

# PARASHAT TOLDOT

## (OFFSPRING, LIFE STORY, GENERATIONS)

### GENESIS 25:19-28:9

#### ETZ CHAYEEM HOO (HE IS A TREE OF LIFE)

**Y**eshua is a tree of life to those who take hold of Him, and those who support Him are praiseworthy. His ways are ways of pleasantness and all of His paths are shalom. Bring us back YHVH to You, and we shall come, renew our days as of old.

As we begin to study the Torah let us never forget that YESHUA THE MESSIAH is the Living Torah, the Torah-Word of Elohim made flesh. He is the way, the truth and the life — the Living Manna sent from heaven. Without Him living in our lives through the indwelling Presence of his Set-Apart/Kadosh Spirit (Who leads us into all truth and revelation) the Written Torah can become the dead letter of the law!

#### Haftorah Reading

Malachi 1:1-2:7

#### B'rit Chadashah

On the sons of the patriarchs: **Romans 9:6-16**

On the faith of Isaac: **Hebrews 11:20**

On Esau: **Hebrews 12:14-17**

#### Outline of This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion):

- 25:19 Rebekah's Barrenness and Pregnancy
- 25:24 Birth of Jacob and Esau
- 25-27 Their Unique Personalities Emerge
- 25:29 Esau Sells Jacob His Birthright
- 26:1 Famine Forces Isaac to Move to Philistia
- 26:6 Isaac Settles in Gerar
- 26:19 The Dispute Over the Wells
- 26:23 YHVH Confirms the Abrahamic Covenant With Isaac
- 26:26 Abimelech Reaffirms the Treaty With Isaac
- 26:34 Esau Marries Outside the Family
- 27:1 Isaac Decides to Confer the Birthright Blessing Upon Esau
- 27:5 Rebekah's Scheme to Insure the Blessing Goes to Jacob
- 27:27 Through Trickery Jacob Procures the Birthright Blessing
- 27:41 Esau's Hatred of Jacob
- 27:42 Rebekah Tells Jacob to Flee to Laban
- 28:1 Isaac Admonishes Jacob Not to Marry a Canaanite
- 28:3 Isaac Confers the Abrahamic Blessing Upon Jacob
- 28:7 Esau Marries a Daughter of Ishmael

