

Two Nations, One Womb

25: 19-26

DIG: How long did Isaac and Rebekah pray for a son? What did ADONAI prophecy to Rebekah about the twins even before they were born? Who would serve who? What do the names of the boys mean? Why should Jacob's name never be translated deceiver? Why is that important?

REFLECT: What have you been praying for? Is waiting on the Lord difficult for you? Is ADONAI's timing perfect, or have you taken matters into your own hands? Can you let God be God?

Parashah 6: Tol'dot (History) 25:19-28:9

This is the account of Abraham's son Isaac, and what became of Isaac was Esau and Jacob. Abraham became the father of Isaac (Hebrew: Yitz'chak), and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from the plain of Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean (25:19-20). Aram was the son of Shem, so the Arameans were Semites. **This is the line through which the Seed of the woman (3:15), or the Messiah, comes, so this is the Seed son.**

As Isaac grew up, his mother Sarah and his father Abraham told him the story of his miraculous birth. They told him how much they longed for him and how much they prayed, year after year, that ADONAI would send him to them. Sarah was barren, but they prayed. An act of God brought Rebekah and Isaac together. Now it will take another act of God to overcome her barrenness.⁴⁰³ Isaac had learned from his parents that he was the son of promise, and that it would be through him and his descendants that **the Messiah** would come. He had learned from his father the pain of trying to give the LORD a helping hand by having a child with his handmaiden, and he had vowed within himself that he would never repeat that mistake. What was left for him to do? Yitz'chak then prayed to ADONAI on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. And, just as Sarah and Abraham had waited twenty-five years before Isaac was born, Rebekah and Isaac also waited twenty.⁴⁰⁴ But then the LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant (25:21).

Waiting on ADONAI is an act of faith, the greatest thing ever required of us humans. Not faith in the outcome we are dictating to God, but faith in His character, faith in Himself. It is resting in perfect confidence that He will guide in the right way, at the right time. He will supply our need. He will fulfill His written Word. He will give us the very best if we trust, believe and have faith in Him.⁴⁰⁵

During **Rebekah's** difficult pregnancy, **the babies jostled each other within her**, and **she asked herself**, "Why is this happening to me?" **Why is my pain so great?** The struggle of these **two boys**, which began before **their birth**, represents the struggle that still goes on in the world today. There is a struggle between light and darkness, between good and evil, between **the Spirit** and the flesh that Paul sets before us in **Romans 7**.⁴⁰⁶

So she went to inquire of ADONAI (25:22), and **He** prophesied to **her**. The content of the prophecy is in the form of Hebrew poetry, which is not based upon rhythm or rhyme, but it is based upon parallelism. The first line is: **Two nations are in your womb**. The Hebrew word for **nations** is *goyim*, which means both Jewish and Gentile nations. The Jewish nation of Isra'el will be from **Jacob** (Hebrew: *Ya'akov*), and the Gentile nation will be from **Esau** (later the nation of Edom). In Hebrew poetry the second line either completes the thought of the first line, or says the same thing in different words. Therefore, the second line is: **and two peoples from within you will be separated**. Then comes line number three: **One people will be stronger than the other**, because Isra'el will be stronger than Edom. And then the fourth line completes the thought of the third: **and the older will serve the younger (Second Samuel 8:12-14)**, because Edom would be enslaved to Isra'el (25:23).

Romans 9:10-12 emphasizes the importance of **ADONAI's** statement to **Rebekah**. **Before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad**, in order that **God's purpose in election might stand**, she was told that **the older will serve the younger**. The **LORD's** choice of **Jacob, the younger**, to inherit his covenant promise was made before the boys were even born. This showed that the choice did not depend on what either did. **God** is free to choose as **He** wills. The fact that **Esav** proved to be uninterested in spiritual things shows how wise **His** choices are.⁴⁰⁷

I am sure that **she treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart**, just as **Mary** would do in the future (**Luke 2:19**). But should **she** do more than that? Surely **she** should tell **her** husband? But what about the **boys**? Would there be any problems if **she** told them? Should **she** let **the LORD** work it out and not say anything? Or should **she** get involved?

Scripture has already provided two instances of fraternal rivalry: Cain and Abel, and Ishmael and **Isaac**. Both times the elder brother emerges in a less than desirable light. The case is no different with **Esau** and **Jacob**.⁴⁰⁸ This prophecy hardly brought any comfort to **Rebekah**. It explained **her** pain, but it raised more questions than it answered. **When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb (25:24)**. They came from the same **womb**, but **they** were worlds apart.

The first to come out was red or the Hebrew word *admoni* which means *ruddy or reddishness*, and that became the basis for the name of his nation *edom*, meaning *red*, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau, which means *hairy* (25:25). So his personal name was because he was born hairy, and the name of his nation was based on the color of his hair.

After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esav's heel. The Hebrew word for heel is *akeiv*, which is also seen in the words of the prophet Hosea when he said: **In the womb he grasped his brother's heel (Hosea 12:3)**. And just as Esau was named by his appearance, Jacob was named by his action, so he was named Ya'akov, which is the same root word for *heel*. The primary meaning of his name is *the one who takes by the heel, or heel holder*. And there is no negative connotation here. But the secondary meaning of his name is *supplanter*, which is a neutral term to be determined by the context (**Genesis 27:36; Jeremiah 9:4**). His name should never be translated *deceiver*. In the LORD's perfect timing, Yitz'chak was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them (25:26).