

Genesis 24-27 Podcast notes

Genesis 24: Abraham sends Eliezer to find a wife for Isaac

1. Abraham covenants with his “servant”¹ to find a worthy wife for Isaac – Gen. 24.1-9.
2. The servant takes ten “camels”² on his journey to Nahor in Mesopotamia – Gen. 24.10.
3. Eliezer’s prayer – Gen. 24.12-14.³
4. Rebekah’s response: She gives the camels water to drink, even “all his camels” – Gen. 24.15-21.
5. Quickly emptying her jar into the trough, she ran back to the well to draw, and she drew for all his camels – Gen. 24.20.⁴
6. Rebekah introduces Eliezer to her brother Laban⁵ – Gen. 24.29-31.
7. The servant retells his story to Laban and Bethuel – Gen. 24.33-49.⁶
8. Their response: abide with us ten days (55), we will ask Rebekeh (57) – Gen. 24.50-57.⁷
 - a. The servant offers gifts to the family – Gen. 24.53.⁸

¹ The rabbinic tradition assumes that Abraham's senior servant is Eliezer, but the latter is never termed a "servant" (15.2-4), and precise identification of the man, unnamed throughout the story, is unnecessary. Thigh seems to be a euphemism for the male organ (cf. 46.26; Exod. 1.5). Perhaps by touching it, the person swearing the oath calls sterility or loss of children upon himself, should he violate it. The parallel in Gen. 47.29 suggests that ch 24 once functioned as Abraham's last request. See: Berlin and Brettler, [The Jewish Study Bible](#), Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 48.

² עֶשְׂרֵה גַמְלִים = ten camels. The problem with this existing in the text is that it is anachronistic, revealing the time period of the author of this text to be in the Iron age during the time of the Israelite monarchy, or later.

³ Legendary Jewish commentator [Rashi](#) (1040-1105 AD) points out the aptness of the sign that the servant requests: The woman appropriate to marry into Abraham's household must practice the extraordinary kindness and generosity characteristic of her future father-in-law. [The Jewish Study Bible](#), p. 49.

⁴ Rebekah's running to serve the visitor (who has not yet introduced himself) recalls Abraham's response to the visit of the unidentified men in Genesis 18.6-7.

⁵ Hebrew *lavan* meaning “white.” The feminine form *levanah*, “the white one,” is a poetic term for the moon. This association is in keeping with other names in Abraham’s family that have a connection with the lunar cult, such as Terah, which has been connected with *yareah*, “moon”; Sarah, the Hebrew form of Akkadian *sarratu*, “queen,” used of the consort of the moon-god Sin; and Milcah, from Akkadian *malkatu*, “princess,” the name of Sin’s daughter. See: Nahum Sarna, [The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis](#), The Jewish Publication Society, 2001, p. 166.

⁶ This type of repetition, which doubtless has its origins in orally transmitted literature, is standard feature of the Near Eastern epic tradition and is carried over into various kinds of biblical prose narrative. Sarna, p. 167.

⁷ Laban and Bethuel... It is not only strange that Laban takes precedence over his father but also that the father plays no further role in the proceedings. In verse 53 he is not listed among the recipients of gifts, and in verse 55 it is Laban and his mother who carry on the negotiations. The conclusion that Laban occupies a special position in the family is inescapable and is confirmed by 25:20, where, in addition to being described as the “daughter of Bethuel,” Rebekah is also listed as being “the sister of Laban.” Radak suggests that the father was too enfeebled and incompetent to act, other than to indicate his assent to his son’s statement of agreement in principle. Numerous ancient Near Eastern texts demonstrate that in a patriarchal society the brother had important duties and powers in regard to his sisters. There are also legal documents that detail the joint exercise of authority by mother and son in the marriage of a daughter. Sarna, p. 168.

⁸ The two types of gifts—the one to Rebekah, the other to her family—most likely correspond to the “bride-price and gifts” mentioned in 34:12. In Akkadian these are known respectively as the *terhatum* and the *biblum*. The first was a fixed amount paid by the groom in compensation for the loss of the bride’s services and her potential offspring. These will now belong to her husband’s family. This is probably what is called elsewhere in Hebrew the *mohar* (Exod. 22:16). The *biblum* consisted of ceremonial marriage gifts to the bride’s family. Sarna, p. 168.

