

Genesis Chapters 25-26 Summary - John Karmelich

As I read these chapters, I thought about a famous radio announcer from my youth (Paul Harvey). His tag line was, "And now, for the rest of the story!" That line fits well for these chapters. They deal with the final years of the main character Abraham and what happened to his family after he passed. There's no great miracle in these chapters. It's more of whatever happened to "this or that" person. So why are these chapters here? Because most of our lives are not God doing great miracles, as much as it is trying to make the best decisions we can with our present situation! Whenever I am not sure why a passage is in the bible, (as I learned a long time ago, when one is confused about a bible passage, try putting Jesus "in the middle of it" and see if it helps!) As usual, I'll discuss at the end of this lesson why I believe the chapters here are important and what God's teaching us through them.

So other than God telling Abraham's daughter in law about the twins in her womb, why is God "silent" here? Why are these chapters part of the bible? Why does He want us to know, "the rest of the story"? As I've stated earlier, much of life is that way! Most of our lives are going through life trying to do the best we can! Reading how bible characters made decisions that affects their lives give insight into "The rest of the story!" As we know, life has consequences greater than the issue of the moment. OK got all of that out of my system, so let me try to summarize these chapters:

As I like to do, let's begin with where we left off. Chapter 24 was about Abraham's servant traveling to where he grew up to arrange for a bride of his son Isaac. That's where his wife Rebecca comes in. It is also important to remember that Abraham's wife Sarah died in Chapter 23. As we start Chapter 25, I'm guessing Abraham's thinking, "OK, my wife past away, my son is married, now what do I do?" Realize he was probably about 140 years old at this time. If you think old men "don't get horny", Abraham now takes a new bride and has six sons through this new woman. There may have been daughters as well, it just has sons listed in the first six verses of Chapter 25. The "rest of the story" is Abraham figured God said he'd be the father of many nations so he got busy in his old age! A few of those names do pop up a little later in the bible. Two of them "Sheba and Dedan" became the founders of Arabic nations. There is also a mention of Midan. When Moses took a wife, it was from the Midanites. Just saying God kept His promise that all Abraham's descendants were significant. The last thing said about his children that came from this new wife, is they received "parting gifts" but Abraham's estate went to Isaac!

Then we read in Verse 7 that Abraham died at 175 years of age! In the early bible chapters, people did live many hundreds of years. After the water vapor above the earth came down, it got shorter, and that time span slowly decreased as we see Abraham functioning till that age! The next few verses mention that Isaac and his twin brother Ishmael buried him in the cave he bought for his wife. (That cave's there in Israel to this day!) I am fascinated Ishmael showed up for this! Remember his father told his mother and him to leave when Isaac was born. Obviously, he must have stayed in touch with his brother. I am sure Ishmael knew the prediction that he'd be the father of 12 nations! In fact, the next paragraph lists a bunch of names that are the "12 tribes of Ishmael". Why are they listed? To show God kept a promise He made to Ishmael's mom about the descendants of her son! Bottom line, both Ishmael and Isaac were there to bury their father together. That's the "rest of the story" for Abraham.

Next on the "list" is the birth of Isaac and Rebecca's twin sons! Realize there is a 20-year gap between their wedding and the birth! Isaac prayed for children and God spoke to Rebecca directly, to tell her of the fact they'll have twins. A key point is God said, "the younger will serve the older". The first born is named Esau which can mean either hairy or red as he was born with a lot of red hair. Then came Jacob,

whose name means "heal-catcher" as he was holding Esau's heal. Apparently they were fighting before they were born and continued that way through their lives!

The story jumps till the boys grew up! Esau was the outdoorsman type and a hunter. Jacob apparently liked to stay home. The story talks about one day when Esau came home starving. Jacob was cooking and Esau asked for some stew. Jacob demanded Esau give him the "first born birthright" before he eat! I picture Esau thinking, "What do I care about all that religious junk I'm starving to death?" Remember that Jacob probably knew from his mom, that God said, "the younger will rule over the elder!" Jacob's wanting to make sure that happened, so he decided to help God! Yes, I believe it was a mistake, but it was what it was, and God used it!

That leads us to Chapter 26. We read of a famine in Israel, and Isaac and Rebecca ended up moving to Philistine Country (think SW Israel). They were the enemy of the Israelites in David's day! They were part of Israel till the Babylonian invasion if memory is correct! Anyway, when Isaac got there, he told a lie just like his father that Rebecca was his sister so the Philistine king wouldn't keep her. Apparently, the king had morals and when he saw Isaac and Rebecca kissing (assumption) he made an order that no other person is to touch them. Remember that Isaac was wealthy from what his father had!

From there most of the chapter is about Isaac digging wells (most likely his servants did). Then it says the Philistines filled the wells. I suspect it was jealousy over Isaac's wealth, as they didn't want him to be in the neighborhood! Fascinating how 500-1,000 years later the Philistines fought Israel over what's essentially water rights and control of the land of Israel! So why have a lot of text about digging wells? That's what I kept pondering as I studied this text. As I said to start the lesson, (and Bible scholars will also argue) is that just as Abraham's father was associated with building altars to God, Isaac's known as the well digger! In the text it mentions two that were filled in by the Philistines and the third wasn't so, so that third well became associated with peace between the Philistines and Isaac!

That leads us into bible analogies. Altars are associated with worshipping God. Water's associated with God's Word. There are over 100 verses in the bible that tie water to His word. (Ephesians 5:26's a good example!) This is just "food for thought" and not necessarily doctrine! Just as Abraham made a bunch of altars to worship God, so we see Isaac associated with studying and spreading God's word! Yes, the first few wells were filled in, but eventually he was successful as he kept it at! Just saying together it is a nice word picture of the Christian life. Worshipping God and spending time in His Word. Could it be I'm reading too much into this? Possibly. Just saying it's a word picture that fits the story and explains why all of this "rest of the story" is here in the Bible. Remember all scripture is God-breathed so we're to learn from it!

The final line of the chapter is about Jacob's brother Esau taking two Hittite wives. These were people of the land of Israel that God called the Israelites to wipe out about 500 years later! So why mention it here? The last line of the chapter said "it made life bitter" for Isaac and Rebecca! Think of it as having problems because foreign gods now have to be dealt with due to those marriages! I know many people can relate to having sons in laws or daughters in laws that cause grief!

That leads me back to Abraham making altars and Isaac making wells (again, a picture of studying His Word). That will lead to "struggles in the world", as we try to make a difference for Jesus in the world around us! All I'm saying is these stories have a nice picture of how God works in our lives when we're willing to make Him the center of our lives! OK, that's enough for this lesson.

On the same page as this study is a more detailed study I wrote many years back. You are welcome to email me if you want or join my list to the get the latest lesson. Thanks for reading. John