <sup><0161></sup>Genesis 16:1,15).

**Ver. 13.** *And these [are] the names of the sons of Ishmael,* etc.] After mentioned: by their names, according to their generations; which were

imposed upon them at their birth, and are recited according to the order in which they were born, as follows:

*the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth:* mentioned in (<sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 60:7); and from whence a people of the Arabs are called Nabathaeans, and their country Nabathaea. Josephus <sup>f1376</sup> says, that all the country from Euphrates to the Red sea is called the Nabatene country. The posterity of this man inhabited part of Arabia Deserta and of Arabia Petraea, even to the entrance of Arabia Felix. Strabo <sup>f1377</sup> reckons the Nabataeans among the Arabians, and calls Petra the metropolis of Arabia Petraea, Petra Nabataea, and Petra of the Arabian Nabataeans, who he says dwelt about Syria, and often made excursions into it; and observes, that their country is populous and abounds with pastures; hence the rams of Nebaioth, mentioned in (<sup>2307</sup>Isaiah 60:7); Pliny also <sup>f1378</sup> places them in Arabia, and says they inhabit the town called Petra, and that they border upon Syria.

*And Kedar* is the second son of Ishmael; and the posterity of this man and their country are reckoned in Arabia by Isaiah, (<sup>2313</sup>Isaiah 21:13,16,17); and they are so well known to be Arabians, that the Arabic language is most frequently, in Jewish writings, called the language of Kedar. These are the people whom Pliny <sup>f1379</sup> names Cedrei, and mentions them along with the Nabathaeans, as near unto them, and indeed they dwelt in the same country, Arabia Petraea, and in tents, living by pasturage, hence they are sometimes called Scenites; and mention is made of the tents of Kedar in (<sup>2305</sup>Song of Solomon 1:5); these are the Scenite Arabs, called Saracens by Ammianus Marcellinus <sup>f1380</sup>. Two other sons of Ishmael follow:

*and Adbeel and Mibsam;* of whom no mention is made elsewhere, nor are there any traces of their names, unless the Agubeni, placed by Ptolemy <sup>f1381</sup> near Arabia Felix.

**Ver. 14.** *And Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa.*] Of Mishma and Massa, and of their posterity, there is not anything said elsewhere, unless the Masani, Ptolemy <sup>f1382</sup> places near Arabia Felix, came from Massa. Dumah seems to be the same Isaiah speaks of in (<sup>0211</sup>Genesis 21:11); and in Arabia Deserta, where some of Ishmael's posterity settled, is a place called Dumaetha, by Ptolemy <sup>f1383</sup>, which perhaps had its name from this son of his. The Targum of Jonathan translates these three names,

“hearing, silence, and patience;”



which the Jews use as a proverb, when they would signify that there are some things to be heard and not spoken of, and to be patiently borne. If Ishmael had in view to teach such lessons by the names he gave his children, he will seem to be a better man than he is usually thought to be.

**Ver. 15.** *Hadar and Tema*, etc.] From the first of these the city Adra in Arabia Petraea, and from the other the city Themma in Arabia Deserta, both mentioned by Ptolemy <sup>f1384</sup>, may be thought to have their names; or the city Adari and the Athritae in Arabia Felix <sup>f1385</sup>; and the inhabitants of the land of Tema are mentioned as Arabians, (<sup><2213></sup>Isaiah 21:13,14); and Pliny <sup>f1386</sup> speaks of a people called Thimaneans, whom he says the ancients joined to the Nabathaeans: the troops of Tema mentioned in Job were of this people, (<sup><3869></sup>Job 6:19); and Eliphaz the Temanite, (<sup><3821></sup>Job 2:11), is thought by some not to be the descendant of Teman the grandson of Esau, but to be of this man's people and country. The three last sons follow:

*Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah*; the two first of these are reckoned among the Hagarites, as the Ishmaelites were sometimes called, (<sup><1359></sup>1 Chronicles 5:19); from Jetur came the Itureans, whom Pliny <sup>f1387</sup> places in Coelesyria; and their country Iturea is reckoned by Strabo <sup>f1388</sup> along with Arabia; and the Ithyreans with Virgil <sup>f1389</sup> are famous for their bows, as Ishmael and his posterity were for archery in all ages, and still are, (see Gill on "<sup><0213></sup>Genesis 21:20"). As for the posterity of Naphish and Kedemah, we have no account elsewhere, nor any traces of their names, unless those of the latter should be meant by the men of the east, or the men of Kedem, (<sup><2443></sup>Jeremiah 49:28), which is not improbable, since they are mentioned with the posterity of Kedar the second son of Ishmael; and the Nubaeans by Lebanon may be from Naphish.

**Ver. 16.** *These [are] the sons of Ishmael*, etc.] The twelve before mentioned, (<sup><0253></sup>Genesis 25:13-15):

*these [are] their names, by their towns and by their castles*; their towns and their castles being called after their names, some of which we are able to trace at this distance, as the above notes show:

*twelve princes according to their nations*; these were princes, or heads of tribes, and there were twelve of them, and continued so, (see <sup><0172></sup>Genesis 17:20); where is the prophecy, and here an accomplishment of it.

**Ver. 17.** *And these [are] the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years*, etc.] one hundred and thirty seven years old. So

that he lived forty eight years after the death of Abraham, (<sup>0258</sup>Genesis 25:8); and, though he did not live to be so old as he, yet it was a considerable age he attained unto, (see Gill on "<sup>0257</sup>Genesis 25:7"):

*and he gave up the ghost and died, and was gathered unto his people;* some of the same expressions being used of him as of his father, (<sup>0258</sup>Genesis 25:8), have led some to conclude that he was a penitent and died a good man, and was gathered to the same people; but these phrases are used both of good and bad men.

**Ver. 18.** *And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur,* etc.] That is, the posterity of Ishmael, whose country reached from one place to the other; not from India to Chaluza, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; but the extent is that vast desert of Arabia, which eastward was called the wilderness of Havilah, and westward the wilderness of Shur; so that they inhabited it from east to west:

*that [is] before Egypt, as thou goest to Assyria;* which last place was over against Egypt, and bordered on that part where lies the way to the land of Assyria:

*[and] he died in the presence of all his brethren;* they being present when he died, or in peace with them, in all prosperity along with them: but since his death is spoken of before, and here the situation of his posterity, the words may be read, "it fell <sup>f1390</sup> in the presence of his brethren"; his lot, or the habitation of his posterity fell by lot between his brethren the Egyptians on one side of him, and the Israelites on the other; or between the sons of Keturah on the east, and the posterity of Isaac on the west.

**Ver. 19.** *And these [are] the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son,* etc.] Moses, having given the genealogy of Ishmael and his posterity, returns to Isaac, the other son of Abraham, with whom and his children the following part of his history is chiefly, if not altogether concerned:

*Abraham begat Isaac;* for the further confirmation of his being his proper legitimate son this clause is added.

**Ver. 20.** *And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife,* etc.] Which was three years after the death of his mother; Isaac was born when she was ninety, and therefore must be thirty seven when she died. The Jews say Rebekah was but fourteen, though it is highly probable she was older; who is described as

*the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian, of Padanaram*; so called to distinguish it from other Arams, as Aram of Damascus, etc. this seems to be the same with Aram Naharaim, or Mesopotamia, which lay between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris; for Padan, as Jarchi observes from the Targum, signifies two; but rather, as he, and Aben Ezra, and others say, Padan in the Arabic language signifies a field; it here intends the field or country of Syria, as in (<sup>3022</sup>Hosea 12:12). Haran, in Syria or Mesopotamia, was the place where Bethuel and Laban lived, (see <sup>0285</sup>Genesis 28:5,10 29:4). Some traces of Padan in Mesopotamia are thought to be in the cities of Aphphadana and Aphadana, which are placed by Ptolemy <sup>f1391</sup> in that country. Moreover, Rebekah is also said to be

*the sister to Laban the Syrian*, the son of Bethuel, who are both called Syrians, because they now lived in Syria: otherwise they were originally Chaldees, being descended from Nahor the brother of Abraham, who both were of Ur of the Chaldees; so Jacob is called a Syrian, because he lived long in the same place, (<sup>0535</sup>Deuteronomy 26:5).