**Study Questions For This Week's Midrash (Torah Discussion):**

- 1 **25:21**, As with his father Abraham, the faith of Isaac was tried mightily. Rebekah was barren and Isaac entreated YHVH that his promises to Abraham might be fulfilled. YHVH at long last answered Isaac's prayer with twins, Esau and Jacob. We learn from this that though the faith of the redeemed believer be tried, the promises of YHVH are always sure. What spiritual mountains have you been asking in faith for YHVH to remove from your life (Mark 11:23), or promises of YHVH to be fulfilled in your life (2 Cor 1:20), or prayers to be answered? Galatians 6:9 says, "And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Remember: never cease praying and believing! Doubts and fear will come, yet prevailing prayer and faith overcomes all. (Read 1 John 5:4–5.)
- 2 **25:27ff**, There are only two types of people on this earth: Esaus and Jacobs. Ponder or discuss this for a moment. Hanging on either side of Yeshua on the cross, spiritually speaking, there was a "Jacob" and an "Esau." (Read Luke 23:39–43 and discuss.) We see the same thing in Matthew 24:39–41. (Discuss.) What type of person was Esau? He was described as a cunning hunter. Nimrod was the only other person in Scripture termed "a hunter." What kind of person would a hunter have been then compared to a farmer or herdsman? Esau was a man of the field. *Field* in Scripture is a metaphor for *the world* (see Matt 13:38). Esau was a profane (unhallowed, worldly, ungodly) man (Heb 12:16). He had no esteem for things of eternal value. That is why he sold his birthright. He lived for the moment and had no eye for, hope in, or faith toward the future. He sought instant gratification of his sensual nature. His god was his belly. He disdained and dishonored his family heritage and those things that were highly esteemed by his father and grandfather. In 26:34–35, we see, to the great grief of his parents, Esau marrying one of the "local girls" of the land who was outside of the family. He did not honor his parents or respect their wishes. Do these traits describe some unbelievers that you know, and even some believers? Perhaps you were like this before you were saved. Do we see many Esau-types running around among the younger generation today?
- 3 **25:32**, The implication here is not that Esau was about to die of hunger, but that he would die before seeing the fulfillment of the promises YHVH had made to Isaac and Abraham regarding possessing the land of Canaan. So what good would his birthright be? He would see no material gain from it in his lifetime. And he was right! But he was motivated by temporal and material gain, not spiritual, future rewards, which are possessed by faith, not by sight (Heb 11:1–2, 8–10, 39–40). Esau was a profane and secular man, and the Spirit and character of YHVH strive against and loathe such individuals (Mal 1:3; Rom 9:13) who prefer secular and sensual pleasures to pleasing YHVH. Their god is their belly and they mind earthly things (Phil 3:19). This was the state of the Laodicean Believers in Revelation 3:14–22. Pause now and reflect. Don't pass over these admonitions lightly. Search your heart for the areas where you put the secular, material and sensual above YHVH and then repent. Ask the *Ruach* (Spirit) of YHVH to open your eyes to the blind areas in your life.
- 4 Isaac was a man of the well, for he is associated with a well eight times (24:62; 25:11; 26:19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 32). Eight is the biblical number of new beginnings. Spiritually, what does a well represent and how does this relate to the number eight?
- 5 The first mention in Scripture of Isaac *after* he was bound to the altar on Mount Moriah (Gen 22) was that "Isaac came from the way of the well Lachai-roi" (24:62). If Isaac's binding to the altar typified the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Yeshua, and at the next mention of Isaac we find him at the well Lachai-roi (meaning "the Living One who sees me") what does this spiritually typify? What blessing came to man upon Yeshua's ascension? (Read John 16:7 and Ephesians 4:9.)
- 6 **26:1ff**, At the well Lachai-roi, Isaac was fruitful. He met his wife while in communion with YHVH (24:62–64). There he dwelt for 20 years and Isaac entreated YHVH because of Rebekah's barrenness (25:21) and YHVH answered Isaac's prayer and Rebekah gave birth to twins (25:22ff). But because of famine in the land, Isaac felt compelled to leave Canaan to seek relief in Egypt following the earlier footsteps of his father, Abraham. Is it wise to rely on "Egypt" for our sustenance, or instead to trust YHVH that where he has planted us and blessed us is where we should stay? While en route to Egypt YHVH, gracefully redirected Isaac away from Egypt instructing him rather to sojourn in Gerar (temporarily)

where he would continue to bless him and his posterity (26:2–4). Isaac obeyed YHVH—more or less. Isaac ended up in Gerar located on the border between Canaan and Egypt and dwelt there a long time (not temporarily as YHVH had instructed him, 26:6,8). Was he fully obeying YHVH or hedging his bet between faith and fear, between Canaan, the land of promise, and Egypt, the land of comfort for the flesh man? How often do we halt between two opinions and compromise between YHVH’s will and our own in matters where he has given us clear direction? What happened in Gerar? (26:7) He sinned (lied) repeating the sin of his father (Gen 20:1–2). Compromised obedience puts us in compromising situations where to “save our skin” we have to compromise our values. Though Isaac was out of YHVH’s will, YHVH was still faithful to keep the promises to Isaac he had made earlier (26:3–4). Isaac was blessed one hundred fold in his wealth (26:12–14). Despite YHVH’s blessings, Isaac’s labors were not without difficulty and opposition from an enemy who was intent upon stealing what was rightfully his. Read 26:15–22 and discuss this opposition and the spiritual implications of the wells. What do the wells represent spiritually in the redeemed believer’s life?

**7** 26:5, *Abraham obeyed [shema, שמע] my voice [kol, קול], and kept [also: observe, preserve, guard; shamar, שמר] my charge [mishmereth, משמרת], my commandments [mitzvah, מצוה] my statutes [chugqah, חקקה], and my laws [toroti, תורת].* There are those who teach that the Torah-law does not predate Moses. Not only does this verse disprove that, but it also shows that Abraham kept the Torah-law of Elohim. In a Hebrew lexicon or word dictionary, look up each of these words and study their meanings and how they are used contextually in the Scriptures.

