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## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE: Isaac and Rebekah

Genesis 24-28:4 (NIV)

24 Abraham was now very old, and the LORD had blessed him in every way. <sup>2</sup> He said to the senior servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh. <sup>3</sup> I want you to swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, <sup>4</sup> but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac."

<sup>5</sup> The servant asked him, "What if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from?"

<sup>6</sup> "Make sure that you do not take my son back there," Abraham said. <sup>7</sup> "The LORD, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father's household and my native land and who spoke to me and promised me on oath, saying, 'To your offspring I will give this land'—he will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there. <sup>8</sup> If the woman is unwilling to come back with you, then you will be released from this oath of mine. Only do not take my son back there." <sup>9</sup> So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and swore an oath to him concerning this matter.

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Genesis 24-28:4 (NIV) - cont.

<sup>10</sup> Then the servant left, taking with him ten of his master's camels loaded with all kinds of good things from his master. He set out for Aram Naharaim and made his way to the town of Nahor. <sup>11</sup> He had the camels kneel down near the well outside the town; it was toward evening, the time the women go out to draw water.

<sup>12</sup> Then he prayed, "LORD, God of my master Abraham, make me successful today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. <sup>13</sup> See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. <sup>14</sup> May it be that when I say to a young woman, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too'—let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master."

<sup>15</sup> Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milkah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor. <sup>16</sup> The woman was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever slept with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.

<sup>17</sup> The servant hurried to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water from your jar."

<sup>18</sup> "Drink, my lord," she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink.

<sup>19</sup> After she had given him a drink, she said, "I'll draw water for your camels too, until they have had enough to drink." <sup>20</sup> So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, ran back to the well to draw more water, and drew enough for all his camels. <sup>21</sup> Without saying a word, the man watched her closely to learn whether or not the LORD had made his journey successful.

<sup>22</sup> When the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a gold nose ring weighing a beka and two gold bracelets weighing ten shekels. <sup>23</sup> Then he asked, "Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?"

<sup>24</sup> She answered him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son that Milkah bore to Nahor." <sup>25</sup> And she added, "We have plenty of straw and fodder, as well as room for you to spend the night."

<sup>26</sup> Then the man bowed down and worshiped the LORD, <sup>27</sup> saying, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master. As for me, the LORD has led me on the journey to the house of my master's relatives."

<sup>28</sup> The young woman ran and told her mother's household about these things. <sup>29</sup> Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, and he hurried out to the man at the spring.

- cont. on next page -

<sup>30</sup> As soon as he had seen the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister’s arms, and had heard Rebekah tell what the man said to her, he went out to the man and found him standing by the camels near the spring. <sup>31</sup> “Come, you who are blessed by the LORD,” he said. “Why are you standing out here? I have prepared the house and a place for the camels.”

<sup>32</sup> So the man went to the house, and the camels were unloaded. Straw and fodder were brought for the camels, and water for him and his men to wash their feet. <sup>33</sup> Then food was set before him, but he said, “I will not eat until I have told you what I have to say.”

“Then tell us,” Laban said.

<sup>34</sup> So he said, “I am Abraham’s servant. <sup>35</sup> The LORD has blessed my master abundantly, and he has become wealthy. He has given him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. <sup>36</sup> My master’s wife Sarah has borne him a son in her old age, and he has given him everything he owns. <sup>37</sup> And my master made me swear an oath, and said, ‘You must not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live,’ <sup>38</sup> but go to my father’s family and to my own clan, and get a wife for my son.’

<sup>39</sup> “Then I asked my master, ‘What if the woman will not come back with me?’

<sup>40</sup> “He replied, ‘The LORD, before whom I have walked faithfully, will send his angel with you and make your journey a success, so that you can get a wife for my son from my own clan and from my father’s family. <sup>41</sup> You will be released from my oath if, when you go to my clan, they refuse to give her to you—then you will be released from my oath.’

<sup>42</sup> “When I came to the spring today, I said, ‘LORD, God of my master Abraham, if you will, please grant success to the journey on which I have come. <sup>43</sup> See, I am standing beside this spring. If a young woman comes out to draw water and I say to her, ‘Please let me drink a little water from your jar,’ <sup>44</sup> and if she says to me, ‘Drink, and I’ll draw water for your camels too,’ let her be the one the LORD has chosen for my master’s son.’