**Ver. 21.** *And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife*, etc.] Was very earnest and constant in his supplications for her, as the word signifies, as is observed by Jarchi; or, “before his wife” <sup>f1392</sup>, she being present, and joining with him in his prayers: the reason was,

*because she [was] barren*; which appeared by the length of time they had been married, which was near twenty years, (see <sup>0255</sup>Genesis 25:26). The Jewish writers <sup>f1393</sup> say, that, after twenty years, Isaac took her and went with her to Mount Moriah, to the place where he was bound, and prayed that she might conceive; putting the Lord in mind of the promise he there made of the multiplication of Abraham’s seed, (<sup>0227</sup>Genesis 22:17,18):

*and the Lord was entreated of him*; he granted him his request; for, though God has purposed and promised to do many things for his people, yet he will be sought unto by them to do them for them:

*and Rebekah his wife conceived*; two sons at once, as it follows.

**Ver. 22.** *And the children struggled together within her*, etc.] When she was quick with child: this was some time before her delivery, and was not a common and ordinary motion felt by women in such circumstances, but an extraordinary one; the two children in her strove with each other, as if it was for mastery, or who should get out first before the proper time; which not only gave her great uneasiness of mind, but pain of body: this was an

emblem of the future difference between those two children, Esau and Jacob, and of the contentions that would be between their respective offspring, and of the enmity and war between good and bad men in all ages, and of the conflict between flesh and spirit in all good men:

*and she said, if [it be] so, why [am] I thus?* that is, either if it be so with me as is not with others in the like condition; for, as Aben Ezra suggests, she had inquired of other women, whether it had ever been so with them, and they replied, no: then, says she, how comes it to pass that it should be different with me from others? or, if those children by struggling should kill one another, or be abortive and kill me, why should I have been so desirous of conception? or prayed for it, as Jarchi observes? or, if so it is, and this will be the case, “why am I thus” <sup>f1394</sup>? this unhappy woman, to be in such circumstances, to endure so much pain, and to no purpose? why have I conceived and carried my burden so long, and at last cannot be delivered, or bring forth a live child? all my prayers and pains have been in vain:

*and she went to inquire of the Lord;* to the school of Shem the great, say the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, and so Jarchi: the Arabic writers say <sup>f1395</sup>, she inquired of Melchizedek; and, according to Aben Ezra, of some prophet, or of Abraham, who lived fifteen years after this event: and indeed, if she inquired of any particular person of note for religion, and as a prophet, there is none so likely as he, who was the friend of God, and had great intimacy with him, and to whom he revealed his secrets. But perhaps no more is meant by it, than that she went either to some proper and private place, and prayed unto the Lord that he would show her the reason of what had happened unto her; or to some public place of worship, and where prayer was wont to be made, and where she inquired by means of such as were engaged therein concerning this matter; (see <sup><1317></sup>Psalm 73:17).

**Ver. 23.** *And the Lord said unto her,* etc.] Either by one or other of the above persons she acquainted with this affair, and entreated to seek the Lord for her; or by an impulse upon her own mind:

*two nations [are] in thy womb;* or two persons, from whom two nations will spring, the Edomites and Israelites, the one from Esau, the other from Jacob:

*and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels;* different in their bodies, complexions, manner of life, religion, as well as place of abode:

*and [the one] people shall be stronger than [the other] people:* the Edomites, the posterity of Esau, were a very potent people, and had a succession of dukes and kings, before the Israelites, the posterity of Jacob, made any figure in the world, and while they were slaves in Egypt, (see <sup><1301></sup>Genesis 36:1-43); though in later times the Israelites became the stronger:

