

## TOLDOT { תולדות } (Generations)

Genesis 25:19-2898, Malachi 1:1-2:7, Rom. 9:1-13

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This week's portion of scripture begins with a description of the generations (toldot) of Isaac, Abraham's son. **"And these are the generations (toldot) of Isaac (Yitzchak), Abraham's son: Avraham begat Yitzchak..."** (Genesis 25:19)

### Adding God to the situation

It was not until Abraham's name was changed from Avram **אברם** to Avraham, **אברהם** that Isaac was born. This change in Avram's name came through the addition of the Hebrew letter {hey}<sup>1</sup> { ה } which is often used as an abbreviated form of the name of God.

With the inclusion of the supernatural power of God in Abram's life, he finally succeeded in seeing the fulfillment of God's promise of a son. So, too, are we in our limited human abilities able to do nothing of eternal value<sup>2</sup>; but **when God gets involved – nothing is impossible!!**



Isaac embraces his father Abraham after the [Binding of Isaac](#), early 1900s Bible illustration , Wikipedia

### Supernatural Conceptions

Isaac (Yitzchak) was forty years old (a significant number in the Bible) when he took Rebecca (Rivkah) as his wife. **"And she was barren."** (Genesis 25:21) Isn't it interesting that both Abraham's wife and Isaac's wife both had difficulty conceiving? This showed everyone that their children were a special gift of grace from God, requiring His Divine intervention, and born for fulfillment of His set apart purpose.

Yeshua was also conceived supernaturally, to a Jewish virgin, by the power of the Ruach Hakodesh (Holy Spirit) to fulfill his Divine Destiny as the Messiah, Saviour of the world.

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<sup>1</sup> You may need to install Hebrew fonts on your computer to see these Hebrew letters

For a Biblical study of the Hebrew letters and their deeper meanings you may order our DVD set, Shalom Morah II.

<sup>2</sup> John 15:5

## The Prayers of a Righteous Man Avail Much

I also find it interesting that only when her husband prayed for her was Rivkah able to conceive: **“Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren, and the Lord allowed Himself to be entreated of him and Rivkah his wife conceived.”** (Genesis 25:21)

The Hebrew expression used here for prayer (*vaye'etar*) can be compared to the Hebrew word for a pitchfork (*eter*). Yitzchak's tears penetrated the foundation of heaven, like the sharp prongs of a pitchfork; and just as the way the grains of wheat or barley are turned over by the pitchfork, so too was God's judgment of barrenness upon Rivkah 'turned over' and reversed by God's mercy.<sup>3</sup>

**“Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with their enemies in the gate.”** (Psalm 127:3-5)

This is the only example in Torah of the man being required to plead with the Lord for a child and not the woman. Sarah, Abraham's wife, came up with her own solution for her barrenness – she suggested a surrogate mother. Hannah, wife of Elkannah, went to the Temple and cried out to the Lord for a child; but Rivkah did none of these things.

She turned to her husband who was her spiritual covering, to entreat the Lord on her behalf; and God answered Isaac's prayers for the miraculous gift of new life. Rivkah found herself pregnant with not just one child – but with twins – a double portion!

We can assume that when month after month after month went by with no signs of pregnancy, Rebecca would have been praying fervently for God's help and intervention. Considering the Middle Eastern cultural emphasis on the blessing of children and the misfortune of barrenness, we can be quite certain that Rebecca would have been on her knees regularly before God on this matter.

Yet God chose not to act until her husband got on board and entreated God on his wife's behalf. I don't believe this means that if we have no husband or that if they won't pray for us then God won't answer our petitions. Not at all! (Nor does it mean that God will give our husbands everything we ask them to pray about☺)

But I do think this should serve as an encouragement to husbands to be faithful in their role as their wife's spiritual and prayer covering. Oftentimes a wife is praying and praying for changes in her family, her marriage, her children, or even herself – but to no avail. Could it be that God is waiting for the husband, as the Cohen (priest) of the home to petition the heavens for an answer? Hmmm.....

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<sup>3</sup> Torah with a Twist of Humor, Joe Bobker

When Rebecca experienced a violent struggle in her womb, she inquired of the Lord who answered that two nations (goyim) and two peoples (amim) are in her womb. God prophesied that even from the womb, there would be separation and mutual antagonism between brothers. Talk about sibling rivalry!

The struggle between the two boys in Rikvah's womb foreshadowed an intense sibling rivalry between Jacob and Esau that still carries on today between their descendants. Today the descendants of the carnal, war-like, son of Isaac, Esau, continue with their 'ancient hatred' towards the descendants of Jacob (Israel).



The birth of Esau and Jacob, as painted by Benjamin West, Wikipedia

"Because you have had an ancient hatred, and have shed *the blood of* the children of Israel by the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, when their iniquity came to an end, therefore, *as I live,*" says the Lord GOD, "I will prepare you for blood, and blood shall pursue you; since you have not hated blood, therefore blood shall pursue you." (Ezekiel 35:5-6)

God also spoke a promise that the elder one would serve the younger. Esau was born first, red (אָדוֹם *adom* in Hebrew) and hairy all over, as a premonition of his future love of hunting and the shedding of blood. The name, Esau עֶשָׂו (Esav in Hebrew) is related to the word for 'hairy' (שֵׁעִיר *se'ir*) and is a wordplay on Se'ir, the region he and his descendants settled.