<sup>45</sup> “Before I finished praying in my heart, Rebekah came out, with her jar on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water, and I said to her, ‘Please give me a drink.’

<sup>46</sup> “She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder and said, ‘Drink, and I’ll water your camels too.’ So I drank, and she watered the camels also.

<sup>47</sup> “I asked her, ‘Whose daughter are you?’

“She said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel son of Nahor, whom Milkah bore to him.’

“Then I put the ring in her nose and the bracelets on her arms, <sup>48</sup> and I bowed down and worshiped the LORD. I praised the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me on the right road to get the granddaughter of my master’s brother for his son. <sup>49</sup> Now if you will show kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so I may know which way to turn.”

<sup>50</sup> Laban and Bethuel answered, “This is from the LORD; we can say nothing to you one way or the other. <sup>51</sup> Here is Rebekah; take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master’s son, as the LORD has directed.”

<sup>52</sup> When Abraham’s servant heard what they said, he bowed down to the ground before the LORD. <sup>53</sup> Then the servant brought out gold and silver jewelry and articles of clothing and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave costly gifts to her brother and to her mother. <sup>54</sup> Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night there.

When they got up the next morning, he said, “Send me on my way to my master.”

<sup>55</sup> But her brother and her mother replied, “Let the young woman remain with us ten days or so; then you may go.”

<sup>56</sup> But he said to them, “Do not detain me, now that the LORD has granted success to my journey. Send me on my way so I may go to my master.”

<sup>57</sup> Then they said, “Let’s call the young woman and ask her about it.” <sup>58</sup> So they called Rebekah and asked her, “Will you go with this man?”

“I will go,” she said.

<sup>59</sup> So they sent their sister Rebekah on her way, along with her nurse and Abraham’s servant and his men. <sup>60</sup> And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,

“Our sister, may you increase to thousands upon thousands;  
may your offspring possess the cities of their enemies.”

<sup>61</sup> Then Rebekah and her attendants got ready and mounted the camels and went back with the man. So the servant took Rebekah and left.

<sup>62</sup> Now Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi, for he was living in the Negev. <sup>63</sup> He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching. <sup>64</sup> Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel <sup>65</sup> and asked the servant, “Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?” “He is my master,” the servant answered. So she took her veil and covered herself.

<sup>66</sup> Then the servant told Isaac all he had done. <sup>67</sup> Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.

## The Death of Abraham

25 Abraham had taken another wife, whose name was Keturah.<sup>2</sup> She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah.<sup>3</sup> Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan; the descendants of Dedan were the Ashurites, the Letushites and the Leummites.<sup>4</sup> The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanok, Abida and Eldaah. All these were descendants of Keturah.

<sup>5</sup> Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac. <sup>6</sup> But while he was still living, he gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them away from his son Isaac to the land of the east.

<sup>7</sup> Abraham lived a hundred and seventy-five years. <sup>8</sup> Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years; and he was gathered to his people. <sup>9</sup> His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, <sup>10</sup> the field Abraham had bought from the Hittites. There Abraham was buried with his wife Sarah. <sup>11</sup> After Abraham's death, God blessed his son Isaac, who then lived near Beer Lahai Roi.

## Ishmael's Sons

<sup>12</sup> This is the account of the family line of Abraham's son Ishmael, whom Sarah's slave, Hagar the Egyptian, bore to Abraham.

<sup>13</sup> These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, listed in the order of their birth: Nebaioth the firstborn of Ishmael, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, <sup>14</sup> Mishma, Dumah, Massa, <sup>15</sup> Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah. <sup>16</sup> These were the sons of Ishmael, and these are the names of the twelve tribal rulers according to their settlements and camps. <sup>17</sup> Ishmael lived a hundred and thirty-seven years. He breathed his last and died, and he was gathered to his people. <sup>18</sup> His descendants settled in the area from Havilah to Shur, near the eastern border of Egypt, as you go toward Ashur. And they lived in hostility toward all the tribes related to them.

## Jacob and Esau

<sup>19</sup> This is the account of the family line of Abraham's son Isaac.

Abraham became the father of Isaac, <sup>20</sup> and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean.

<sup>21</sup> Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. <sup>22</sup> The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.

<sup>23</sup> The LORD said to her,

"Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."

<sup>24</sup> When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. <sup>25</sup> The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. <sup>26</sup> After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.

<sup>27</sup> The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. <sup>28</sup> Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

<sup>29</sup> Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. <sup>30</sup> He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.)

