



Toledot

Beresheet (Genesis) 25:19 – 28:9

Rebecca, the wife of Isaac, is barren so Isaac prays to G-d on her behalf. G-d responds to Isaac's plea and Rebecca conceives twins. She experiences a difficult pregnancy, during which the twins begin a struggle within the womb which will continue for many years after birth. The first twin to emerge is red and hairy and is named Esau; the other, born holding Esau's heel is named Jacob. Esau is a hunter; Jacob a quiet individual, who chooses to stay in camp. Isaac favors Esau, but Rebecca loves Jacob.

One day, while Jacob is cooking a stew, Esau comes in starving and demands some food. As payment for the food, Jacob insists that Esau sell him his birthright.

A famine occurs in the land, but G-d commands Isaac to remain in Canaan and not to travel to Egypt, so that he may receive the blessings bestowed by his father Abraham. Isaac remains in Gerar and tells the inhabitants that Rebecca is his sister. One day Abimelech, ruler of the area, sees Isaac and Rebecca being intimate. When questioned, Isaac states that he called her his sister in order to preserve his life. In time, Isaac becomes very wealthy in Gerar, and is ultimately asked to leave. He settles in *Beer Sheva* and makes a peace treaty with the Philistines.

Isaac grows old, and the time of blessing his offspring is at hand. He directs Esau to hunt game and prepare a meal for him after which he will bless him. Rebecca overhears the conversation and convinces Jacob to deceive his father. Jacob does so and receives the blessing for himself. Rebecca, fearing that Esau plans revenge against Jacob, tells Jacob to flee to Haran, to her brother Laban.



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