**"Now the first came forth, red all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esav."**  
(Genesis 25:25)

Next came Jacob (Ya'akov יַעֲקֹב), grasping onto Esau's heel (עֶקֶב *ekev*), a premonition of his desire to grasp after his brother's birthright. The word 'ekev' can mean 'the heel of the foot' but also can mean 'to follow' or may also carry the connotation of 'deception'.

Notice that the divine destiny of both boys was sealed even in the womb before birth! Wow! Rebecca knew that second born Jacob was God's choice as the one to inherit the birthright and blessing that usually goes to the firstborn. Knowing his destiny, Jacob became Rebecca's favourite. He was also a mama's boy – quiet, loved to stay at home – a boy so easy for a mother to love.

Esau, however, became his Daddy's son – a hairy hunter – a 'man's man'. Naturally, Dad enjoyed the venison his favourite son brought home, not like his 'sissy' twin brother. This favouritism caused problems in the family and we may take heed from their example not to show more love and affection to one child than another.

**"And Isaac loved Esau because he did eat of his venison: but Rebecca loved Jacob."**  
(Genesis 25:28)

Later, we see that Jacob, who should have known better, perpetuated this parental dysfunction in favouring Joseph, son of his beloved wife, Rachel, over the sons of Leah. How often we see the sins of the fathers visited upon the children.

Esau did, indeed, grow into a skilled hunter, an outdoorsman; while Jacob kept to the tent.  
**"...and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a simple man, dwelling in tents"** (Genesis 25:27).

One day, when Esau came in from the field, he came upon Jacob cooking a red (adom) stew of lentils. This is another reason why Esau was given the nickname of Adom (red) – because of the red stew.

Our English Bibles usually use the word Edom and state that **"Esau was the father of the Edomites."** (Genesis 36:9) The area where they settled (Se'ir) was also rich in red (adom) rock. The Tanach contains several prophecies about Edom and their end,<sup>4</sup> but unless we understand that they descend from Esau, we miss much of God's dealings with Israel and the Arabic nations in this very day.

Esau felt so famished that when Jacob offered to trade some stew for Esau's birthright, he agreed.

In these days, the firstborn would act as the priest (cohen) of the family. Jacob highly valued the privilege inherent in the birthright of his firstborn brother, whereas Esau treated it as insignificant, worth less than a bowl of stew.



Jacob offering a dish of lentils to Esau for his birthright, 18th century painting by Zacarias Gonzalez Velazquez

## Wasting the Birthright

**"And Esau said to Jacob: 'Let me swallow, I pray thee, some of this red, red (adom adom) pottage; for I am faint.' Therefore was his name called Adom (red)."** (Genesis 25:30)

Like so many today, Esau thought only of his immediate desire (exaggerated as it was), rather than considering the future consequences of giving in to his appetite. How many young men and women give in to their sensual desires and lose something as precious as their sexual purity?

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<sup>4</sup> See the book of Obadaiah,



How many of us marry someone totally unsuited for us because of our exaggerated feelings of loneliness or fear of being alone? We confuse a ‘*want*’, intense as it may be, with a real need. We cannot allow our feelings to rule us; our emotions must not become our masters.

**“And Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way. So Esau despised his birthright.”** (Genesis 25:34)

The rabbis use this as an illustration of a carnal person who does not even recite the blessing over the food but just eats, drinks and gets up from the table, never giving thanks to God as the source of all his nourishment. Observant Jewish people not only say a short blessing before eating (like grace before meals) but also recite a longer prayer after having eaten and having been satisfied.

I notice something interesting here in the choice of the Hebrew wording used in this Scripture. The word used for ‘*despised*’ is **וַיְבִז (va’yibez)**. It does not so much mean ‘despise’ (as in hate) but is rather related to the concept of ‘*waste or squander*’ (bizbez).



Esau Selling His Birthright (painting circa 1627 by [Hendrick ter Brugghen](#)), Wikipedia

Esau simply squandered away his birthright. He wasted an eternal treasure in order to enjoy a transitory physical desire.

The birthright, in Hebrew, is called **חֵבְלֵי בְּכֹרָה (ha’b’chorah)**, indicating a **chosenness (b’chor בכר)**. This was God’s choice to choose Jacob and not Esau. Jacob used no manipulation, trickery or deceit in obtaining this birthright. His request simply revealed that Esau’s fickle and immature character rendered him unqualified and undeserving of being chosen to possess the birthright. Such is how immature, carnal, Believers, allowing their desires rather than the Holy Spirit to direct them, and therefore failing to control their appetites – may lose their rightful spiritual inheritance. May it never be so for us!

## A Famine in the Land

In the next chapter (Gen. 26), Isaac finds himself in the midst of a famine in the Land. The Lord appeared to Isaac and warned him not to go down to Egypt, but to stay in the Land and keep trusting in the provision of God for him and his family.