*and the elder*, or “greater”,

*shall serve the younger*, or “lesser”: the offspring of Esau, the eldest, should become tributary to the posterity of Jacob, the younger; which was verified in the times of David, when the Edomites were subdued by him, (<sup><1084></sup>2 Samuel 8:14); and still more in the times of Hyrcanus, when the Edomites or Idumeans became one people with the Jews, and embraced their religion <sup>f1396</sup>, rather than to be dispossessed of their country; and will have a further accomplishment in the latter day, when the prophecies in (Obadiah 1:18-21) shall be fulfilled. Of the use which the Apostle Paul makes of this passage, (see Gill on “<sup><501></sup>Romans 9:11-12”).

**Ver. 24.** *And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled*, etc.] The nine months were up from the time of her conception; or, as the Targum of Jonathan, when the two hundred and seventy days she went with child were completed:

*behold, [there were] twins in her womb;* as was perceived by the midwife; a double mercy was granted, more given than asked for; probably only one child was asked for, but two given.

**Ver. 25.** *And the first came out red*, etc.] Either his body, or rather the hair it was covered with, red; which was a sign, as Jarchi observes, that he would be a shedder of blood, fierce and cruel as were he and his posterity:

*all over like an hairy garment;* his body was all over full of hair, which stood as thick as a garment made of hair, and was a sign of the roughness of his disposition, as well as of the strength of his body:

*and they called his name Esau;* his parents, and those present at his birth, all that saw him thus covered with hair; for he had his name not from the colour of his body or hair; for the word does not signify “red”, but comes from a word which signifies “to make”, he being a “maker”: that made his way out before his brother, or an active man as afterwards, or because of

his hair was “made” or born more like a man than a child; and so the Targum adds,

“because he was wholly perfect, with the hair of his head and beard, and with his teeth and grinders:”

but chiefly because of his hairiness, for Esau in the Arabic language signifies “covered”<sup>f1397</sup>, as he was with hair: some say, a word in that language signifies a hairy garment made of camel’s hair<sup>f1398</sup>.

**Ver. 26.** *And after that came his brother out*, etc.] Out of his mother’s womb, either by his own strength, or by the help of the midwife:

*and his hand took hold on Esau’s heel*; to pluck him back and get out first; and this was not casual, but was so ordered in Providence, and had a meaning and mystery in it:

*and his name was called Jacob*; by his parents and others, and that for the above reason, because he took his brother by the heel, which his name has the signification of, and Esau has respect to in (<sup>012736</sup>Genesis 27:36):

*and Isaac [was] threescore years old when she bare them*; and so it was twenty years after he had been married to her; so long was his faith tried and exercised about the promised seed that was to spring from him.

**Ver. 27.** *And the boys grew*, etc.] In stature, became strong and fit for business, and betook themselves to different employments:

*and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field*: whose business lay in tilling and sowing it, which his father Isaac followed sometimes; or rather he chose to range about the field and hunt after beasts and birds, in which he was very expert, and contrived traps and snares to catch them in; and this course of life was most agreeable to his temper and disposition, being active, fierce, and cruel; according to the Targum of Jonathan, he was also a hunter and slayer of men, Nimrod and Henoch his son:

*and Jacob was a plain man*; an honest plain hearted man, whose heart and tongue went together; a quiet man, that gave no disturbance to others; a godly man, sincere, upright, and perfect, that had the truth of grace and holiness in him, as well as the perfect righteousness of his Redeemer on him:

*dwelling in tents*; keeping at home and attending the business of the family, as we afterwards find him boiling pottage, (<sup><01259></sup>Genesis 25:29); or rather this denotes his pastoral life, being a shepherd, he dwelt in tents, which could be removed from place to place for the convenience of pasturage: Jarchi's note is,

“in the tent of Shem and in the tent of Eber;”

agreeably to the Targum of Jonathan,

“a minister in the school of Shem, seeking doctrine from the Lord;”

a student there, where he resided awhile, in order to be instructed in the doctrines of truth and righteousness.