**8** Isaac remained in the land as per YHVH’s instruction (26:3) and was blessed one hundredfold materially (26:12–13). Where has YHVH planted you? What land has he told you to inhabit? Are you growing where you have been planted and producing fruits of righteousness and being a profitable servant in using the gifts and talents he has given you? Or do you keep uprooting yourself and moving from field to field never staying in one place long enough to mature to the point of bearing fruit? This principle could apply to job, marriage, friendships, ministry or congregation.

**9** 26:19, Spiritually speaking, are you a well or a cistern? The former contains living and flowing water while the latter contains stagnant and stale water. In essence, a cistern is a giant pot with little or no fresh water flowing in or out of it. Do you impart life to others or do you suck life out of others because of your self-absorption, pride and selfishness? Scripture says that Isaac’s servants dug in the valley and found a well of springing or living water. What can we learn from this? Spiritually, what does the valley represent? What does digging represent? Did the well just present itself, or was effort expended to uncover it? What does water represent in Scripture, spiritually? Does Scripture speak of a river of life or pond of life? What is the difference between the two? Again, spiritually is your life a river or a pond?

**10** 26:18–22, Isaac redug the wells that belonged to his father in the land YHVH promised to him, yet the world opposed him and stole from him what was rightfully his. The well’s names were *Contention* and *Strife*. How easy it is to allow fleshly or demonically motivated people to oppose and deter us from our divine destiny. What was Isaac’s response? He took the high road of peace refusing to be embroiled in carnal battles. His faith in YHVH was undaunted and at the third well he found spaciousness and a vast supply of water. Are you striving and contending with the spiritual Philistines in your life? Are they keeping you from moving onward spiritually into a place of fruitfulness where the river of life from YHVH’s throne flows? Is it not time to let YHVH fight your battles so that you can move onward in your faith-walk?

**11** 26:23–25, Upon retracing the steps of his father, Abraham, back into the land of promise in redigging the ancient wells ending up in Beer-sheba (*well of the covenant or seven-fold oath*) did YHVH bless Isaac? The moment Isaac returned back to the heart of Canaan, the heart and center of YHVH’s will for his life, what happened? (See verse 4.) Is YHVH calling you back to the ancient wells of salvation? Is he calling you to retrace the steps of your father Abraham, the father of faith, to return to the ancient paths where a special blessing awaits you? (Read Mal 4:4–6 and Jer 6:16,19; 18:15.)

**12** 27:1–32, How often do we take matters into our own hands to “help” YHVH out in fulfilling his promises for our life. Where is the faith in that? (Read Psalm 37:3–7, 23–24, 34.) Analyze the actions of your life on the basis of these words. Discuss the following concepts of faith:

- Dynamic or Active Faith: one with this kind of faith knows when to move ahead and when to wait.
- Passive or Inactive Faith: one never moves, but is always waiting for things to just happen.
- Presumptuous or Impetuous Faith: always moves and never waits.

Which kind of faith did the faith heroes of Scripture evidence? What kind of faith do you have?

**13** 27:40, Compare this verse with the description of Ishmael in Genesis 16:12. In 28:9 Esau married the daughter of Ishmael thus uniting these two family lines from which some of the present-day Arabs descend. Look at these two verses and compare the character traits listed there with those Palestinian Arabs *et al* who live to kill Jews and to destroy the nation of Israel today. The roots of today’s hatred among these people originate in jealousy and rivalry between Jacob and Esau.

**14** 28:5, Jacob paid a hard price for his trickery and deceit. YHVH did not let him off the proverbial hook. Jacob received none of the material inheritance of Isaac and had to start from scratch under Laban, the taskmaster and a deceiver himself. Jacob came out a humbled and changed man. Are you presently paying a dear price for your past mistakes? Are you “taking your medicine” and learning your lessons well so that YHVH can mature and bless you in the end?