How often are we tempted to give up and move on when we experience a ‘*famine*’ in our current circumstances? But we should move only if God says to move and stay if He commands us to stay. God is well able to provide even in a famine or drought when we continue to trust in Him:

**“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is in the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit.”** (Jer. 17:7,8)

It is interesting to note that while at other times, the patriarchs went down to Egypt for food, the Lord instructed Isaac in this specific circumstance to stay.

**“And the LORD appeared unto him, and said: 'Go not down unto Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of.'”** (Genesis 26:2)

This shows us the wisdom of seeking the Lord for solutions to our problems and not relying on what our father before us did, or what seems the logical answer. God may ask us to stay in a situation when everything is telling us to get out – fast! If God is instructing us to stay, however, He will bless us even in a famine; we can ‘bloom where we are planted.’

**“Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father;”** (Genesis 26:3)

With the rising acts of terrorism and violence in Jerusalem and Israel at large, there may be a temptation to think we should escape and ‘*go down to Egypt*’ (head back into the lands of our exile); but if the Spirit of God tells us to stay, then we can know that He will protect us and establish the oath He swore unto our forefathers to give us this Land.

We see another man who stayed in the Land of Israel during a famine and God blessed him – Boaz in the story of Ruth. Whereas Naomi’s husband took her and their children to the land of Moab because of the famine in the land, Boaz stayed. Not only did Naomi gain Moabite wives for her sons, (contrary to God’s will as written in His word), but also her husband and both her sons all died in the Land of Moab.

When Naomi returned to the Land, broke and bitter, she and her Moabite daughter in law, Ruth, found their Redeemer, Boaz, blessed and prospering - a man of wealth, prosperity and position, having stayed in the Land during the famine.

**“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,”** declares the LORD.” (Isaiah 55:8)

So, too, did God promise to bless Isaac if he would stay in the Land. This makes me even more determined to remain in the Land, even during difficult times, and just keep trusting God to bless, protect, and provide. In all decisions – whether to move ahead or to stay put, we need to hear God’s voice and believe that the Holy Spirit is leading and guiding us as we seek Him.

## Inheriting from the Father

All the blessings that God bestowed upon Abraham are now promised to Isaac. He is blessed because of his father. I am only now beginning to understand the blessing that I have inherited because of the faithfulness, sacrifices and obedience of my own natural mother and father.

However, Isaac also inherited some less than positive traits from his father, Abraham. Do the words, “*She is my sister*” sound familiar? Unfortunately, the sins of the fathers (and mothers) can also be passed down to future generations. Although a great man, Abraham fell into the temptation of deception under pressure or fear; and it seems so does his son, Isaac.

**“And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said: ‘*She is my sister*’; for he feared to say: ‘*My wife*’; ‘lest the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah, because she is fair to look upon.’”**  
(Genesis 26:7)

Whereas husbands are exhorted to love their wives as the Messiah loved His people and ‘sacrificed himself’ for them, here we see both husbands, Abraham and Isaac, sacrificing their wives for the sake of saving their own skin!

We must deal ruthlessly with the sins and character weaknesses we see in our lives that we have inherited from our own parents and renounce them, in order that we don’t pass them down to our children. With conscious effort and cooperation with the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and through the power of the blood of Yeshua and the Word of God, we can overcome these tendencies and break the generational cycles of sin and destruction, set into place by the enemy of our souls.

Because God is our Abba Father, men and women raised with abuse and dysfunction in their generational line can learn to walk in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, rising up to be people who bring forth life instead of death. But it won’t happen by accident; and it didn’t change in Isaac’s generation either. Later, we see that the sin of deception that passed down from Abraham to Isaac then passes on to Jacob.

**All people will see and know you are a people God has blessed**

Isaac, in faith, sowed in the Land in the year of famine, and the Lord blessed him a hundred fold. (Gen. 26:12) He became a man of great wealth and possessions – so much so that the Philistines envied him. So much for the idea that God couldn’t possibly want His people to be wealthy!

Anti-Semitism is still, in large measure, fuelled by envy over the prosperity that many Jewish people enjoy because God has blessed them. This is evidence of God’s faithfulness who has said,

**“All people will see and know that you are a people whom God has blessed.”<sup>5</sup>**

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<sup>5</sup> Malachi 3:12

Can we say the same? And if not, why not? Do we feel undeserving of receiving God's blessings? We are to be provoking non-Believers to jealousy. Now how may we do this if we are just as poor, miserable, depressed, sick and in debt as they are??

It seems to me that a large part of this is not about God's ability to bless, but our own ability to receive it. God says '*Open your mouth wide and I will fill it*'<sup>6</sup>. Some of us feel good about giving, but are not the best at receiving. Perhaps if we accepted that it is God's will to bless us, then we would stop feeling so guilty about receiving His blessings that come our way.

## Stopping up the Wells

In our last parashah (Scripture portion), Isaac (Yitzchak), Abraham's son, was left on top of Mt. Moriah, narrowly escaping his father's intention to sacrifice him to Adonai. However, due to the angel's intervention, Isaac survived and is now seen in this week's Torah portion digging his father's wells in Gerar, capital of Philistine territory.

Although Yitzchak may have suffered significant trauma through this '*near death experience*', we see that he is a man of character who continues to press on, carrying on his father's business of re-digging the wells his father had dug on his way to Beer Sheva.



