

Drash on Toledot (Genesis 25:19-28:9)

Ahavat Yeshua DC Service

November 30, 2024

David L. Craig

Parashat [Toledot](#) (תּוֹלְדוֹת) is the sixth parashat of the annual Torah reading cycle. The title comes from its second Hebrew word. According to the *Berean Strong's Lexicon*:

The term "toledoth" is used in the Hebrew Bible to denote genealogical records or accounts of a person's descendants. It often introduces sections of narrative that detail the lineage and history of key biblical figures. The word can also refer to the broader historical or narrative account of a family or group.

So they are not merely lists of begats, although some are. But there's even more to *toledot* than this lexicon entry allows. In the Septuagint, *toledot* is translated into the Greek word *genesis* (γένεσις). Now the seventy Jewish scholars chose to explicitly title the books they translated, and to not be bound to the traditional titles. So for the first book, they bypassed the Greek word *arche* (ἀρχή) they had selected for the translation of *b'reesheet* and titled it for the Hebrew word *toledot*. Fortunately *arche* and *genesis* are both found in the New Covenant Scriptures, so they have entries in Strong's Greek dictionary as well as Thayer's Greek lexicon. *Origin* is one English translation shared by both; however, *arche* has a much stronger connection to the **beginning** of *origin*, while *genesis* is more nuanced toward that which **follows** *origin*. Now the first appearance of *genesis* in the Septuagint unsurprisingly corresponds to the first occurrence of *toledot* in the Torah. This occurs as the beginning of the second parallel account of Creation which originates in chapter 2 verse 4 [CJB]:

Here is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

Thus, we see the domain of a *toledot* can scale far beyond "the broader historical or narrative account of a family or group" all the way into cosmology. If Moses had started the Torah with the second account of creation first, then the Hebrew titles of the book and its first parashat would have been *Toledot*, not *B'reesheet*. But then the first verse would not have been the far more powerful, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

Parashat *Toledot* changes the focus within the book of *B'reesheet* from Abraham's begetting of children to Isaac's begetting of children. It covers the conception and birth of Isaac's only children, the twins Esau and Jacob, then continues tracing their character development within a family dynamic that included favoritism, intrigue, and deception. Also documented are some amazing repetitions of events in the marriage of Abraham and Sarah that also occurred in the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca. Following a plot that tricked the now vision-impaired Isaac into transferring the family blessing to Jacob instead of Esau, the parashat concludes with Jacob being dispatched to obtain a wife from his mother's family as opposed to local descendants of Noah's cursed grandson, Canaan.

Yah-a-mod, Elishiva bat Dan. Lisa will read starting at the origin of the parashat.

¹⁹ Here is the history of Yitz'chak, Avraham's son. Avraham fathered Yitz'chak. ²⁰ Yitz'chak was forty years old when he took Rivkah, the daughter of B'tu'el the Arami from Paddan-Aram and sister of Lavan the Arami, to be his wife. ²¹ Yitz'chak prayed to ADONAI on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. ADONAI heeded his prayer, and Rivkah became pregnant. ²² The children fought with each other inside her so much that she said, "If it's going to be like this, why go on living?" So she went to inquire of ADONAI, ²³ who answered her, "There are two nations in your womb. From birth they will be two rival peoples. One of these peoples will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."

Thank you, Lisa.

It is remarkable how little of Isaac's direct interaction with ADONAI is recorded in The Bible. In verse 21 we read that Isaac prayed to ADONAI on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. We are not told the words he used. This is the first of *only two* passages in The Bible that mention Isaac talking to God. In this passage we are not told if ADONAI said anything in response, we are only told ADONAI heeded his prayer.

