

Toldot

Genesis 25:19-28:9

This translation was taken from the JPS Tanakh

¹⁹ This is the story of Isaac, son of Abraham. Abraham begot Isaac. ²⁰ Isaac was forty years old when he took to wife Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, sister of Laban the Aramean. ²¹ Isaac pleaded with the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord responded to his plea, and his wife Rebekah conceived. ²² But the children struggled in her womb, and she said, "If so, why do I exist?" She went to inquire of the Lord, ²³ and the Lord answered her,

"Two nations are in your womb,
Two separate peoples shall issue from your body;
One people shall be mightier than the other,
And the older shall serve the younger."

²⁴ When her time to give birth was at hand, there were twins in her womb. ²⁵ The first one emerged red, like a hairy mantle all over; so they named him Esau. ²⁶ Then his brother emerged, holding on to the heel of Esau; so they named him Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when they were born.

²⁷ When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the outdoors; but Jacob was a mild man who stayed in camp. ²⁸ Isaac favored Esau because he had a taste for game; but Rebekah favored Jacob. ²⁹ Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the open, famished. ³⁰ And Esau said to Jacob, "Give me some of that red stuff to gulp down, for I am famished"—which is why he was named Edom. ³¹ Jacob said, "First sell me your birthright." ³² And Esau said, "I am at the point of death, so of what use is my birthright to me?" ³³ But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. ³⁴ Jacob then gave Esau bread and lentil stew; he ate and drank, and he rose and went away. Thus did Esau spurn the birthright.

Chapter 26

¹ There was a famine in the land—aside from the previous famine that had occurred in the days of Abraham—and Isaac went to Abimelech, king of the Philistines, in Gerar. ² The Lord had appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land which I point out to you. ³ Reside in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; I will assign all these lands to you and to your heirs, fulfilling the oath that I swore to your father Abraham. ⁴ I will make your heirs as numerous as the stars of heaven, and assign to your heirs all these lands, so that all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your heirs— ⁵ inasmuch as Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge: My commandments, My laws, and My teachings."

⁶ So Isaac stayed in Gerar. ⁷ When the men of the place asked him about his wife, he said, "She is my sister," for he was afraid to say "my wife," thinking, "The men of the place might kill me on account of Rebekah, for she is beautiful." ⁸ When some time had passed, Abimelech king of the Philistines, looking out of the window, saw Isaac fondling his wife Rebekah. ⁹ Abimelech sent for

Isaac and said, "So she is your wife! Why then did you say: 'She is my sister?'" Isaac said to him, "Because I thought I might lose my life on account of her." 10 Abimelech said, "What have you done to us! One of the people might have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us." 11 Abimelech then charged all the people, saying, "Anyone who molests this man or his wife shall be put to death."

12 Isaac sowed in that land and reaped a hundredfold the same year. The Lord blessed him, 13 and the man grew richer and richer until he was very wealthy: 14 he acquired flocks and herds, and a large household, so that the Philistines envied him. 15 And the Philistines stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of his father Abraham, filling them with earth. 16 And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you have become far too big for us."

17 So Isaac departed from there and encamped in the wadi of Gerar, where he settled. 18 Isaac dug anew the wells which had been dug in the days of his father Abraham and which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham's death; and he gave them the same names that his father had given them. 19 But when Isaac's servants, digging in the wadi, found there a well of spring water, 20 the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours." He named that well Esek, because they contended with him. 21 And when they dug another well, they disputed over that one also; so he named it Sitnah. 22 He moved from there and dug yet another well, and they did not quarrel over it; so he called it Rehoboth, saying, "Now at last the Lord has granted us ample space to increase in the land."

23 From there he went up to Beer-sheba. 24 That night the Lord appeared to him and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Fear not, for I am with you, and I will bless you and increase your offspring for the sake of My servant Abraham." 25 So he built an altar there and invoked the Lord by name. Isaac pitched his tent there and his servants started digging a well. 26 And Abimelech came to him from Gerar, with Ahuzzath his councilor and Phicol chief of his troops. 27 Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, seeing that you have been hostile to me and have driven me away from you?" 28 And they said, "We now see plainly that the Lord has been with you, and we thought: Let there be a sworn treaty between our two parties, between you and us. Let us make a pact with you 29 that you will not do us harm, just as we have not molested you but have always dealt kindly with you and sent you away in peace. From now on, be you blessed of the Lord!" 30 Then he made for them a feast, and they ate and drank.

31 Early in the morning, they exchanged oaths. Isaac then bade them farewell, and they departed from him in peace. 32 That same day Isaac's servants came and told him about the well they had dug, and said to him, "We have found water!" 33 He named it Shibah; therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba to this day.

34 When Esau was forty years old, he took to wife Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite; 35 and they were a source of bitterness to Isaac and Rebekah.

Chapter 27

1 When Isaac was old and his eyes were too dim to see, he called his older son Esau and said to him, "My son." He answered, "Here I am." 2 And he said, "I am old now, and I do not know how

soon I may die. ³ Take your gear, your quiver and bow, and go out into the open and hunt me some game. ⁴ Then prepare a dish for me such as I like, and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my innermost blessing before I die."