*Isaac digging for the wells, imagined in a [Bible illustration](#) (c. 1900)*

**“Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died, and he gave them the same names his father had given them.”** (Genesis 26:18)

Why are these wells significant? They were vital sources of water in a harsh, dry desert land. To intentionally fill in these life-giving water holes with dirt can only be interpreted as a barbaric act, done to keep Isaac away from his father's wells.

When the children of Israel camped in the wilderness after their exodus from Egypt, they became discouraged for lack of water. However, they came to a well and sang praises to Adonai:

**“From there they went to Be’er, which is the well where the LORD said to Moses, “*Gather the people together, and I will give them water.*” Then Israel sang this song: “*Spring up, O well!...*”** (Numbers 21:16-17)

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<sup>6</sup> Psalm 81:10



Abraham had purposefully named these wells after God, to remind people that He is the source of all life. It is with joy that we draw from these deep wells of living water:

**“With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.”** (Isaiah 12:3)

Yeshua made the bold claim of being the Messiah through a Samaritan woman at a well by proclaiming Himself as the source of living waters leading to eternal life.

**“...but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”** (John 4:14)

Christ and the Samaritan Woman, by [Jan Joest van Kalker](#)



The Philistines had stopped up all the wells that Isaac’s father Abraham had dug.

The question that comes to my mind to ask is, *“Who has stopped up our wells? What wicked “Philistine” has poured dirt into our well, polluting it to such an extent that the living water no longer flows freely?”*

Isaac’s servants found a well of living (as opposed to stagnant) water. (Gen. 26:19) When we stop growing, stop moving, stop giving of ourselves, we grow stale and stagnant, like the waters of the Dead Sea (Yam Hamelach), which fail to support life.

Yeshua stood up on the last and most important day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot), when the high priests would pour out water at the temple, (*Simchat Beit Hashoevah*) and cried out, saying, **“If anyone thirst, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scriptures has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”** (John 7:37-38)

By this He spoke of the Holy Spirit. We must find out what has stopped up the flow of living water in our lives, what has polluted our wells and cleanse them that we may once again become a ‘channel of living water’ to others. We need wisdom and understanding to know how to restore the flow of living water in our lives. **“Understanding is a wellspring of life (Makor Chayim) ...: (Prov. 16:22)**

### 1<sup>st</sup> block – Strife

As we follow along with Isaac on his journey to unstop his father’s wells, we may find the understanding to free our own source of living water. The Philistines strove with Isaac over the first well, saying ‘**The water is ours.**’ Isaac called the name of the first well ‘**Esek**’, עֶשֶׂק which means ‘**strife/quarrelling**’ (because they strove or quarrelled with him there).

A related word, **Osek (same word, different vowel) means oppression, exploitation, extortion; to oppress, subjugate, extort, exploit or mistreat.** Having any form of these kinds of attitudes or behaviors in our life will most certainly stop up the flow of life.

With this first well, we find the key to the first polluting agent: strife! There is nothing quite so effective at putting a damper on our peace, joy, and all the free flow of the Spirit in our life as strife. I just love peace! I can't stand it when people quarrel and bicker.

The Holy Spirit dwells in peace; this is why the servant of the Lord must not strive or be argumentative.<sup>7</sup> We can't be the kind of people who always have to get the last word in or prove that we are right. The Holy Scriptures have so much to say about the value of 'shalom': Blessed are the peacemakers... Pursue peace with all men... As much as it depends upon you, live in peace (shalom) with all people<sup>8</sup>....One of the names of God is *YHVH Shalom* **יהוה שלום**.<sup>9</sup>

#### For the Sake of Shalom (Peace)

Abraham, Isaac's father, knew the value of peace. When his herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen got into strife, Abraham suggested they separate *for the sake of peace*. He even gave up the very best of the land to Lot, taking only the barren leftovers, so desperate was this peace lover to escape the strife.

Isaac, obviously a peace lover like his father Abraham, refused to enter into strife with the Philistines (even though they were wrong and acting unfairly towards him). Like his father before him, he walked away for the sake of peace.

He could have held his ground, defended his rights, tried to prove why the well actually belonged to him. But instead, he simply walked away without a word. Isaac's name in Hebrew, **Yitzchak**, means **laughter**. Isaac knew that strife would steal his joy, rob him of his namesake – laughter.

Strife kills the anointing on our lives; it destroys our prosperity. We should avoid situations full of strife and bickering like the plague! Sometimes this is a huge challenge – if we are for peace but we live with people who are at war with one another.

**“Better a meal of simple herbs with quietness than a house full of feasting with strife.”**  
(Prov. 17:1)

If I have prayed, asked for divine help, and done my very best to work towards a place of peace and harmony with someone and have failed, I may have to just walk away. In my own life, as I have written in my book of personal testimony (Hannah, Grafted in Again), I have had to walk away from the well of Esek, the place of strife, oppression, exploitation and abuse; and I am determined to never again return to this polluted well.