- b. Let her abide “days or ten...” – Gen. 24.55.⁹
- 9. The return journey¹⁰ and marriage – Gen. 24.58-67.
 - a. A mother of thousands of millions – Gen. 24.60.¹¹
 - b. Beer-lahai-roi, “The well of the living one seeing me” – Gen. 24.62.¹²
 - c. Jacob went out to *sûsh* - חִשׁ “meditate” – Gen. 24.63.¹³
 - d. The veil of Rebekah – Gen. 24.65.¹⁴

Genesis 25: The Genealogies of Abraham

- 1. Abraham marries Keturah – Gen. 25.1.¹⁵
 - a. The descendants of Abraham & Keturah – Gen. 25.2-6.
- 2. The death of Abraham – Gen. 25.7-10.
 - a. Abraham is buried near his wife Sarah in the cave of Machpelah – Gen. 25.9.
- 3. The generations of Ishmael – Gen. 25.16-18.
 - a. “Castles” (KJV) in Gen. 25.16 is the plural of *ṭîrâ* – טִירָה “encampment.” The LXX translators used ἐπαύλεις – their “dwellings.” Perhaps the KJV translators went with “castles” as these individuals are called princes (מְשִׁימִים) (Hebrew), ἄρχοντες (Greek) in the text.

⁹ Literally, יָמִים אֹדַעֲשׂוֹר “days or ten,” a phrase interpreted by the Targums to mean “a year or ten months” and by the Septuagint as “a few days, say ten. Sarna, 169.

¹⁰ Gen. 24.65 identifies Isaac as master. Everywhere else in Gen. 24, *my master* refers to Abraham, and Isaac has been called “his/my master's son.” Perhaps Abraham has died while his steward was on his sacred mission. If so, the events narrated in 25.1-18 had happened beforehand.

¹¹ “May you grow into thousands of myriads” ... הֲיִי לְאַלְפֵי רִבְבָהּ

¹² בְּאֵר לַחַי רֹאֵי - be-ayr' lakh-ah'ee ro-ee' from “well” (בְּאֵר) and living one (חַי), and the verb “see” (רָאָה). According to Genesis 16.14., this is the name a well situated in the Negeb. It was probably part of an oasis to which sheep-breeders seasonally repaired for water and pasturage. Isaac later settled there (25.11).

¹³ The meaning of Hebrew *la-suahk* is obscure. The present rendering is based on Arabic *saha*, “to take a stroll.” Another tradition has Isaac “chatting” with his friends, a translation derived from Hebrew *siah*, “to talk.” Still a third interpretation connects the word with Hebrew *siah*, “a shrub”; he strolled among the plants or went to plant shrubs. The most popular rabbinic understanding has Isaac “praying.” Sarna, p. 169.

¹⁴ The incident of Sarah in Egypt, as described in Genesis 12:14, shows that Israelite women were not normally veiled. Tamar put on a veil only to disguise herself before Judah (38:14.). In the Middle Assyrian law the veil is a mark of distinction and the prerogative of a free woman, but this is exceptional in the Near East, where wives generally went about unveiled. There is evidence, however, that the veiling of the bride was part of the marriage ceremony. In Akkadian the bride on her wedding day is called *kallatu kutumtu*, “the veiled bride.” *Pussumntu*, “the veiled one,” is another term for *kallatu*, “bride.” The Middle Assyrian laws make the raising of a concubine to the status of a wife contingent upon her being veiled in the presence of the court. In light of all this, Rebekah’s veiling herself has both symbolic and socio-legal significance. It is an unspoken signal to Isaac that she is his bride. Sarna, p. 170.

¹⁵ The “sons” of Keturah, six in number, are to be regarded as constituting the original core of the tribal confederation to which others, “grandsons” and “great-grandsons,” later adhered. The name “Keturah” is obviously related to Hebrew *ketoret*, “spices.” There was a universal and sustained demand in the ancient world for frankincense, myrrh, and other aromatic resins and gums.. Because of her name, it is reasonable to assume that the key factor behind the organization of the Keturah tribes was the spice trade—the production, shipment, and distribution of this precious commodity. It so happens that both biblical and Assyrian sources mention many of the names here listed as those of peoples or localities involved in this particular branch of international commerce. They controlled the trade routes that led from the Arabian Peninsula to the lands of the Fertile Crescent. Sarna, p. 171-2.

4. The generations of Isaac and the continuation of the lineage history – Gen. 25.19-23.
 - a. Two nations are in your womb! God speaks to Rebekah – Gen. 25.23
5. Jacob and Esau – Gen. 25.24-34.
 - a. Esau came out first, a pun on “red,” and “hairy” – Gen. 25.25.¹⁶
 - b. Jacob born second, another pun – Gen. 25.26.¹⁷
 - c. Therefore was his name called Edom – Gen. 25.30.
 - i. The Edomites were traditional enemies to Israel.¹⁸
 - d. Sell me this day thy birthright! – Gen. 25.31¹⁹

¹⁶ In addition to the pun on Seir and (שַׁעַר) *se'ar* ("hair"), there is also a play on red (אֲדָמוֹנִי) - *admoni* and "Edom," another name for Esau and the kingdom descended from him. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 53. Sarna writes, "This detail anticipates the crucial role of Esau's hairiness later on in the narrative. Hebrew *se'ar*, "hair" (*sa'ir*, "hairy"), is also an allusion to the land of Seir, the habitat of Esau/Edom, as mentioned in Gen. 32.4 and in other texts. **This region probably derived its name from the shaggy nature of the terrain.** Sarna, p. 180.

