

### Scripture Text

Genesis 23-27

### Context

As Abraham's life come to a close (Gen 24:1), he begins to ensure that he provides for his promised son Isaac, by securing a wife (Gen 24) and sending away other children born of his concubine (Gen 25). Isaac became the recipient of the Abrahamic blessings due to the obedience of Abraham (Gen 26:1-5). However, the entire family of Isaac (including Rebekah, Esau and Jacob) become embroiled in a deceitful power struggle for the blessings of Abraham that resulted in disastrous consequences.

### Observation and Meaning

1. Refer to Gen 24:1-4, 23:4 and 31:19. How do these passages inform us about Abraham's motivation in insisting that Isaac not take a wife from among the Canaanites but that his servant will find a wife from Abraham's home country? (Hint: It's not because of the religious affiliations of his folks back at home.)
2. Refer to Gen 23:4, 24:1 and Heb 11:13-16. What is the reason that Abraham gave for a need to purchase a land from the Hittites? How does that inform us of the blessings received by Abraham when Genesis 24:1 informs us that "the LORD has blessed Abraham in all things"?
3. Refer to Gen 20:1-18, 21:22-34 and Gen 26. What are the similarities and differences between the accounts of Abraham and Isaac in these passages?
4. Refer to Gen 26:4-5 and 22:17-18. In particular, how does Isaac and Abraham differ in their relationship to the Abrahamic promises of God?
5. Refer to Gen 25:19-28 and 27:1-4. Given that Rebekah probably loved Jacob due to what God revealed in Gen 25:23, what's the reason that Isaac loved Esau?
6. Refer to Gen 27:1-4, 27:26-29 and 28:1-4. What are the blessings that Jacob and Esau are fighting for?
7. Refer to Genesis 28:1-4. Despite the deceitfulness of Jacob, Rebekah and perhaps the foolishness of Isaac, Jacob still received the promises of Abraham. What are the consequences of the behaviour of Jacob? What does this tell us about God's plan of redemption and human responsibility?

### Big Idea

God's plan of redemption continues in spite of the passing away of Abraham. Abraham is a towering figure of faithfulness, even intentionally ensuring that Isaac receives the promises of God through his preparing of a bride for Isaac and sending away of other children. Isaac by contrast, did not prepare as well for his children, though God clearly said about the choosing of Jacob over Esau. However, Isaac's lack of faithfulness in this area did not prevent God's plan of redemption from continuing, though it did come with painful consequences for the family.

### Connecting to the Bible's storyline

The promises to Abraham find their culmination and fulfilment in Jesus. Just as Abraham's imperfect yet real obedience secured blessings for Isaac, Jesus' perfect and real obedience secured God's spiritual blessings for us (Eph 1). The story of Isaac's family also shows that as God uses his broken people to achieve his purposes, both in spite of their foolishness and through their foolishness. Likewise, the Cross was achieved through the wickedness of sinful men though God has predestined for it (Acts 2:23).

### Applications

1. Abraham ensured that he lived as sojourner and stranger even though he has lived in Canaan for decades already and has become wealthy. How are we doing in terms of living as strangers and exiles? (1 Peter 2:13)
2. Isaac clearly struggles with fear (Gen 26:6 and 26:24). The antidote for Isaac would be the promises of Abraham given to him. We have the Gospel. What are some of our fears and how does the Gospel help us deal with those fears?
3. Even though deceitfulness, sensuality and violence fill the family of Isaac, they were nonetheless certain that the true treasure in the family would be the blessings of Abraham. We have received all spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph 1). But they were mistaken as to how the blessings are to be received. How did we receive the spiritual blessings in Christ? How do we reflect that Christ's blessings are our true treasure in our lives?