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<sup>7</sup> 2 Timothy 2:24-25

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 5:9, Hebrews 13:14, Romans 12:18

<sup>9</sup> Judges 6:24

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Block - Hatred

When they dug a second well, they strove with him there too. They named this second well **‘Sitnah’**. שִׂטְנָה which is a Hebrew word for *accusation*. This word is also related to ‘satan’, the name for the devil, enemy, and adversary, also called the *‘accuser of the brethren.’*<sup>10</sup>

This second polluting influence that will stop up our wells of living water is accusation and judgment, especially that which is Satanic in origin. Strife and accusation are two of the most powerful agents of Satan to stop up the well of living water that should flow out of our inner being.

We simply cannot minister to others with hatred, accusation and judgement hidden in our hearts towards someone. Forgiveness is not optional for a servant of the Lord. Our Heavenly Father will only forgive us if we forgive others from our heart.

Yeshua has commanded us to pray for our enemies and to bless them, not returning evil for evil but overcoming evil with good. Admittedly, this can be a challenge when we have been so mistreated that we feel hatred for another person, but by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, we can be cleansed of hatred and once again find ourselves in the flow of the rushing river.

### Finding our broad space – Rehovot

**“And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehovot, רְחֹבֹת because he said, “For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.”** (Genesis 26:22)

Finally, after walking away from the well of ‘Sitnah’ also, they dug another well and this time, they found a place of shalom, for the Philistines did not strive with them at this well. And so they called the place R’hovot רְחֹבֹת.

This name, also a city in Israel, comes from the word **Rachav**, רָחַב which means **‘wide’ or broad** space. **“For now the Lord has made a broad space for us, and we shall be fruitful in the Land.”** (Gen. 26:22)

Isn’t it such a relief, to finally come to a *‘broad space’*, after being cramped and squished in small quarters for a length of time? It feels so wonderful to be living here in Israel in a high village, overlooking an awesome expanse of mountains. We came to this place after spending years and years crowded into a small apartment in the city in Canada with five people and a dog with only the side of another apartment buildings for a view!

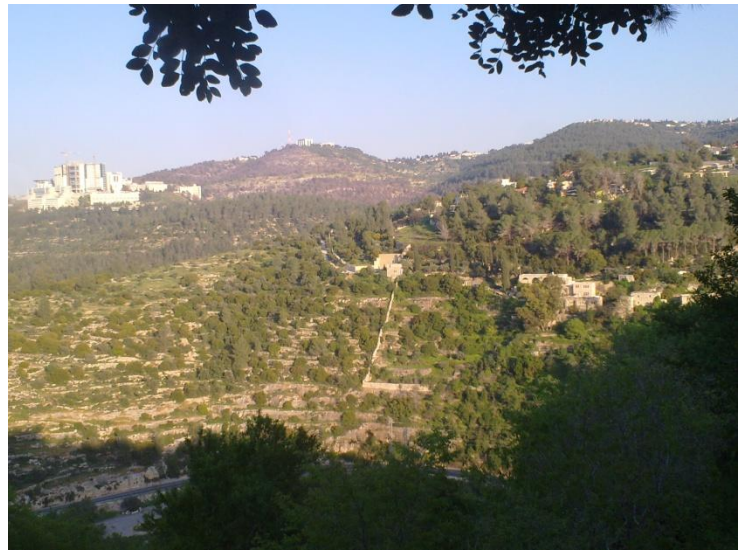
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<sup>10</sup> Revelation 12:9-11

Sometimes I just sit and take in the roominess of this place, feeling so blessed with the sheer delight of space. Besides spacious, broad, wide and roomy, this word may also indicate **comfort & luxury**.

It was in this place of R'vhovot, that they knew they would be fruitful; God had made a space for them. Many people struggle to find their place of *R'hovot* – where they feel like they fit; where there is a comfortable place for them. It's hard to be fruitful when you feel cramped and out of place.

Like Isaac, sometimes we need to just keep digging and moving on until we find that comfortable space. The Lord will make room for us so that we may be fruitful if we don't linger at the wells of Esek and Sitnah.



A nearby view from our home in Israel

**“I will sing to the Lord, because He has dealt bountifully with me.” (Psalm 13:6)**

## Moving into ‘Sheva’

From R'hovot, they went to Be'er–Sheva, where God appeared to Isaac at night and promised to bless him and multiply his seed, “...*for My servant Abraham's sake.*” (Gen. 26:24). First of all, we can see that Isaac is blessed for the sake of his father, Abraham, not on his own merit.

We also may be blessed for the sake of our fathers and the generations that have come before us. We need to stop and think about that. Humility and gratitude will rise up in our hearts when we realize how much we owe to the faithfulness of our ancestors.

God also promises that the Jewish people, even those who are enemies of the gospel, are still beloved ‘**..for the sake of the fathers.**’ (Romans 11:28).

Once we find our place of R'hovot, we may move into the place of increased blessing of Be'er – sheva בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע. ‘Be'er’ בְּאֵר means a well, and ‘sheva’ שֶׁבַע, means good -fortune, blessing, plenty, abundance satisfaction or contentment. It also relates to the number seven 7, which symbolizes completion, wholeness and perfect rest.

When we go out and grab the world's blessings, often there is a high price tag that comes along with them; but when God blesses, He adds no sorrow with it.

**“The blessing of the Lord makes one rich and He adds no sorrow with it.” (Prov. 10:22)**



When I read God's promise to Isaac in the Hebrew, it seems to me that it uses the past tense, "**I have blessed you ...because of Abraham**". In other words, the blessing is already a done deal, not some vague future hope.