## HAFTORAH READING—MALACHI 1:1–2:7

### The Spiritual Disease of Empty Ritualistic Religion

#### Background on the Book of Malachi

The name *Malachi* means “my messenger” and was written around 450 to 400 B.C., which was about a hundred years after the return of the Jews to Israel from their Babylonian captivity. The reconstruction of the Second Temple was completed and enough time had passed for religious revival and fervor to have waned among the Jewish people and for religious spiritual laxness to creep into the priesthood and common folks, as well. As a result, YHVH sent the prophet to challenge and to even rebuke both the “clergy” and the laity of that day. Malachi, focuses on several issues that were of concern to YHVH: abuses were occurring in the sacrificial system where instead of the best being offered up, the second best sufficed (Mal 1:7–10); divorce among the people was widespread (Mal 2:14); intermarriage was occurring where Judah was assimilating with the pagan nations around them (Mal 2:10–12); and the people were neglecting to tithe (Mal 3:8–10). The nation was in a spiritual state of decline and the people were lukewarm toward YHVH. Their worship practices had become shallow. What lessons can we learn from this Haftorah portion and how does it apply to us?

**1** 1:1–4, In these verses, which discuss Esau and his descendants, we see the connection between the Torah and Haftorah portions. What does Esau have to do with the state of spiritual decline in Israel at this time? Why did YHVH dislike Esau? Why did he love Jacob more than Esau? What did Esau do that was so onerous in the eyes of YHVH? (Read Heb 12:12–17.) Verse 16 of Hebrews 12 says, “Esau was a profane man.” The word *profane* (*bebelos*, *Strong’s G952*) means “void of religion, impious, lacking all relationship or affinity with Elohim.” Why would YHVH use Esau as an example of the Jews? What warning was he sending the Jews when he discusses the fate of Esau and his descendants (Edom)? What lessons are in this for us?

**2** Esau no doubt figured that no ill could befall him, that he was special by virtue of the fact that he was the son of Isaac and grandson of Abraham. Catering to a false sense of spiritual security, he allowed impiety and secularism to captivate his thinking. Such a mindset can sneak up and overtake anyone. Many of the Jews of Yeshua’s time had fallen prey to this same mindset. Read John the Baptist’s warning to the religious hypocrites of his day in Matthew 3:7–12; Yeshua’s warning to the religious Jews of his day in



John 8:33–40; Yeshua’s warning to the assembly in Ephesus in Revelation 2:4–5; and to the assembly in Laodicea in Revelation 3:15–19.

**3** When the Jews had returned from Babylon and eventually rebuilt Jerusalem and the Temple there was spiritual revival, yet by the time that Malachi comes on the scene that spiritual fervor for YHVH and his Torah had waned and given way to spiritual apathy and lukewarmness resulting in the secularization of Jewish society: divorce and intermarriage were rampant, Torah obedience and worship of YHVH had waned. Tithing had declined or ceased. We have seen in point two (above) that no one is immune to this spiritual sickness called lukewarmness. To what degree can those of us in the Hebrew Roots/Messianic Israel Movement fall prey to the “disease” of spiritual apathy?

Consider this for a moment: You’re a Christian. Your eyes are opened to the Hebrew roots of your Christian faith and to the paganism that has crept into the Christian church system over the centuries. You learn that the modern church and the lifestyles of modern churchgoers are very different from that of the first-century Jewish believers. In excitement, you shed the pagan and unbiblical practices and embrace a more Hebraic lifestyle. You are excited because the Word of Elohim is becoming more real to you in a very practical way. You begin to actually feel like YHVH’s set-apart people because of how you dress, what you eat, the days you celebrate and worship on, all of which makes you different from everyone else. But after a few years, complacency sets in as the Hebrew roots lifestyle becomes common place, and those things which define that set-apart lifestyle (e.g. keeping the Sabbath, eating kosher, keeping YHVH’s set-apart times, Hebraic worship patterns and rituals) are taken for granted. We begin to grow lax in our heart attitude and love for YHVH and his ways and little-by-little we let the fires of our spiritual zeal wane. We spend less time pursuing him in Bible study and prayer, less time worshipping him and abiding in his Presence. YHVH’s Sabbath and feasts become less sanctified in our minds as we give in to secular pursuits on his set-apart day. Materialism (the lust of the flesh and eyes) begins to grip our hearts and we are not as faithful in our giving of our time, talent and treasure to YHVH, his work and his people because our hearts have wandered away from seeking first the kingdom of El and his righteousness (Matt 6:33).