**Ver. 28.** *And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of [his] venison*, etc.] Better than Jacob, not only because he was his firstborn, but because he brought him of the flesh of creatures, which he took in hunting, and being dressed, were savoury food to him: it is in the original, “because venison (or what he hunted) [was] in his mouth”<sup>f1399</sup>, into which he put it, and was very grateful to his taste:

*but Rebekah loved Jacob*; more than Esau, being more at home with her, and of a milder disposition; and more especially being a good man, a partaker of the grace of God, and to whom she knew by the oracle the blessing and promise belonged.

**Ver. 29.** *And Jacob sod pottage*, etc.] Or boiled broth; this he did at a certain time, for this was not his usual employment; the Targum of Jonathan says, it was on the day in which Abraham died; and whereas this pottage was made of lentiles, as appears from (<sup><01234></sup>Genesis 25:34); this the Jewish writers<sup>f1400</sup> say was the food of mourners; and so this circumstance furnishes out a reason for Jacob's boiling pottage of lentiles at this time: and hence also they<sup>f1401</sup> gather, that Jacob and Esau were now fifteen years of age; for Abraham was an hundred years old when Isaac was born, and Isaac was sixty at the birth of his sons; and Abraham lived to be one hundred and seventy five, and therefore Esau and Jacob must be fifteen years old when he died:

*and Esau came from the field, and he [was] faint*: for want of food, and weary with hunting, and perhaps more so, having toiled and got nothing.

**Ver. 30.** *And Esau said to Jacob, feed me, I pray thee, with that same red [pottage], etc.*] Or, “with that same red<sup>f1402</sup>, red”; not knowing what it was, or what it was made of, and therefore only calls it by its colour; and the word being doubled, may denote that it was very red; or he, being in haste and greedy of it through hunger, repeats it in a quick and short way: this pottage was made of lentiles, as we learn from (<sup><0234></sup>Genesis 25:34); which sort of food was much in use with the Egyptians, Egypt abounding with lentiles; and particularly Alexandria was famous for them, from whence they were carried into other countries, as Austin<sup>f1403</sup> relates. The lentiles of Pelusium, a city in Egypt, are made mention of by Virgil<sup>f1404</sup> and Martial<sup>f1405</sup>, for which that place was famous; where, as Servius says<sup>f1406</sup>, lentiles were first found, or where they grew the best; and, in the Misnah<sup>f1407</sup>, an Egyptian lentil is spoken of, as neither large nor small, but middling. Pliny<sup>f1408</sup> speaks of two sorts of it in Egypt, and says he found it in some authors, that eating of these makes men even tempered, good humoured, and patient; and observes<sup>f1409</sup>, that they delight in red earth, or where there is much ruddle, or red ochre, from whence they may receive a red tincture; and the pottage made of them is of such a colour. And Dr. Shaw<sup>f1410</sup> says, that lentiles dissolve easily into a mass, and make a pottage or soup of a chocolate colour, much used in the eastern countries: and, as Scheuchzer observes<sup>f1411</sup>, coffee is of the bean kind, and not unlike a lentil, and makes a red decoction. The colour of it took with Esau, as well as it was sweet and savoury, as Athenaeus<sup>f1412</sup> reports; and especially, he being faint and hungry, desires his brother to give him some of it, and even to feed him with it:

*for I [am] faint*; so faint that he could not feed himself, or however wanted immediate sustenance, and could not wait till other food he had used to live upon was dressed:

*therefore was his name called Edom*; not from his red hair, but from this red pottage; for Edom signifies “red”, and is the same with the names Pyrrhus and Rufus.