Followers of Yeshua, Jew and Gentile, are the seed of Abraham, therefore equal heirs and partakers of God's blessings – because of our forefather, Abraham. We need only to believe it and receive! God's favour is upon us and our seed. I see my children favoured by friends and teachers at school; this is evidence of supernatural favour. This is for all of us.

Even our Enemies will be a Peace with us

Now that Isaac is walking in the supernatural blessing and favour of God, in the midst of a famine, the Philistines come seeking him. Isaac said to the Philistines, "**Why are you coming to me now, since you hate me?**" And they answered, "**We saw plainly that the Lord was with you.**" (Gen. 26:28)

How did they see that the Lord was with Isaac? They saw God's supernatural provision and blessing on his life! In the natural, as a single mom without a 'job', I should be living in a dump, and going to the food bank or soup kitchen to feed my children. But God has supernaturally provided for us and blessed us, and I am so eternally grateful!

It is my hope that people will plainly see that God is with us and is doing what no man could do in our lives. Isaac and his former enemies enjoyed a feast together and they departed from him in peace (shalom).

Isaac was faithful to stay in the Land, to sow in the midst of a famine, and to walk away from what was not of God – he was even willing to suffer injustice for the sake of peace. He refused to linger at the wells of strife and accusation. Isaac, like his namesake, Yitzchak (laughter) walked in a way pleasing the Lord and therefore the joy of the Lord was his strength.

The word says that when our ways are pleasing to the Lord, He **makes even our enemies to be at peace with us!** (Proverb 16:17) There may be people in our lives who hate us, who have sent us away and rejected us; but we can take heart knowing that if we simply continue walking with the Lord, eventually even these people may come after us, seeking to be reconciled.

That day may come when those who scorned and rejected us may plainly see that God is with us through His abundant blessings on our life, and we may finally experience shalom with them.

We need to shake off the self-pity over who did us wrong and trust God to even up the score. I have an elderly Auntie Lil, who used to say, "*Don't worry, his day is coming...*" when she saw someone treating me unfairly; and that day did come! It doesn't matter who has taken advantage of us – who has said "*This well belongs to me*" when we know full well it is ours. God will make the wrongs right and whatever was meant for evil, He will turn around for our good.

What is our part? It is to forgive those who have mistreated, betrayed, cheated, or taken advantage of us. We have to trust that God is a God of justice. We may have been put to shame or felt disgraced over something someone has done against us, but God promises to give us ‘a *double portion*’ in return.

**“Instead of your shame, you will receive a *double portion* and instead of disgrace you will rejoice in your inheritance. And so you will inherit a double portion in your land, and everlasting joy will be yours.”** (Isaiah 61:7)

That same day, Isaac’s servants came to him and said, **“We have found water.”** And so he called it ‘Sheva’ (Genesis 26:33). Sheva is the place of abundance, satisfaction and contentment. We are at peace with God, with ourselves and with others.

By the grace of God, if we will avoid the major ‘well stoppers’, we can move from a cramped place of barely enough, to having just enough, to the place of abundance, peace and wholeness.

## Daughters of Sheva

Bat-Sheva (daughter of Sheva) went through terrible heartache that seems to contradict her very name. She committed adultery with King David, experienced the resulting death of her husband through the murderous plot of David, and went through the grief of seeing their infant son die, knowing it was because of her own sin.

Can we even begin to fathom the guilt and pain of regret she must have felt? And yet, God allowed her to move into the place of her name – ‘Bat בַּת (daughter of) Sheva שֶׁבַע’. She persevered and went on to become a woman of great honour and influence: wife of King David and mother of Solomon, the next ruler of Israel.

From Bat-Sheva’s example, we can see that we also may come to a place of blessing, contentment and satisfaction in our lives, even after going through times of trial and pain. We must believe and trust in God that even when we walk through valleys of tears, we are just passing through:

**“As they pass through the Valley (Emek) of Baca (weeping) בְּעֵמֶק הַבָּכָה, they make it a spring;”** (Psalm 84:6) We have all walked through these valleys of weeping; but despite our human failures and weaknesses, we are still His Daughters of Sheva – meant to live in blessing, abundance, satisfaction.

The world’s blessings in themselves will not bring satisfaction; only God Himself can adequately quench our thirst: **“For He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness”** (Psalm 107:9)

Some of us have sought satisfaction in finding the perfect relationship; but it has been in vain. Yeshua came across a Samaritan woman at a well, obviously someone desperate for love but looking for it in all the wrong places. Reminds me of someone I know quite well ☺

This Samaritan woman had already been married several times and was living with a man not her husband. Yeshua saw her thirst and told her about the living water – the water than only He could give – that would eternally satisfy her thirsty soul. “...**but whoever drinks of this water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become to him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life.**” (John 4:14)

Sometimes, to be honest, I go from one thing to the next but just feel so lost, empty and unsatisfied. Finally I realize that my soul is thirsty and so I go to fountain of living waters to be refreshed in the Spirit of the living God. “**As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirst for God, for the living God.** (Psalm 42:1-2)

Sheva is also the Hebrew word for **the number seven**, 7 which represents **perfection, wholeness and completion**. In six days God created the heavens and the earth but on the seventh day, his work was completed, perfected and so He rested, saying ‘It is finished’.