<sup>31</sup> Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright."

<sup>32</sup> "Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?"

<sup>33</sup> But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.

<sup>34</sup> Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left.

So Esau despised his birthright.

## Isaac and Abimelek

<sup>26</sup> Now there was a famine in the land—besides the previous famine in Abraham's time—and Isaac went to Abimelek king of the Philistines in Gerar. <sup>2</sup> The LORD appeared to Isaac and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live. <sup>3</sup> Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. <sup>4</sup> I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, <sup>5</sup> because Abraham obeyed me and did everything I required of him, keeping my commands, my decrees and my instructions." <sup>6</sup> So Isaac stayed in Gerar.

<sup>7</sup> When the men of that place asked him about his wife, he said, "She is my sister," because he was afraid to say, "She is my wife." He thought, "The men of this place might kill me on account of Rebekah, because she is beautiful."

<sup>8</sup> When Isaac had been there a long time, Abimelek king of the Philistines looked down from a window and saw Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah. <sup>9</sup> So Abimelek summoned Isaac and said, “She is really your wife! Why did you say, ‘She is my sister?’”

Isaac answered him, “Because I thought I might lose my life on account of her.”

<sup>10</sup> Then Abimelek said, “What is this you have done to us? One of the men might well have slept with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us.”

<sup>11</sup> So Abimelek gave orders to all the people: “Anyone who harms this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.”

<sup>12</sup> Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the LORD blessed him. <sup>13</sup> The man became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy. <sup>14</sup> He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him. <sup>15</sup> So all the wells that his father’s servants had dug in the time of his father Abraham, the Philistines stopped up, filling them with earth.

<sup>16</sup> Then Abimelek said to Isaac, “Move away from us; you have become too powerful for us.”

<sup>17</sup> So Isaac moved away from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar, where he settled. <sup>18</sup> Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died, and he gave them the same names his father had given them.

<sup>19</sup> Isaac’s servants dug in the valley and discovered a well of fresh water there. <sup>20</sup> But the herders of Gerar quarreled with those of Isaac and said, “The water is ours!” So he named the well Esek, because they disputed with him. <sup>21</sup> Then they dug another well, but they quarreled over that one also; so he named it Sitnah. <sup>22</sup> He moved on from there and dug another well, and no one quarreled over it. He named it Rehoboth, saying, “Now the LORD has given us room and we will flourish in the land.”

<sup>23</sup> From there he went up to Beersheba. <sup>24</sup> That night the LORD appeared to him and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham.”

<sup>25</sup> Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD. There he pitched his tent, and there his servants dug a well.

<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile, Abimelek had come to him from Gerar, with Ahuzzath his personal adviser and Phicol the commander of his forces. <sup>27</sup> Isaac asked them, “Why have you come to me, since you were hostile to me and sent me away?”

<sup>28</sup> They answered, “We saw clearly that the LORD was with you; so we said, ‘There ought to be a sworn agreement between us’—between us and you. Let us make a treaty with you <sup>29</sup> that you will do us no harm, just as we did not harm you but always treated you well and sent you away peacefully. And now you are blessed by the LORD.”

<sup>30</sup> Isaac then made a feast for them, and they ate and drank. <sup>31</sup> Early the next morning the men swore an oath to each other. Then Isaac sent them on their way, and they went away peacefully.

<sup>32</sup> That day Isaac’s servants came and told him about the well they had dug. They said, “We’ve found water!” <sup>33</sup> He called it Shibah, and to this day the name of the town has been Beersheba.

### Jacob Takes Esau’s Blessing

<sup>34</sup> When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and also Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite. <sup>35</sup> They were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah.

<sup>27</sup> When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see, he called for Esau his older son and said to him, “My son.”

“Here I am,” he answered.

<sup>2</sup> Isaac said, “I am now an old man and don’t know the day of my death. <sup>3</sup> Now then, get your equipment—your quiver and bow—and go out to the open country to hunt some wild game for me. <sup>4</sup> Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die.”

<sup>5</sup> Now Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau left for the open country to hunt game and bring it back, <sup>6</sup> Rebekah said to her son Jacob, “Look, I overheard your father say to your brother Esau, <sup>7</sup> ‘Bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat, so that I may give you my blessing in the presence of the LORD before I die.’ <sup>8</sup> Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you: <sup>9</sup> Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it. <sup>10</sup> Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies.”

