

GENESIS Week 24, chapter 25

This week we continue our study of Genesis 25. Let's start by reading Gen. 25:12-18

READ GEN 25:12-18

We ended last week taking a brief look at the descendants of Keturah, one of Abraham's concubines. Just how many concubines Abraham had beyond Hagar and Keturah we don't know; likely, there were others, with only these two playing any Biblical role. Yet, that is not at all something we can be sure of.

Generally speaking, the sons of Keturah formed tribal confederations, and along with Ishmael, make up the various Arab peoples that we see today. I say tribal confederations, because unlike the Israelites who very much tended to stay closely identified with their individual tribes.....Reuben, Simeon, Ephraim, Judah, Benjamin, and so on.....the sons of Keturah quickly became less identified with their individual tribes and had to band together in order to have any staying power and influence. In fact, most of names of the sons of Keturah have been lost in history, and we really can't follow their progress at all. The one that DOES have a Biblical impact is the tribe of Midian, who lived on the western end of the Arabian Peninsula, with the Gulf of Aqaba as one of their boundary lines. This is the same Midian that Moses fled to from Egypt after he had killed that Egyptian soldier; that same Midian where he found a wife and lived for 40 years as a shepherd.

In verses 12 – 18, we get a report on the line of Ishmael. Ishmael was the dispossessed "firstborn" of Abraham and the Egyptian handmaiden, Hagar. Recall that Ishmael was a teenager by the time Isaac was born. Also recall that until Abraham's ONLY legal wife, Sarah, bore him Isaac, Abraham had DECLARED Ishmael to be his firstborn son. Ishmael, as far as Abraham was concerned, was the son of promise...the son of his who would carry on the covenant that Yahweh had made with Abraham. It is no coincidence the verse just previous to this section on the genealogy of Ishmael (vs. 11) says this: ".....After the death of Abraham, God blessed his son Isaac...."

This was a reminder that Yahweh had REJECTED Ishmael as the son of promise. The son of promise was the one that God Himself had caused to be born in a miraculous way.....by means of the dead womb of Sarah, and the dead seed of Abraham. The son of promise was Isaac.

Let's review a little about Ishmael and gain some context, because we're also going to talk about Islam in this lesson. Before we look of these sons of Ishmael.....who form the core of the modern Arab peoples.....let me point out that Ishmael *is* a Semite, just as Isaac was, and of course, as Abraham was. What's a Semite? A descendant of Noah's son Shem. Actually, the word "Semite" is kind of an error in itself.....at least in the sense of how it is pronounced and spelled. The word SHOULD be shem-ite.....NOT sem-ite. The error is a typical gentile Christian one, because the Hebrew alphabet character that we

transliterate as an “s” can be used in one of two ways: as a “sheen” or as a “seen”. Moving the little dot located above the character to the far right of that Hebrew alphabet character makes it a Sheen.....that gives us an “sh” sound....like “she” or “shoot” or “Sharon”; moving the little dot to the far left makes the same character a “seen”, giving us the “s” sound.....pronounced like “Sam” or “Seattle” or “seaside”. The word Shem is spelled with Sheen, not a Seen.

In any case, since Isaac and Ishmael had the same father, and he was a descendant of Shem, then BOTH of those children are Semites. In fact, ALL the children Abraham sired are Semites. So, the Arabs and the Jewish people are very much related...they’re all Semites. That’s what makes the term we hear so much today, “anti-Semitic” such an oxymoron. Anti-Semitic is technically a term that means, *against Semites*.....against the descendants of Shem. Yet, the way that term has always been used, is to declare bigotry against the Jewish people. And, interestingly, it is the Arab peoples who are usually those who are most accused of being anti-Semitic. So, we have the Arab Semites being called anti-Semitic. Just another of those mindless phrases and terms that are regularly used in which no one seems to have any idea what they’re actually saying.