Please, dear reader, consider these issues. Do not point the finger at someone else, but ask YHVH to help you to search your own heart. Have you grown weary in walking in righteousness? Are you watching more television, seeking more entertainment, buying more things now than you used to? Are you spending less time alone with YHVH? Are you spending less time with his people on his set-apart days? What other areas have you grown lax in? Listen to the words of YHVH through Malachi as he pleads with his people to return to him, yet at the same time he warns them about Esau—a secular and profane man who gave up his spiritual inheritance for the momentary pleasures of the flesh.

**4** **1:6–14**, YHVH indicts the priest for offering to him defective offerings on his altar of sacrifice. They were giving him the second best, the crumbs, the leftovers—something they would not even have deigned to give to their own local government officials. Are we guilty of giving the crumbs, leftovers and second best of our time, talent and treasure to YHVH each day of our lives?

Doesn’t the Apostle Peter call us a “royal priesthood” (1 Pet 2:9), and aren’t we called to be kings and priests to rule with Yeshua in his kingdom on earth (Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6)? Spiritual apathy had so overtaken the Jews of Malachi’s day that what was their response to YHVH’s indictment? (Read 1:6, last sentence and verse 7.) They were clueless to their spiritual state. Now compare their response with that of the Laodicean assembly as recorded in Revelation 3:17. See any similarities? Are we in danger of this occurring to us?

The Jews in Malachi’s day were no doubt going to Shabbat services each week, wearing their kippas, tzitzit and beards, bringing their kosher food to the *oneg* table, carrying a copy of their favorite Hebrew-names-only Bible tucked under their arms. They probably considered themselves to be a real spiritual crowd because they had their women wearing head coverings, and because their chariots parked outside had pasted on them bumper stickers that said things like “Honk if you love Torah!” and “Torah is the real thing!” just to let the world know how special they were. Yet Yeshua rebuked many of the religious Jews of his day for turning their religion into a rote, ritualistic, legalistic, arrogant and self-righteous affair: “This people draws near unto me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips; but their heart is far from me” (Matt 15:8). The outward trappings were well in place for all to see, but their hearts were lukewarm—if not flat out

cold, dead and empty! What did Paul say about those who do great religious works, but are devoid of the real spiritual, heart substance that matters: love, faith and hope? (Read 1 Cor 13.)

**5** 2:6, Let's paraphrase this verse: "The Torah of truth was in his mouth, and Torahlessness was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace/*shalom* and uprightness, and did turn many away from Torahlessness." This was to be the role of the priesthood, yet the priests in Malachi's day had failed to fulfill their high calling. How many today are preaching a pure undefiled Torah message? How many are actually living it—at home, on the job, in their private lives and thought lives where no one else sees them? How about you?

**6** It is interesting to note that Malachi is the last book in the Christian "Old Testament." In the Jewish Bible, Second Chronicles is the last book. Why do you think YHVH allowed Malachi to be so placed for the Christians? (Read Mal 2:8.) Remember, he is still talking to the priests (in our day, the pastors and church leaders). The word "law" in your English Bibles is the Hebrew word *Torah* (*Strong's H8451*) meaning "YHVH's instructions, teachings, or precepts in righteousness." Do you think that Malachi 2:8 has any prophetic implications for our day, especially in light of what Malachi says in 4:1–6? What is the timing of the chapter four prophecy? Has this prophecy been fulfilled yet? If not, when? (Compare Mal 2:8 with 4:4.) What does this restoration of Torah have to do with the spirit of Elijah in 4:5–6 that will come just prior to Yeshua the Messiah's second coming? Discuss the relationship between the Torahlessness of modern-day church pastors, the restoration of Torah to YHVH's people just prior to Yeshua's return, and how that relates to the spirit of Elijah that will help bring that spiritual revival to YHVH's people.