Later there are two passages in which the verbatim words of ADONAI to Isaac are provided. In chapter 26 verses 2 through 5 [CJB] it is recorded:

² ADONAI appeared to him and said, [quote] "Don't go down into Egypt, but live where I tell you. ³ Stay in this land, and I will be with you and bless you, because I will give all these lands to you and to your descendants. I will fulfill the oath which I swore to Avraham your father – ⁴ I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky, I will give all these lands to your descendants, and by your descendants all the nations of the earth will bless themselves. ⁵ All this is because Avraham heeded what I said and did what I told him to do – he followed my *mitzvot*, my regulations and my teachings." [unquote]

We are not told if Isaac said anything at this time. It seems nothing Isaac had ever done had any bearing upon this transfer of blessing, only that he must thereafter not leave the land. Much later, when Isaac relocated to Be'er-Sheva, in verses 24 through 25 [CJB], we read:

²⁴ ADONAI appeared to [Yitz'chak] that same night and said, [quote] "I am the God of Avraham your father. Don't be afraid, because I am with you; I will bless you and increase your descendants for the sake of my servant Avraham." [unquote] ²⁵ There he built an altar and called on the name of ADONAI. He pitched his tent there, and there Yitz'chak's servants dug a well.

This is the other passage in which we read about Isaac speaking to God, though, again, just what he said is not specified. Unless these Scriptures are in fact the totality of all dialog between Isaac and The LORD, it's clear all other such interactions are effectively classified—much is left to guesswork. What should we make of this lack of information, especially when we consider how much more information is provided regarding the interactions Isaac's father and Isaac's less favorite son each had with ADONAI, which also included physical activities? I believe one thing this teaches is ADONAI employs a range of

styles to interact with us children, all customized for each disciple to ensure personal destinies are fulfilled. So if God is a chatterbox with you, rejoice! Or if all you infrequently hear is, “Yes,” or, “No”, rejoice! Either way, you are getting what you need at the time, and it’s possible your interaction style with ADONAI may change from time to time. Do testify to us of anything like what we read in *Genesis*.

Now, consider the most noteworthy episode of Isaac’s life as an individual: he allowed his father to attempt to literally sacrifice him on an altar. In that anecdote we read a brief chat Isaac had with his father in chapter 22 verses 7 through 8 [CJB]:

⁷ Yitz’chak spoke to Avraham his father: “My father?” He answered, “Here I am, my son.” He said, “I see the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” ⁸ Avraham replied, “God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son”; and they both went on together.

Anything else Isaac might have said, heard, or thought following this dialog is not mentioned. Thus, The Bible provides slim pickins to inform our comprehension of just how Isaac learned of and then agreed to his role in this extremely unusual sacrifice. A lot about Isaac’s life seems to be hidden in the cleft of the rock, so to speak.

The Internet holds many thoughts about how Isaac was a type of the Messiah to come who, as the only Son of the Heavenly Father, would be sacrificed to make the only possible atonement for all the sins mankind has and will subject the Universe to. I can’t take the time to list all the ways Isaac’s experience has been considered parallel to Yeshua’s. However, there is one highly significant difference of which I have found no mention. After learning what His Father expected of Him, Yeshua had years, perhaps decades, to prepare for the appointed time. During the last hour before the ordeal started, in the Garden, He sweat blood about what was coming, knowing He would not be spared, that He had to be publicly and slowly tortured to death. Isaac, however, had at most a few hours to learn about, decide to submit to, and go through his destiny on that altar. The point is Isaac’s binding was not in the same league as the Passion of The Messiah. Now we are not told how Isaac experienced his drama. It is astonishing anyone could demurely submit to being sacrificed. Such an act should be highlighted in the “Hall of Faith” within Hebrews chapter 11, but it is not—regarding the binding of Isaac, only Abraham’s faith is exalted.

But here’s a thought... It *may* be Isaac was supernaturally and privately told, “You will not be harmed, let alone killed, just go along with this and keep quiet.” **If** so, that promise would (1) strongly undergird Isaac’s ability to quietly submit, (2) render that submission much less remarkable, and (3) elevate the commendation of faith due to Abraham in the matter far above that due to Isaac, just as we see in Scripture. Now please don’t blow any gaskets—I am only suggesting that according to The Scriptures, this possibility cannot be ruled out. We *do* know *not* everything Yeshua did has been written down because the planet is not buried in books about those things. How much more everything His Father has done? So consider possibilities about which the Scriptures are silent, but keep them to yourself whenever The LORD enjoins your discretion regarding such privileged information.

The next parashat is *VaYetz* and spans Genesis chapter 28 verse 10 through chapter 32 verse 2.