Let me also express that just because Ishmael was rejected by God as the son of promise that does NOT mean that Ishmael was in some way cursed by God. Ishmael was not punished or judged; he simply could NOT have been the son of promise because Yahweh had determined that another, Isaac, was to be that son. In fact, to sort of make up for Ishmael being dispossessed of the firstborn status that he held until Isaac was born, Ishmael was given an almost equal physical inheritance as Isaac. It’s just that while Abraham would provide Isaac’s wealth and prosperity, Yahweh would provide for Ishmael’s. So, in our age, while the Arab peoples are generally Israel’s enemy, they are in no way an accursed people any more than we in this room are just because the leaders of our nation have recently come against Israel by forcing them to divide their land. Oh, the Arabs have been and will continue to be disciplined severely by Yahweh for coming against His set-apart people, just as we Americans (as a nation) have recently been, and will continue to be, severely disciplined by God for forcing Israel to turn over some of their land to their enemies. But, whereas the descendants of Noah’s son Ham *are* generally a line of people who are in a bind, in that they DID have a curse put on them, that is *not* the case with the descendants of Shem....Arabs as well as Hebrews.... (or Japheth for that matter).

OK. I mentioned that for all practical purpose, we could say that the descendants of Ishmael, together with the descendants of Keturah, form the modern day Arab peoples. And, just like we in this room are not purebred.....that is we all have some mixture of European or Asian stock within us.....so it is with the Arab peoples. These descendants of Ishmael and Keturah began co-mingling very early on. Therefore, we find mention in Isaiah chapter 60 of Midian, Ephah, and Sheba.....who are tribes from Keturah.....side-by-side with Kedar and Nebaioth, who are sons of Ishmael.

Just for the sake of good context.....which is everything in Bible study.... let’s all read Isaiah 60:1-7, together.

READ ISAIAH 60:1-7

This is an end-times prophecy about what has been happening and is continuing to happen with Israel, mostly right before our eyes. It's about the return of the Jews to their homeland. And, of course that return of the Israelites to their God-given land is an ongoing *process* that has been occurring over the last several decades.

And, in the last few verses of what we just read we see the names of those 5 tribes....ARAB tribes.....of Midian, Ephah, Sheba, Kedar and Nebaioth; names we have just finished reading in Genesis. For the sake of simplicity, what is being said here is that ARAB peoples will eventually become friends and servants of Israel and bring them wealth and prosperity. More pointedly, this is about the Arab peoples coming to worship Messiah in Israel. So, this is NOT for today, but for sometime in the near future. And, the idea is that hordes of Arabs will bow down to the Hebrew Messiah.

So, we must very careful in how we disciples of Yahshua look at the Arab peoples. Yes, today, most Arabs are on the wrong side of the issue with Israel. They have even chosen to abandon the God of their forefather, Abraham, to take on a false-god, a non-god, called Allah. They have chosen to be outright enemies of Christians and Jews BECAUSE of this fact that is so falsely reported in today's news media, and in today's tolerant seeking Churches.

But, as any who have heard my dear friend Tass speak, knows, there are MANY Arab Believers in Messiah...so-called Christian Arabs. The Arab Muslims, who believe in Allah, are no more deceived than our family, friends, and neighbors who believe in no god at all! So, while we MUST stand beside Israel...knowing that will put us against most of the world.... for that is our duty and call before God..... that does NOT mean we have to hate the Arabs or Muslims. We can hate what they believe, we can hate what they do, and we're no more wrong to destroy those who try to destroy us or Israel, than we were to fight Hitler's armies in WWII. But, we sure don't have to revel in it, or have joy in the doing.

Now is probably also a good time to mention a couple of things about Islam; because Islam says that Ishmael is the true founder of Islam.

I'm spending a lot of time with this because of the horrible ignorance, and outright agenda driven lies, about the simple history of the matter of Islam and Ishmael. Let me say right up front that Ishmael is NOT the father of Islam. He's not even the father of all the Arab peoples, just some of them.

