

OVERCOMING THE DYSFUNCTIONS OF ISRAEL'S PATRIARCHS

XI. Moving Beyond Our Parents' Failures

(Genesis 25:1-11)

I. Introduction

- A. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Israel's patriarchs and their respective wives and families, though blessed of God, were imperfect people who at times made huge mistakes that led to serious marital and family dysfunction.
- B. Thankfully, Romans 15:4 states that we can learn from whatsoever things were written in the Old Testament for our edification, and that includes our learning how to overcome the dysfunctions of Israel's patriarchs.
- C. We view Genesis 25:1-11 for insight on moving beyond our parents' failures for our insight and application:

II. Moving Beyond Our Parents' Failures, Genesis 25:1-11.

- A. After Sarah died, Abraham married Keturah, and she bore him six sons, Genesis 25:1-2. Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac, but he gave gifts to his sons by Keturah so they could live on their own and he sent them to the land of the east (Genesis 25:3-6 NIV; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Genesis 25:2-4).
- B. Abraham lived to the ripe old age of 175 before he died, Genesis 25:7-8. Significantly, both Isaac and Ishmael, the son of Hagar whom Abraham had sent away with his mother in Genesis 21:12-14, buried their father Abraham, Genesis 25:9a. They buried him in the cave of Machpelah in the field he had purchased from Ephron the Hittite to bury his wife Sarah, Genesis 25:9b-10 with 23:1-20.
- C. Even more significantly, after Abraham's passing, Isaac initially dwelt by the well named Lahai-roi, the same well that was named by Ishmael's mother Hagar back in Genesis 16:13-14 when she had fled from her mistress Sarai. That well was so named to recall God's gracious awareness of Hagar's plight when she had fled from Sarai, and the Lord had promised to make her unborn son the father of many people, Gen. 16:7-12.
- D. In addition, when Abraham had sent his servant back to his relatives in Mesopotamia to obtain a wife for his son, Isaac had gone to the well Lahai-roi to meditate prayerfully that the Lord might make the journey of Abraham's servant successful (cf. Genesis 24:62-63; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 68). Isaac had grieved over his mother's death, but when the Lord provided Rebekkah as his wife, Isaac was comforted, Genesis 24:67.
- E. In view of the obvious attachment of Isaac to the well Lahai-roi, he gave evidence that he had moved beyond the spiritual failures of his parents to overcome where they had failed:
 - 1. Before Isaac's time, Sarai had given her maid Hagar to Abram to bear an heir unto him, utilizing a common practice of the day if a wife was barren (Genesis 16:1-3; Ryrie, op. cit., ftn. to Genesis 16:2-3).
 - 2. However, this practice fell short of God's initial plan that a man have one wife as seen in God's provision of one wife for the first man Adam, Genesis 2:20-24. To align with God's order, Abram and Sarai should have consulted the Lord on how Abram was to produce an heir through Sarai regardless of her barrenness.
 - 3. When Hagar then became pregnant with Abram's first son, she began to despise her mistress Sarai, and Sarai treated Hagar harshly so that Hagar fled from her mistress into the wilderness on the way to Shur, that is, toward the land of Egypt, Hagar's native land (Genesis 16:1, 5-8; Ibid., ftn. to Genesis 16:7).
 - 4. The Angel of the Lord, the Preincarnate Christ, found Hagar by a fountain of water and directed her to return to her mistress Sarai, adding that He would greatly multiply Hagar's unborn son's seed and that she was to name him Ishmael, meaning the Lord had heard her in her affliction, Genesis 16:7-11.
 - 5. Consequently, after Isaac was later born and he learned of this incident, in his quest for a wife to produce seed and to find comfort over his mother Sarah's death, Isaac had spent time at Lahai-roi, seeking the Lord's provision of a wife instead of marrying a godless Canaanite woman (Genesis 24:3, 62). Isaac had learned not to try to address his lack of a good wife by means of his own human effort as had his parents in handling Sarai's barrenness, but he instead chose to trust in the Lord for His guidance and provision.
 - 6. Thus, at the death of Abraham, Isaac honored Ishmael, joining with him as a man who had been named Ishmael by the Angel of the Lord at Lahai-roi (Gen. 16:11) to bury their father. Isaac then again stayed by that well Lahai-roi in seeking God's guidance and provision after the loss of his father, Genesis 25:11.

Lesson: Though his parents had failed to rely on God for how his father was to sire a son to be the heir of the Abrahamic Covenant, Isaac learned to avoid his parents' self-help error seen in his visiting Lahai-roi in prayerful reliance on God first to meet his need for a good wife and then to face the future after the passing of his father.

Application: May we learn from the spiritual failures of our forefathers what we should correctly do to enjoy God's blessing, and may we keep applying that lesson as we face our own futures.