

November 26, 2024

## Shalom Shalom

Shalom,

**Genesis 25:19–28:9** is the Torah portion that is called **Toldot**. It is translated, “**Generations**” or “**Offspring**.” It relates events and travels in the life of Isaac, the promised heir of Abraham who had inherited herds, flocks, and great wealth from his father. It continues into the lives of his sons, Jacob, and Esau, showing the enmity between them and the differences in their relationships with Isaac and Rebecca.

*Now there was a famine in the land—aside from the previous famine that happened in Abraham's days. So Isaac went to King Abimelech of the Philistines, to Gerar. Then Adonai appeared to him and said, “Do not go down to Egypt. Dwell in the land about which I tell you. Live as an outsider in this land and I will be with you and bless you—for to you and to your seed I give all these lands—and I will confirm My pledge that I swore to Abraham your father. I will multiply your seed like the stars of the sky and I will give your seed all these lands. And in your seed all the nations of the earth will continually be blessed, because Abraham listened to My voice and kept My charge, My mitzvot, My decrees, and My instructions.” (Genesis 26:1-5 TLV)*

**Circumstances toss people from place to place today, even many believers allow themselves to be moved about much like a ball in a pinball machine.** There is often a lack of direction, or at best, a worldly approach to receiving direction. If something unforeseeable happens or someone offers their point of view about things, people are often swayed to pay attention to those things rather than **exclusively adhering to the Word of God and the direction of the Holy Spirit**. God wants us to lean, first, on Him for direction. He wants us to use the God-given ability to be truly led by the Spirit of God through the inward witness. When circumstances, or other voices, attempt to sway our thinking from our God-appointed destiny, our spirit, by the Holy Spirit, may receive instruction to keep us from losing our focus.

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (Romans 12:1 ESV)*

*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the Word of truth. But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness... (2 Timothy 2:15-16 ESV)*

It's very easy to follow the path of least resistance and live out our days glued to media reports or to the myriads of attention-diverting posts designed by the god of this world (Satan) to **bend our minds to conformity**, telling us how to believe and how to act about every conceivable situation that may come before us. Satan uses other people, friends, relatives, so-called prophets, and false teachers to get us to major in minor things to keep us from clearly hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit. **In contrast to the obedience of Isaac in staying where YHWH had set him, many believers today seem to think that someone's fad teaching, pet doctrines, or circumstances are God's way of leading them, and they become so fixed on what is occurring naturally, and what others want them to think, that they never yield themselves to hear the Good Shepherd speaking, nor do they allow God's Holy Spirit to lead them.** When we listen to people, we often hear Satan's report and get things in backward order, that is seeking first all the things they need to feed, clothe, house, and protect themselves, and then giving what's left to seeking God. **Seeking God first is the kingdom way of living and keeps things in their proper order.**

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2 ESV)*

*Therefore do not worry, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear?" For the pagans eagerly pursue all these things; yet your Father in heaven knows that you need all these. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Matthew 6:31-33 TLV)*

**God's way of doing things may often contradict our logical way of thinking and doing.** It will defy conventional human practicality, but unless the wisdom of God is revealed to us and followed, we will just **react** to the circumstances and **miss** out on the blessing that the Father has designed for us. **We will fail to be in the right place at the right time**, like a tree planted by rivers of water. We allow ourselves to be tossed about with things that we really have no control over, or we let our minds take us to what seems good at the time, and thus we yield to a convenient course of action that makes natural sense but leads us away from **the place of blessing that God has already prepared for us.**

Isaac understood what the LORD was instructing him to do, and He was obedient to carry out those instructions. We read **that Isaac, not only stayed in the land during a famine, but he also planted seed in a time when planting was illogical due to a lack of rain.**

*Then Isaac sowed in that land and in that year reaped a hundredfold. Adonai blessed him and the man became great and continued to become greater until he became very great. He acquired livestock of sheep and livestock of cattle, and numerous servants. Then the Philistines envied him. (Genesis 26:12-14 TLV)*

**God had told Isaac to stay in the land, and that He would be with him.** It is much better to be in a place of trouble **with God** than to be in comfortable circumstance without Him. **As believers in Messiah, the Lord promises He will never leave us, but if we override His instructions, we can move ourselves from the place where He commands His blessing.** Isaac stayed where God had set him, and because he knew he belonged there, he trusted and prospered. He knew he was in the place where the LORD had promised to bless him and his children after him, and to eventually give them all the land He had promised. **The blessing of the LORD reversed all the negative effects of the famine and caused his good seed to produce the best possible harvest.**

People are prone to get things in backward order. It is common, in our day, for people to choose what appears to be an easier path. Many move across the country, looking for greener pastures to improve their economic situation, and then we hear them say, “We can’t find a congregation that meets our specifications, and we’re in a less desirable situation than before.” **God sets people in congregations in His body as it pleases Him,** and seeking Him first means that His ministry in us as He has set each of us as His individual body parts should come first, even when it goes against our natural, faulty reasoning. People from outside congregations, self-appointed bishops with an agenda bring confusion that thwart fruitfulness. **When the Holy Spirit is in control, and when we allow Him to show us, everything works together for good**

*As I counseled you when I was leaving for Macedonia, stay on in Ephesus, so that you may order certain people who are teaching a different doctrine to stop. Have them stop devoting their attention to myths and never-ending genealogies; these divert people to speculating instead of doing God's work, which requires trust. (1 Timothy 1:3-4 CJB)*

Many of the things we hear today bring agitation into our lives. **They do not work shalom,** and that **should be an immediate sign** that we need to change what we are hearing. **The Holy Spirit will always speak in shalom, even when outward events are alarming.** If need be, He will direct you to action, but **always in shalom.** Don’t allow anything, nor any report, to rob you of God’s promises working in you. Don’t allow those who prophesy doom and gloom to frighten you. Cast down every imagination that the enemy tries to build in your mind with evil reports. **Trust God! He will direct your path. Set your mind, solely on Him.**

## Let Shalom lead you

*You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock. (Isaiah 26:3-4 ESV)*

Settled and secure,  
Terry

*With your ears you will hear a Word from behind you: "This is the way; stay on it..." (Isaiah 30:21 CJB)*

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