You see, Isaac and Ishmael represent the crux of the matter between Jews and Christians on the one side, and Muslims on the other; Isaac and Ishmael are a distinct fork in the road. And, please grasp that the differences between the Judeo-Christian world, and the Islamic world, are irreconcilable. There is no halfway point, there is no compromise. Islam says that the words from God, from Allah, and the people of the promise of the

covenants with Abraham, come down through Ishmael and are recorded in the Koran. Of course, Jews and Christians maintain that the promise of the covenants comes down through Isaac, and are recorded in the Holy Scriptures.

We have just finished reading several chapters that explicitly state that the son of promise....the line of the covenant..... was by means of Isaac, not Ishmael. Interestingly the Muslims acknowledge that IS what the Bible says.....and they say the Bible texts have been corrupted and changed by Jews and Christians. That in fact, the Bible SHOULD say that it was Isaac that was rejected, and that Ishmael was the REAL son of promise.

Let's look at a couple of facts that makes that belief utter nonsense. First, the religion of Islam didn't even come into existence until the Prophet Mohammed formed it; the Muslims fully agree with that. And, Mohammed wasn't even born until almost 600 years AFTER the time of Jesus Christ. The last book of the OT was written 1000 years BEFORE Mohammed was born. The last book of the NT was written 5 centuries BEFORE Mohammed was born. Let me say that another way: the OT as we know it was completed in 400 BC, the NT as we know it was completed about 100 AD, and the founder of the religion of Islam was born about 575 AD. And, upon reading the Bible, Mohammed, the founder of Islam says: "oh, all that was corrupted by the Jews just to pervert what I'm telling you is the truth". It would be as though someone today stood up and said; hey, the Constitution that is under glass in Washington DC...the one that was written 250 years ago.....it isn't correct. I just wrote the correct one. The original one in Washington DC is corrupted, and it was corrupted just so you wouldn't believe that I just wrote down the right one, here on Merritt Island, in 2005. Now, is that about the most illogical, silliest thing you've ever heard? That is precisely what Islam claims about the Holy Scriptures today.

By the time Islam was even invented by Mohammed, the Roman Catholic Church was dominant throughout Europe and Asia. Constantine, who declared the new gentile form of Christianity to be the state religion of the Roman Empire, had already been DEAD for over 200 years by the time Mohammed was born. It doesn't even matter that with the Dead Sea Scrolls we have the oldest actual, original Scriptural writings of the Hebrews from BEFORE the time Christ was born.....and they have been studied and photos of them released, and much of them are even on display in Jerusalem for any and all to see.... And they agree fully with the Bibles that you and I have before us today (OT of course); proving that no corruption or change has occurred.....at least not AFTER about 100 BC if ever. Yet, Islam says that what Genesis SHOULD have said is that Ishmael was the chosen one, and Isaac was the rejected one.

Second.....and don't ever let anyone tell you otherwise.....there are two ways and only two that we can know whom a god is.....His name and his attributes. There are those scholars who say that Allah is just Arabic for "god". While in the most general sense this is true, the ONLY name of god in Islam is Allah. They reject and all Biblical names for God, even when those names are Arab-ized. Yud-heh-vav-heh, El Shaddai, or any other

Biblical name or title for the God of the Universe is wrong according to Islam. So, the god of Islam has an entirely different name than the God of the Bible.

Further, the god of Islam glorifies death. The god of the Bible glorifies life. The god of Islam says that Muslims are to win over converts to Islam by means of the sword. The god of the Bible says that His Believers are to win over converts by means of love and faith. The god of Islam says that how a Muslim behaves determines his eternal future. The god of the Bible says the condition of one's heart determines his eternal future. The god of Islam has no Messiah. The god of the Bible says there **MUST** be a Messiah. The god of Islam is a war god. The god of the Bible is a Shalom god. It goes on and on and on. The attributes, character, and instruction of the god of Islam as found in the Koran, is the ***exact opposite*** of the attributes, character and instruction of the God of the Bible. And, yet, we have a President, and many Christian religious leaders that tell us that Christians and Muslims are worshipping the same God. I have heard many pastors say that the best way to approach a Muslim is to say that we respect that they are worshipping God; they just don't know that the God they are worshipping is Jesus! JESUS! Do I sound just a little riled up? This is insanity....it is blasphemy of the worst kind, and it is teaching God's people to believe that the worshipping of ANY god is fine.....no matter his name or characteristics.....because any god is really just the god of Israel. Well, that's not what Yahweh has been telling us, is it?