My last (and final) child, Avi-ad, was born in the city of Be’er Sheva. He has brought such delight to my soul; but now I can say of my childbearing years that my labour has been completed. There are those, the Psalmist writes, “**men of the world, who have their portion in this life...they are satisfied with children.**” (Psalm 17:14)

As delightful as I find my children, as much as I appreciate the blessing of my family, they are not enough to satisfy my soul. We may find a measure of satisfaction on earth, choosing like Paul exhorted us to be content in all circumstances, but I am reminded that ultimately, the place of Sheva will only be found on that day that we see His face. “**A for me, I will see Your face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.**”

**“Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, “My son.”**

Chapter 27 describes the deceiving of Isaac in his last days by his son, Jacob. Knowing the prophetic word spoken over Jacob, and knowing Isaac’s favouritism towards Esau, Rebecca (perhaps out of desperation) resorts to trickery and deceit in order to bring about the fulfillment of Jacob’s destiny.

Isaac, being old and almost blind, intended to give his blessing to his favorite son, Esav, but instead, he inadvertently bestowed the blessing upon Jacob, who pretended to be his brother.



Grave Isha – Isaac blessing his son Jacob (Wikipedia)

Jacob deferred to his mother's advice and carried out the deception upon his aging father. Jacob, whose name can mean 'deceiver', did lie to receive his father's blessing:

**Isaac asked , “Are you really my son Esau?”**

**And Jacob said, “I am.”** (Genesis 27:24)

Later we see that Yaacov the deceiver, becomes Yaacov the deceived, when his uncle Laban deceives him with regards to his bride.

Rather than giving him Rachel, Laban tricks him by giving him her less attractive sister, Leah, whom Jacob did not love. This is why a Jewish wedding also begins with the custom of 'bidikut kalah' – checking the bride. The groom, escorted by all the men and accompanied by singing and dancing, enters the chamber of the women. Here sits the bride and all her attendants, female friends and relatives. At this point, the groom checks that he's really getting the woman he chose. It is a beautiful ceremony, confirming the groom's choice of this particular bride and no other.



*Rachel and Jacob* by [William Dyce](#)

The name Yaacov, besides meaning the heel of the foot, also means 'polluted, crooked or deceitful'. Esau makes reference to this play on words when he says, **“Isn't he rightly called Yaacov, for he has deceived me two times!”** (Gen. 27:36)

We can also see from this portion the power of a father's blessing (and the destructive power of its absence). The blessing of Abraham passed to Isaac and now to Jacob: “Cursed is everyone who curses you and blessed is everyone who blesses you.”<sup>11</sup> This promise remains over the Jewish people even today – a warning to all anti-Semites of the earth.

The father's blessing was and still is, very significant in a person's life. I believe that this is one reason Jewish people have a tendency to prosper – every Friday evening, as we usher in the Shabbat (seventh day Sabbath), many Jewish fathers bless their children with a special Hebrew blessing that they be fruitful.

Mothers may also bless their children, but the father's blessing is especially important, and not just for sons. The single most important factor in a young girl's sense of her destiny is whether or not she received acceptance, approval, affection, attention, and affirmation from her father. If she did not, she may seek for these from unworthy men, becoming promiscuous – trading her body for a crumb of the blessing she so desperately needed to experience from her father.

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<sup>11</sup> Genesis 27:29



Jewish boys most often receive their father's blessing (as well as the blessing of the entire Jewish community) at their coming of age ceremony - the Bar Mitzvah; girls at their Bat Mitzvah. Some Christians are re-discovering the value of returning to these ancient paths of blessing through such ceremonies.

Even if we have grown up without an affirming, accepting father (or no father at all), we can experience the love of Abba – our Father in Heaven – and pray for godly father figures for our children.

I read a book<sup>12</sup> by a Jewish rabbi that expresses the power of a spiritual father's blessing. Not that this rabbi would agree with my faith in Yeshua, but in his book, he writes something so poignant about 'the father's blessing' that I would like to share his words with you.



“When I was a confused Bar Mitzvah boy of thirteen, shaken by my parents’ divorce and doing poorly at school, I had the unusual honour of a private audience with the world’s foremost Jewish spiritual leader, the Lubavitcher rebbe. The rebbe read the letter I presented him and then, with a deep sea of compassion sparkling in his blue eyes, he blessed me to grow in time to be a “light to the Jewish people and a light to all the world.”

What the rebbe did with this blessing was change the history of my life. My parents’ divorce had left me bitter and bewildered. By giving me a vision of what my future could be, the rebbe was saying, *“Your life is governed not by the events of yesterday but by the promise of tomorrow...You have a bright future rather than a scarred past. Rather than be consumed by your own darkness, you’re going to give others light.”* I left feeling that I would be healed, and ever since I have attempted to fulfill the blessing’s promise.”

This is so beautiful. This is the power of blessing. The good news is that even if we are already grown, and even if we did not receive our father’s blessing, we can still receive the blessings of acceptance, approval, affection, attention, and affirmation from our Heavenly Father – our Abba - through His son, Yeshua.