⁵ Rebekah had been listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau had gone out into the open to hunt game to bring home, ⁶ Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "I overheard your father speaking to your brother Esau, saying, ⁷ 'Bring me some game and prepare a dish for me to eat, that I may bless you, with the Lord's approval, before I die.' ⁸ Now, my son, listen carefully as I instruct you. ⁹ Go to the flock and fetch me two choice kids, and I will make of them a dish for your father, such as he likes. ¹⁰ Then take it to your father to eat, in order that he may bless you before he dies." ¹¹ Jacob answered his mother Rebekah, "But my brother Esau is a hairy man and I am smooth-skinned. ¹² If my father touches me, I shall appear to him as a trickster and bring upon myself a curse, not a blessing." ¹³ But his mother said to him, "Your curse, my son, be upon me! Just do as I say and go fetch them for me."

¹⁴ He got them and brought them to his mother, and his mother prepared a dish such as his father liked. ¹⁵ Rebekah then took the best clothes of her older son Esau, which were there in the house, and had her younger son Jacob put them on; ¹⁶ and she covered his hands and the hairless part of his neck with the skins of the kids. ¹⁷ Then she put in the hands of her son Jacob the dish and the bread that she had prepared.

¹⁸ He went to his father and said, "Father." And he said, "Yes, which of my sons are you?" ¹⁹ Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau, your first-born; I have done as you told me. Pray sit up and eat of my game, that you may give me your innermost blessing." ²⁰ Isaac said to his son, "How did you succeed so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because the Lord your God granted me good fortune." ²¹ Isaac said to Jacob, "Come closer that I may feel you, my son—whether you are really my son Esau or not." ²² So Jacob drew close to his father Isaac, who felt him and wondered. "The voice is the voice of Jacob, yet the hands are the hands of Esau." ²³ He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; and so he blessed him.

²⁴ He asked, "Are you really my son Esau?" And when he said, "I am," ²⁵ he said, "Serve me and let me eat of my son's game that I may give you my innermost blessing." So he served him and he ate, and he brought him wine and he drank. ²⁶ Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come close and kiss me, my son"; ²⁷ and he went up and kissed him. And he smelled his clothes and he blessed him, saying, "Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of the fields that the Lord has blessed.

²⁸ "May God give you Of the dew of heaven and the fat of the earth, Abundance of new grain and wine. ²⁹ Let peoples serve you, And nations bow to you; Be master over your brothers, And let your mother's sons bow to you. Cursed be they who curse you, Blessed they who bless you."

³⁰ No sooner had Jacob left the presence of his father Isaac—after Isaac had finished blessing Jacob—than his brother Esau came back from his hunt. ³¹ He too prepared a dish and brought it to his father. And he said to his father, "Let my father sit up and eat of his son's game, so that you may give me your innermost blessing." ³² His father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" And he said, "I am your son, Esau, your first-born!" ³³ Isaac was seized with very violent trembling. "Who was it

then," he demanded, "that hunted game and brought it to me? Moreover, I ate of it before you came, and I blessed him; now he must remain blessed!" ³⁴ When Esau heard his father's words, he burst into wild and bitter sobbing, and said to his father, "Bless me too, Father!" ³⁵ But he answered, "Your brother came with guile and took away your blessing." ³⁶ [Esau] said, "Was he, then, named Jacob that he might supplant me these two times? First he took away my birthright and now he has taken away my blessing!" And he added, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" ³⁷ Isaac answered, saying to Esau, "But I have made him master over you: I have given him all his brothers for servants, and sustained him with grain and wine. What, then, can I still do for you, my son?" ³⁸ And Esau said to his father, "Have you but one blessing, Father? Bless me too, Father!" And Esau wept aloud. ³⁹ And his father Isaac answered, saying to him,

"See, your abode shall enjoy the fat of the earth
And the dew of heaven above.

⁴⁰ Yet by your sword you shall live,
And you shall serve your brother;
But when you grow restive,
You shall break his yoke from your neck."

⁴¹ Now Esau harbored a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing which his father had given him, and Esau said to himself, "Let but the mourning period of my father come, and I will kill my brother Jacob." ⁴² When the words of her older son Esau were reported to Rebekah, she sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, "Your brother Esau is consoling himself by planning to kill you. ⁴³ Now, my son, listen to me. Flee at once to Haran, to my brother Laban. ⁴⁴ Stay with him a while, until your brother's fury subsides— ⁴⁵ until your brother's anger against you subsides—and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will fetch you from there. Let me not lose you both in one day!"

⁴⁶ Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am disgusted with my life because of the Hittite women. If Jacob marries a Hittite woman like these, from among the native women, what good will life be to me?"

Chapter 28

¹ So Isaac sent for Jacob and blessed him. He instructed him, saying, "You shall not take a wife from among the Canaanite women. ² Up, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and take a wife there from among the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother, ³ May El Shaddai bless you, make you fertile and numerous, so that you become an assembly of peoples. ⁴ May He grant the blessing of Abraham to you and your offspring, that you may possess the land where you are sojourning, which God assigned to Abraham."

⁵ Then Isaac sent Jacob off, and he went to Paddan-aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, mother of Jacob and Esau.

⁶ When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him off to Paddan-aram to take a wife from there, charging him, as he blessed him, "You shall not take a wife from among the Canaanite women," ⁷ and that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and gone to Paddan-aram, ⁸ Esau realized that the Canaanite women displeased his father Isaac. ⁹ So Esau went to Ishmael and took

to wife, in addition to the wives he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael son of Abraham, sister of Nebaioth.