Please. If you love the people of whatever church or synagogue you attend, take this information with you, and tell them the truth. Do you realize what happened to the Israelites that worshipped BOTH Yahweh and the gods of other nations? Those who tried to be politically correct and tolerant by the standards of that era? Those who declared that Yahweh and Ba'al were one? They were scattered and millions were destroyed. There is NO DIFFERENCE between what they did, and what we do today, right in our places of worship, when we declare that Yahweh, Messiah, and Allah are one. And, I remind you; God didn't deal with them person-by-person or family-by-family. He placed ***a national*** judgment upon them, and the exact same thing is prophesied in our time; that you don't personally believe this blasphemy doesn't exempt you and your family from suffering right along with others in our nation under God's terrible discipline. Oh, certainly, you are saved, and your eternal future is secure. But, is that really all that matters? I think not.

OK. Let's examine these tribes of Ishmael.

Nebaioth was the firstborn son of Ishmael. His tribe is the people referred to as the Nabaiati, in Assyrian accounts of their Empire's battles against the people of the Arabian Peninsula, only a few decades prior to Judah being taken captive in Babylon. We more know these people as the Nabateans, and even more recently as the Jordanians of Petra.

Kedar is spoken of many centuries after Genesis, in the Bible, and they formed some kind of association with the Edomite people (the descendants of Esau). These are people who wandered about as shepherds and goat herders throughout the Arabian and Sinai Peninsulas. Without doubt, they form at least part of the modern day Bedouins.

Adbe'el is known in Assyrian historical records as Idiba'il; they were conquered by Tiglath-Pileser.....the same guy who was instrumental in conquering the Northern Kingdom of Ephraim-Israel.....and sent to guard the Egyptian-Assyrian border.

Dumah's tribe shows up again in Isaiah 21. They occupied a territory just above Midian, along the Gulf of Aqaba, on the Arabian Peninsula.

The tribe of Tema dwelled around a well-known oasis, northeast of Dedan, because it was located on a very well traveled caravan route that connected the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula with the lower reaches of the Mesopotamia.

Jetur and Naphish appear to have integrated into a single tribe, and are described later on in the Bible (in 1 Chronicles 5) as the Hagrites.....a contraction for Hagar-ites, descendants of Hagar.

For all practical purpose, nothing is known beyond pure speculation about the remaining 12 sons of Ishmael, so we won't go there.

Verse 16 tells us that the descendants of Ishmael lived in villages; in other words, they didn't build and reside in walled cities. They were rural.....farmers and herders...and, some were desert wanderers and traders. This accounts for the lifestyle the Arabs developed in which.....because they lived in unfortified towns.....they constantly attacked one another in hopes of gaining for themselves, by taking from another. This mentality is still at work today. Part of what fundamental Islam is fighting *against*, is a way of life that PRODUCES things, rather than their traditional way of life that simply TAKES what others have produced. The traditional Arab tribal ways revolved around Arab tribes always seeking to take wealth and power from other Arab tribes. Even Mohammed, the founder of Islam, gained his reputation as a leader by leading attacks of his own tribe against other Arab tribes and winning. The goal was always the same: booty.

Now, I want that to sink in for a minute. Why is it that those Arab/Muslim strongholds of the world are also the most backward places in the entire world? Afghanistan, Pakistan, most of Iraq and Iran, and so on. It is because, generally speaking, the people have no concept of working, producing, fairness, and technological progress. When Islam attacked Europe in 711 AD, it was the European WEALTH that they were after, not a European way of life or European technology. They wanted to take what Europe had produced. That is exactly what they want today. The war on terror is indeed a fight about a way of life. But, the way of life they want is, we produce it, they take it. Because they don't even know how.....nor do they WANT to know how.....to produce and share.

