

Yitzhak and Rivkah: the Ultimate Successors?

The Two Promises:

1 | (13, 15) for I give all the land that you see to you and your offspring forever.

2 | (22, 17) I will bestow My blessing upon you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sands on the seashore

Bereshit, 23, 4 -27,2:

First Negotiation, Assuring the First Promise:

(23,4) “I am a resident alien among you; sell me a burial site among you, that I may remove my dead for burial.” (...)

(9) Let him sell me the cave of Machpelah that he owns, which is at the edge of his land. Let him sell it to me, at the full price, for a burial site in your midst.”

(10) Ephron was present among the Hittites; so Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the Hittites, the assembly in his town’s gate, saying:

(11) “No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field and I give you the cave that is in it; I give it to you in the presence of my people. Bury your dead.”

(13) and spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the landowning citizens, saying, “If only you would hear me out! Let me pay the price of the land; accept it from me, that I may bury my dead there.

(14-15) And Ephron replied to Abraham, saying to him, My lord, do hear me! A piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver—what is that between you and me? Go and bury your dead.”

(16) Abraham accepted Ephron’s terms. Abraham paid out to Ephron the money that he had named in the hearing of the Hittites—four hundred shekels of silver at the going merchants’ rate. (...)

(19-20) And then Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of the field of Machpelah, facing Mamre—now Hebron—in the land of Canaan. Thus the field with its cave passed from the Hittites to Abraham, as a burial site.

The Search for a Daughter-in-law:

(24,1) Abraham was now old, advanced in years, and G-d had blessed Abraham in all things.

(2-4) And Abraham said to the senior servant of his household, who had charge of all that he owned, “Put your hand under my thigh and I will make you swear by G-d, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell, but will go to the land of my birth and get a wife for my son Isaac.”

(5) And the servant said to him, “What if the woman does not consent to follow me to this land, shall I then take your son back to the land from which you came?”

(6) Abraham answered him, “On no account must you take my son back there!

(6) G-d, the God of heaven—who took me from my father’s house and from my native land, who promised me on oath, saying, ‘I will assign this land to your offspring’—will send a messenger before you, and you will get a wife for my son from there. (...)

First Encounter with Rivkah:

(14) let the maiden to whom I say, ‘Please, lower your jar that I may drink,’ and who replies, ‘Drink, and I will also water your camels’—let her be the one whom You have decreed for Your servant Isaac. Thereby shall I know that You have dealt graciously with my master.”

(15) He had scarcely finished speaking, when Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, the son of Milcah the wife of Abraham’s brother Nahor, came out with her jar on her shoulder.

(16) The maiden was very beautiful—and a virgin. She went down to the spring, filled her jar, and came up.

(17) The servant ran toward her and said, “Please, let me sip a little water from your jar.”

(18) “Drink, my lord,” she said, and she quickly lowered her jar upon her hand and let him drink.

(19) When she had let him drink his fill, she said, “I will also draw for your camels, until they finish drinking.”

(20) She quickly emptied her jar into the trough, she ran back to the well to draw, and she drew for all his camels.

(21) The man, meanwhile, stood gazing at her, silently wondering whether G-d had made his errand successful or not. (...)

(27) The maiden ran and told all this to her mother’s household.

(28) Now Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban. Laban ran out to the man at the spring.

Second Negotiation, Assuring the Second Promise:

(53) The servant brought out objects of silver and gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah; and he gave presents to her brother and her mother.

(54) Then he and the entourage under him ate and drank, and they spent the night. When they arose next morning, he said, “Give me leave to go to my master.”

(55) But her brother and her mother said, “Let the maiden remain with us some ten days, then you may go.”

(56) He said to them, “Do not delay me, now that G-d has made my errand successful. Give me leave that I may go to my master.”

(57) And they said, “Let us call the girl and ask for her reply.”

(58) They called Rebekah and said to her, “Will you go with this man?” And she said, “I will.”

The Generational change:

(61) Then Rebekah and her maids arose, mounted the camels, and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and went his way.

(62) Isaac had just come back from the vicinity of Beer-lahai-roi, for he was settled in the region of the Negev.

(63) And Isaac went out Lassuach in the field toward evening and, looking up, he saw camels approaching.

(64) Raising her eyes, Rebekah saw Isaac. She alighted from the camel

(65) and said to the servant, "Who is that man walking in the field toward us?" And the servant said, "That is my master." So she took her veil and covered herself. (...)

(66) Isaac then brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he took Rebekah as his wife. Isaac loved her, and thus found comfort after his mother's death.

Introduction to Yitzhak:

(25, 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 G-d on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and G-d 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 G-d,

(23) and G-d 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 became a mild man, raising livestock.

(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.

the Only Story About Yitzhak in the Torah:

(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) G-d had appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land which I point out to you.

Yitzhak	Abraham
(6) So Isaac stayed in Gerar.	(20, 1) Abraham journeyed from there... While he stayed in Gerar.
(7) When the local leaders asked him about his wife, he said, " She is my sister, " for he was afraid to say "my wife," thinking, "The local leaders might kill me on account of Rebekah, for she is beautiful."	(2) Abraham said of Sarah his wife, " She is my sister. " So King Abimelech of Gerar had Sarah brought to him.
(10) Abimelech said, " What have you done to us! One of the men might have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us."	(9) Then Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him, " What have you done to us? What wrong have I done that you should bring so great a guilt upon me and my kingdom? You have done to me things that ought not to be done.
(16) And Abimelech said to Isaac, " Go away from us, for you have become far too big for us."	(15) And Abimelech said, "Here, my land is before you; settle wherever you please. "
(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.	(21, 27) Then Abraham reproached Abimelech for the well of water which the servants of Abimelech had seized.
(20) the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours..."	(13, 7) And there was quarreling between the herders of Abram's cattle and those of Lot's cattle...
(33) He named it Shibah (oath), therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba to this day.	(21, 30-31) He replied, "You are to accept these seven ewes from me as proof that I dug this well. Hence that place was called Beer-sheba, for there the two of them swore an oath.

Epilogue:

(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. (...)

(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, (...)

(8) Now, my son, listen carefully as I instruct you.

(9-10) 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. Then take it to your father to eat, in order that he may bless you before he dies."

(11-12) Jacob answered his mother Rebekah, "But my brother Esau is a hairy man and I am smooth-skinned. 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

(15-17) 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, and she covered his hands and the hairless part of his neck with the skins of the kids. Then she put in the hands of her son Jacob the dish and the bread that she had prepared. (...)

(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."

(42-45) 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. Now, my son, listen to me. Flee at once to Haran, to my brother Laban. Stay with him a while, until your brother's fury subsides— 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?" (*Last words of Rivka*)

(27,1) 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.