<sup>11</sup> Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, “But my brother Esau is a hairy man while I have smooth skin. <sup>12</sup> What if my father touches me? I would appear to be tricking him and would bring down a curse on myself rather than a blessing.”

<sup>13</sup> His mother said to him, “My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do what I say; go and get them for me.”

<sup>14</sup> So he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and she prepared some tasty food, just the way his father liked it. <sup>15</sup> Then Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau her older son, which she had in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob. <sup>16</sup> She also covered his hands and the smooth part of his neck with the goat-skins. <sup>17</sup> Then she handed to her son Jacob the tasty food and the bread she had made.

<sup>18</sup> He went to his father and said, “My father.”

“Yes, my son,” he answered. “Who is it?”

<sup>19</sup> Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing.”

<sup>20</sup> Isaac asked his son, “How did you find it so quickly, my son?”

“The LORD your God gave me success,” he replied.

<sup>21</sup> Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Come near so I can touch you, my son, to know whether you really are my son Esau or not.”

<sup>22</sup> Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, “The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” <sup>23</sup> He did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he proceeded to bless him.

<sup>24</sup> “Are you really my son Esau?” he asked.

“I am,” he replied.

<sup>25</sup> Then he said, “My son, bring me some of your game to eat, so that I may give you my blessing.”

Jacob brought it to him and he ate; and he brought some wine and he drank. <sup>26</sup> Then his father Isaac said to him, “Come here, my son, and kiss me.”

<sup>27</sup> So he went to him and kissed him. When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said,

“Ah, the smell of my son  
is like the smell of a field  
that the LORD has blessed.

<sup>28</sup> May God give you heaven’s dew  
and earth’s richness—  
an abundance of grain and new wine.

<sup>29</sup> May nations serve you  
and peoples bow down to you.

Be lord over your brothers,  
and may the sons of your mother bow down to you.

May those who curse you be cursed  
and those who bless you be blessed.”

<sup>30</sup> After Isaac finished blessing him, and Jacob had scarcely left his father’s presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting. <sup>31</sup> He too prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. Then he said to him, “My father, please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing.”

<sup>32</sup> His father Isaac asked him, “Who are you?”

“I am your son,” he answered, “your firstborn, Esau.”

<sup>33</sup> Isaac trembled violently and said, “Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him—and indeed he will be blessed!”

<sup>34</sup> When Esau heard his father’s words, he burst out with a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, “Bless me—me too, my father!”

<sup>35</sup> But he said, “Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing.”

<sup>36</sup> Esau said, “Isn’t he rightly named Jacob? This is the second time he has taken advantage of me: He took my birthright, and now he’s taken my blessing!” Then he asked, “Haven’t you reserved any blessing for me?”

<sup>37</sup> Isaac answered Esau, “I have made him lord over you and have made all his relatives his servants, and I have sustained him with grain and new wine. So what can I possibly do for you, my son?”

<sup>38</sup> Esau said to his father, “Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father!” Then Esau wept aloud.

<sup>39</sup> His father Isaac answered him,  
“Your dwelling will be  
away from the earth’s richness,  
away from the dew of heaven above.

<sup>40</sup> You will live by the sword  
and you will serve your brother.  
But when you grow restless,  
you will throw his yoke  
from off your neck.”

<sup>41</sup> Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him. He said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”

<sup>42</sup> When Rebekah was told what her older son Esau had said, she sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, “Your brother Esau is planning to avenge himself by killing you. <sup>43</sup> Now then, my son, do what I say: Flee at once to my brother Laban in Haran.



## Genesis 24-28:4 (NIV)- cont.

## NOTES

<sup>44</sup> Stay with him for a while until your brother's fury subsides.

<sup>45</sup> When your brother is no longer angry with you and forgets what you did to him, I'll send word for you to come back from there. Why should I lose both of you in one day?"

<sup>46</sup> Then Rebekah said to Isaac, “I’m disgusted with living because of these Hittite women. If Jacob takes a wife from among the women of this land, from Hittite women like these, my life will not be worth living.”

28 So Isaac called for Jacob and blessed him. Then he commanded him: “Do not marry a Canaanite woman.<sup>2</sup> Go at once to Paddan Aram, to the house of your mother’s father Bethuel. Take a wife for yourself there, from among the daughters of Laban, your mother’s brother.<sup>3</sup> May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples.<sup>4</sup> May he give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now reside as a foreigner, the land God gave to Abraham.”

[illegible]