Esau was, of course, devastated when he discovered that Jacob had received his father’s blessing in his place. It is pathetic to hear him weeping for a blessing he would never receive. **“When**

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<sup>12</sup> Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, Face Your Fear (Living with Courage in an age of caution), p. 146.

**Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceeding great and bitter cry, and said unto his father, “Bless me, even me also, O my father.”** (Gen. 27:34)

But Isaac’s blessing over his son, Jacob, could not be revoked, even as Father God’s blessing upon Israel cannot be revoked. **“For the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable”** (Romans 11:29)

Chapter 28 finds Jacob running for his life from his brother Esau, who is harbouring murderous intentions against him in his heart. Isaac sends Jacob to Paddan-aram, to his kindred, that he may find a wife from among them. It had been a source of intense grief and bitterness to Isaac and Rebecca that Esau had chosen pagan wives. (Gen. 28:8)

They wanted a better choice for Jacob, the child of destiny. We are warned not to become yoked with non-Believers, not to intermarry with them, lest they turn us away from our devotion to Elohim. *“What fellowship has light with darkness?”*<sup>13</sup> And yet so many follow their emotions, and marry those outside the family of God. This ends the parashah (phew!) – and yet the spiritual feast continues with the haftarah from Malachi 1:1-2:7.

## Haftarah Toldot

The obvious connection between parashah and haftarah is the line, **“Jacob have I loved, but Esau I have hated.”** (Malachi 1:2) The word for hatred here (soneh) is different than the demonic hatred of the well Sitnah. It is more like the preference that Jacob had for his wife Rachel over his wife, Leah.

We may take offense towards God over this: *“Why should he prefer Jacob over Esau? Doesn’t God love all His children equally?”* But we see that God does, indeed, have specific children marked out, even from before birth, set apart even from before the womb, ordained for special divine purposes & destinies.

Jeremiah was one of these. The Lord said to him, **“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born I set you apart. I ordained you as a prophet to the nations.”** (Jer. 1:5)

The New Testament portion attached to this week’s parashah addresses this issue as well. The 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans discusses the whole issue of divine election through God’s choice of Jacob over Esau and basically concludes that God is God! **“Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!”** He will choose whom He chooses, have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and on Whom He wills, He hardens. (Rom. 9:10-18)

Some, like Pharaoh, God even hardened. They are called vessels of wrath, prepared for destruction. **“The Lord has made all for Himself, yes, even the wicked for the day of doom.”** (Prov. 16:4)

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<sup>13</sup> 2 Corinthians 6:14

Who can fathom the ways of God? He has called out from among not only the Jews but also from amongst the Gentiles, those prepared beforehand for glory, to be vessels of mercy. We must be faithful to our calling, lest God curse our blessings as He spoke to the unfaithful priests in the haftorah (Mal. 2:2).

Adom (red/Edom), descendants of Esau, boast that though they have been beaten down, they will return and re-build. This reminds me so much of the 'Palestinian Refugee' issue. Those who left Israel who are now clamouring to return and re-build in the Land belonging to the descendants of Jacob (Israel).

But what is God's answer? They may attempt to re-build but I will throw it down. They will be called the border (g'vul) of wickedness. They are now attempting to create a border (g'vul) and even divide Jerusalem, but God will tear it down.

**"Even though Adom has said, 'We have been impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places,' Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'They may build, but I will throw down; They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness, And the people against whom the LORD will have indignation forever.'" (Mal. 1:4)**

These are called people whom the Lord will be angry with forever (Ad-Olam)!

Can we accept this? Will we charge God with unrighteousness? Certainly not! If we look at the book of Obadiah we read that there will be no survivors left of the house of Esau. Josephus, an ancient historian wrote that the Edomites were *'a turbulent and unruly race, always hovering on the verge of revolution...rushing to battle as if going to a feast.'*

We also need to see that there is a vast difference between the war-like, blood-thirsty, murderous Adomites, (represented by the Islamic Terrorists) and the Ishmaelites, (representing the rest of the Arabic people), the other son of Abraham, sent away by his father, abandoned to die by his mother, crying out for his father's blessing.<sup>14</sup>

May we conclude by proclaiming that He is the Potter and we are the clay. May we be ever soft and pliable in His merciful hands and yield to His will, resting in His promise that none who trust in Him will ever be put to shame.

*We thank you, Father, for your blessing over our lives, that all will plainly see that you are indeed 'God with us' Emanu-El. Thank you for the living waters of Your spirit that alone can satisfy the thirst of our soul. Help us, by your grace and in the power of Your Holy Spirit, to pursue peace, to walk away from the wells of esek & sitnah, to unstop the wells that have been polluted by outside sources. Lead and guide us to the place of R'hovot and on to Sheva. Deliver us from generational curses & help us overcome sinful tendencies in our generational line, that our children will also have a secure covering. Keep our eyes on You, Lord, and our hope in eternity. In Yeshua's name we pray. Amen.*

Shabbat Shalom.

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<sup>14</sup> See Here Comes Ishamael, The Kairos Moment for the Muslim People by Faisal Malik [www.covenantoflife.org](http://www.covenantoflife.org)

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