In verse 17, we are told that Ishmael lived for 137 years; then "he was gathered to his kin". Here again, we find no reference at all to what that "he was gathered to his kin" means. Where *were* his kin? WHO were his kin? Was this an afterlife? If so, what did it consist of? We'll never find out in the Torah, and very little in the whole of the OT. Rather, this is just a nice way of saying he lived out a good life span, and died peacefully,

probably of natural causes. His people were undoubtedly his descendants as opposed to his ancestors. He had been divided and separated away from his father, so HE was the start of a new line. Being gathered to his kin, I feel certain, refers to his immediate family.....who would not be known as Arab for several more centuries.

Next we're given a general territorial boundary where Ishmael's descendants lived. And, it starts at the border of the Sinai Peninsula with Egypt.....that is the reference to Shur, which means "wall", and then goes north to the Assyrians of Mesopotamia. The location of Havilah is not known, as there are many locations in the Middle East that goes by this, or variations of, name Havilah. But, the inference is that the descendants of Ishmael tended to stay among themselves; for it says they camped alongside their kinsman. They didn't seem to mix with the Mesopotamians, or Egyptians, or Nubians, or many of the other non-Semitic peoples of the earth. Generally speaking, the descendants of Ishmael occupied areas to the north, south, and east of the land of Canaan.

OK. Now that you know more about Ishmael than you probably expected, or ever wanted, to know, let's move a little further into Genesis 25.

READ GEN 25: 19-34

Chapter 25 is more or less divided into 3 parts: the first third consisting of the final important details of Abraham's life, the 2nd third, consisting of calling out the descendants of Ishmael, and giving some information about where they settled. Here in the final third of chapter 25, we begin to chart the end of Isaac's story and the beginning of his son Jacob: the torch was being prepared to be passed yet again.

Isaac is spoken of only sparingly as compared to his son Jacob, and his father, Abraham. For instance, we are told at the end of chapter 24 that Isaac married Rivka, but then there is no information given to us about the first 20 years of their marriage. We do know that unlike Abraham, Isaac seems to have stayed closer to home. The known stories about Isaac center around Be'er Sheva; as far as anyone knows, he didn't live in Hebron as his father did, except near the end of his life. But, *like* his father, he was an owner of flocks and herds.

In verse 21, we find that, much in the same way as it was for his father; Isaac went a long time with his beloved wife unable to bear him an heir. Further, saying she was barren meant she had given Isaac NO children at all...not even girl children. And, as with Abraham, Isaac goes before Yahweh, and Yahweh grants his request for a son.....Rebecca is now pregnant. While there, of course, are great similarities between the situation of Abraham and Sarah conceiving and the current problem with Isaac and Rivka, there are also great differences. For instance, neither Isaac nor Rivka were elderly or beyond child bearing years. Even more, we don't find Isaac with any concubines or Rivka offering a handmaiden or slave girl to bare a child in her stead. There appear to be no plans to do anything but live with the situation until Yahweh decides to do something.

Is it that the Lord waited for Isaac to approach Him before allowing him children? Is it that the Lord was constrained by Isaac, in that it was *necessary* for Isaac's prayers so that God COULD allow Rebecca to become fertile? This is the substance of many arguments among spiritual leaders: does God NEED our prayers in order to act?

I think not. But, God does want to teach us. And, He also wants a relationship with us; yet, what relationship with anyone is possible without communication? While oral speech is the typical human-to-human way of communicating, prayer is the way God ordained for human-to-God communication. And, while God does not NEED prayer, He does WANT prayer. Conversely, we as humans NEED to pray. I cannot think of a way that builds a stronger faith than communicating my needs, or that of another, to God, and then marveling over his response.

But, this much longed for pregnancy by Rebecca almost immediately became uncomfortable for her. And, these apparently very active twin sons within her womb caused her to inquire of God just what was going on. Let's be clear: this pregnancy worried Rivka. The activity within her womb was NOT normal. Even an unusual Hebrew word is chosen to describe the goings on.....the word usually translated as struggled: and that word is *va-yitrotsetsu*. This verb has more of the sense of crushing, and thrusting, and smashing.....something pretty violent.