**Ver. 31.** *And Jacob said, sell me this day thy birthright.*] Which had many privileges annexed to it, as honour and authority in the family next to parents; a double portion of inheritance; some say the exercise of priesthood, but that is questioned; the parental blessing, and especially in this the promises of the Messiah, and of inheritance of the land of Canaan, and which was typical of the heavenly inheritance: all which Rebekah knew



by the divine oracle were designed for Jacob, and which no doubt she had acquainted him with, and advised him to deal with his brother about parting with his birthright as he had opportunity; and very likely they had talked together about it before in a distant manner, and Esau had shown some indifference to his right, and made no great account of it; and now, an opportunity offering to get him in the mind to part with it, he takes it, and moves for a sale of it immediately, at once, without any more delay, and even before he had his pottage; thus taking the advantage of his brother's necessity: or, sell it me "as the day"<sup>f1413</sup>, let the bargain be as clear as the day, as Jarchi interprets it; let it be made in plain and full terms, that there may be no dispute about it hereafter, or any revocation of it: but the former sense seems best, as appears from (<sup>0253</sup>Genesis 25:33), where the same way of speaking is used.

**Ver. 32.** *And Esau said, behold, I [am] at the point to die*, etc.] Or, "going to die"<sup>f1414</sup>, going the way of all flesh; which he might say on account of the common frailty and mortality of man, and the brevity of life at most, or by reason of the danger of life he was always exposed to in hunting of wild beasts, as Aben Ezra suggests; or rather, because of his present hunger and faintness, which, unless immediately relieved, must issue in death. Dr. Lightfoot<sup>f1415</sup> thinks it was now the time of the famine spoken of in the following chapter, (<sup>0261</sup>Genesis 26:1):

*and what profit shall this birthright do to me?* a dying man, or when dead? In such a case, all the privileges of it in course would devolve on Jacob; and as for the promises of the Messiah, and of the land of Canaan, made to Abraham and his seed, these seemed to be at a great distance, and if he lived ever so long might never enjoy them; and therefore judged it most advisable to consult his present interest, and have something in hand, than to trust to futurity; and, by thus saying, he signified an entire willingness to part with his birthright on the terms proposed.

**Ver. 33.** *And Jacob said, swear unto me this day*, etc.] For the more sure and certain confirmation of the bargain; and by this oath oblige himself to let him peaceably enjoy the birthright, nor seek to revoke it, or dispute it with him, or disturb him in the possession of it:

*and he sware unto him*; that he would abide by the bargain, and never give him any trouble on that account; and hereby he made it over to Jacob as firm as it could be; God himself being appealed to as a witness of it, whose

will it was that Jacob should have the birthright, the blessing, and the promises:

*and he sold his birthright unto Jacob*; with all the privileges and appurtenances of it, and that for one morsel of meat, as in (<sup><8126></sup>Hebrews 12:16).

**Ver. 34.** *Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles*, etc.] This shows what the pottage was made of, of which (see <sup><0250></sup>Genesis 25:30); and that Jacob gave to Esau more than he asked and bargained for, bread as well as pottage; but neither of them until the bargain was made and sworn to, and he had got the birthright secured unto him; as cunning as Esau, and as simple and plain as Jacob were, the latter outwitted the former, and was too crafty for him:

*and he did eat, and drink, and rose up, and went his way*; following his former course of life, without any remorse of conscience, reflection of mind, or repentance for what he had done; for though he afterwards carefully sought the blessing with tears he had parted with, yet not until his father was upon his deathbed, (<sup><8127></sup>Hebrews 12:17 <sup><0234></sup>Genesis 27:34);

*thus Esau despised [his] birthright*; by setting it at so mean a price, and by not repenting of it when he had so done; having no regard especially to spiritual blessings, to the Messiah, and to the heavenly inheritance, eternal glory and happiness by Christ: the Jerusalem Targum adds,

“and he despised his part in the world to come, and denied the resurrection of the dead;”

and the Targum of Jonathan on (<sup><0259></sup>Genesis 25:29) says, that

“on that day he committed five transgressions; he performed strange worship (or committed idolatry), he shed innocent blood, he lay with a virgin betrothed, he denied the life of the world to come (or a future state), and despised the birthright;”

which confirms the character the apostle gives of him, that he was a fornicator and a profane person, (<sup><8126></sup>Hebrews 12:16).