

## *Patriarchs Study and Discussion Questions*

### *Lesson Five: Isaac, Abraham's Heir – Genesis 23-26*

#### Overview

- 1) Skim Genesis 23. Describe the occasion on which Abraham purchased the only piece of land he ever owned in Canaan. See also Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16. Upon Sarah's death, Abraham purchased Ephron's field and cave, the only piece of land he owned in Canaan in his lifetime (except for a well [21:30]). Later, Abraham was buried with Sarah on this land. Their bones testified to their confidence that God would ultimately give them all of Canaan, as He promised (Hebrews 11).
- 2) How have previous chapters substantiated this statement: "The Lord blessed [Abraham] in every way" (Genesis 24:1)? The Lord blessed Abraham with wealth (12:16, 13:6, 20:14-16), ownership of a small piece of land (chapter 23), sons (including Isaac, the son of the promise [21:2, 16:4, 25:1-4]), and honor (23:6, 14:17-20, 20:15; 21:22-23).
- 3) From Ephesians 1:3, list "every spiritual blessing" you are aware of in your possession. Write a prayer of praise to God for blessing, caring for, and loving you just as much as He loved the patriarch Abraham. The Lord has blessed us with a calling, hope (anticipation of) of eternal life, the indwelling Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit, forgiveness of sins, peace with God, spiritual gifts, and His eternal promises. Personal sharing

#### Read Genesis 24.

- 4) Which verse tells us why Abraham insisted that Isaac should not return to the country of Abraham's family? Verse 7: "The Lord...brought me out...and promised me... 'I will give you this land.' "
- 5) Connect Genesis 22:20-24 with Abraham's request to his servant in 24:4. The writer (Moses) tells us that Abraham knew his brother had a family from whom Isaac could take a wife. Genesis 22 lists the children of Abraham's brother Nahor. Rebekah was one of them (Nahor's granddaughter), and she later became Isaac's wife.
- 6) What do you learn from chapter 24 about the character of Abraham's servant, Rebekah's character, and prayer? How will you apply it to your life today? Abraham's servant was very faithful. He had apparently been influenced by his master to put his trust in the Lord. He was diligent and eager. He would not eat until he had told Laban all that had happened. Afterward, he did not want his return journey delayed. Rebekah was hospitable and generous in caring for the servant and his camels. She was faithful, brave, and trusted the Lord (as seen in her willingness to leave her brother's household so quickly). In order for Rebekah to arrive at the well before Abraham's servant finished praying, it seems she must have been on her way before he began praying. From this, we learn that God not only responds to our prayers, but He also knows our need before we ask! We also learn God answers specific prayers in specific ways. Finally, God is glorified when we share answers to prayer (as Abraham's servant did). Personal sharing

#### Read Genesis 25:1-18.

- 7) How are verses 1-4 related to Genesis 15:5 and 17:5? Genesis 17:5 says, "I have made you a father of many nations," and Genesis 15:5 says, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars... so shall your offspring be." Genesis 25:1-4 describes the beginning of the fulfillment of these promises in the birth of many other sons to Abraham through Keturah.
- 8) Hagar received promises and prophecy from God regarding her son Ishmael (Genesis 16:10, 12, and 21:18). Which of these find (or begin to find) fulfillment in Genesis 25:12-18? In Genesis 16:10, God promised Hagar to "...so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count." In Genesis 21:18, He promised to "make (Ishmael) into a great nation." 25:13-16 revealed that Ishmael had twelve sons that became tribal rulers. It was the beginning of the fulfillment of God's promise to Hagar. Also, God told Hagar in 16:12 that "he would live in hostility toward all his brothers." Genesis 25:18 confirmed that Ishmael's sons did indeed live "in hostility toward all the tribes related to them."

- 9) How do these records of God's faithfulness to keep all His promises encourage you in your own circumstances today? **Personal sharing**

Read Genesis 25:19-23.

- 10) What sorrow did Abraham's wife Sarah and Isaac's wife Rebekah share? **Both women were barren.**
- 11) What is the significance of this in light of God's promise to make Abraham's descendants as numerous as the stars (Genesis 15:5)? **Since both women were barren, the birth of any children would be a miracle of God. Their barrenness prevented anyone from claiming that the fulfillment of God's promise of numerous descendants was random chance.**
- 12) Rebekah asked the Lord, "Why is this happening to me?" (25:22). Is this a good question for a confused person to ask God? Why or why not? **Rebekah asked God to explain her circumstances to her. She wanted to know why. In Hebrew, her question is worded in a way that makes it difficult to understand exactly what her concern was. Apparently, she wondered why she was experiencing so much aggressive movement in her womb during her pregnancy; she wondered about the significance of it. It is quite common for people to ask God why: "Why this trouble? Why am I in these circumstances? Why have you allowed this, God?" Some people ask God "Why?" more as a statement of resentment than out of genuine interest in an answer. But for those who are serious about self-examination and are willing for God to accomplish His will in their lives at any cost, "Why?" may be a very good question to ask in prayer. In this case, God answered Rebekah by telling her that her trial really wasn't directly about her. She was merely being impacted (already) by the lives of her children. Sometimes our suffering isn't because of anything we have done. Even so, God can use it for good in our lives. Personal sharing**

Read Genesis 25:24-26:34.

- 13) The eldest son inherited a double portion of the family estate (twice as much as any younger sons inherited) and ranked second in authority under his father. This was considered his birthright. In light of God's rich promises to Abraham recorded earlier in Genesis, what is the significance of Esau despising his birthright and trading it away so easily? Which prophecy in chapter 25 will Esau's oath likely fulfill? **Esau was indifferent toward his familial position, responsibilities and privileges. This seems to imply carelessness about inheriting God's promises, and thus, carelessness toward God in general. The significance seems to be spiritual apathy. Genesis 25:23 says, "The older will serve the younger." By trading away his birthright, Esau created a situation that ended with him serving his younger brother.**
- 14) List all the similarities between Isaac's experience and Abraham's experience with Abimelech (recorded in Genesis 20 and 21:22-34). **While in Abimelech's territory, both Abraham and Isaac claimed his wife was his sister out of fear for his life. God rescued both men from Abimelech's wrath when their deceit was discovered. Both men grew wealthy in Abimelech's land. Both father and son made peace treaties with Abimelech (in so doing, Abimelech was acknowledging their influence in the land). Finally, both father and son had arguments over water rights with Abimelech.**
- 15) Which of your personal qualities will you ask God to reproduce in your children (and others who are influenced by you), and which personal weaknesses will you ask Him to correct in you, in order to break an existing or potential generational cycle? **Personal sharing**