¹⁷ By folk etymology, the name is here derived from Hebrew (אָקֵב) '*akev*, "heel." In reality, Hebrew *ya'akov* stems from a Semitic root '-k-v, "to protect." It is abbreviated from a fuller form with a divine name or epithet as its subject. *Ta'akov-el*, "May El protect," is a name that has turned up several times in cuneiform texts over a wide area. The name Jacob is thus, in origin, a plea for divine protection of the newly born--most appropriate for the one who was to live his entire life in the shadow of danger. Sarna, p. 180.

¹⁸ According to Genesis 36.6-8, the clan of Esau originally lived in Canaan but later settled in "the hill country of Seir." The national territory of Edom lay east of the Jordan in the southernmost part of the country. It stretched from the Gulf of Elath northward for the distance of about 100 miles to Nahal Zered ([Wadi Hasa](#)), which formed the natural boundary between Edom and Moab. It shared a common boundary with Judea along the [rift of the Arabah](#), which extends from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Akaba.

It was this geographic reality that engendered the hostility between the two peoples. The western side of the Edomite homeland enjoyed a strategic and climatic advantage. Its steep precipices, rising to 5,000 1661 (1,525 m.) above sea level, overlook the Arabah. **Their westerly exposure assures the receipt of respectable amounts of precipitation, thereby sustaining agriculture and forests. The "king's highway," one of the main arteries of communication in the ancient world, traversed the country from north to south This gave it control over the precious caravan trade from India and southern Arabia and connected it with Egypt, Syria, and Mesopotamia.** Punon, an important copper mining and smelting site, was also situated within Edom.

On the western side of the rift lay the [Arabah](#), arid and far from the Judean centers of population. This necessitated long lines of communication and the hauling of supplies over considerable distances and treacherous terrain. The copper deposits of the Arabah were unexploitable without a local supply of fuel. A strategic highway led through the region from the Gulf of Akaba across the Negeb to Beer-sheba, where it split into a network of roads joining the important towns of Judea and Northern Israel. Without control of the Arabah, the nomadic tribes that roamed the Negeb were a constant menace.

Both Edom and Israel had abundant incentive to encroach upon each other's territory. **It was easier for the Edomites to infiltrate westward into the Arabah than for the Judeans to penetrate Edom. The Edomites exploited their strategic advantage to the full**, while the temptation to shorten communication lines, to have a supply source close by, and to have access to fuel for the copper mines as well as control over the lucrative spice trade proved irresistible to the Judean kings. It was David who defeated the Edomites, stationed permanent garrisons in their land, and made them vassals of his kingdom, as described in 2 Samuel 8:13f. Sarna, p. 177-178, ¹⁹ An extrabiblical reference gives information that may have bearing upon this story. We read that Esau slew Nimrod and cut off his head, taking the "valuable garments of Nimrod, which Nimrod's father had bequeathed to Nimrod, and with which Nimrod prevailed over the whole land, and he ran and concealed them in his house." ([Book of Jasher, chapter 27.10](#)) Later, we read that Esau was wearied from the fight (verse 11), and thus sold his birthright to Jacob (verse 12).

e. Esau despised his birthright – Gen. 25.34.

Genesis 26: The Lord appears to Isaac

1. God appears to Isaac – Gen. 26.1-2
2. I will make they seed as the stars of heaven – Gen. 26.4.²⁰
3. “She is my sister...” another repetition in Genesis (triplet) – Gen. 26.6-12.²¹
4. Strife over wells with the “Philistines”²² – Gen. 26.14-22.
5. The naming of Beer-sheba, another doublet in Genesis – Gen. 26.15-33.²³

²⁰ Remember, stars are symbols for priests.

²¹ This is a triplet narrative in Genesis. The Wife/sister motif, or the Sacrifice of Sarah, occurs three times: Genesis 12:10-20 (J) and Genesis 20:1-18 (E) and Genesis 26 : 6 – 14 (J). (Triplet). See: [Stories told twice in the Bible](#).

²² As the Philistines do not arrive in the Levant until the end of the Bronze age, this is another probably anachronism in the text, demonstrating the time of the scribal activity that produced this story in its written form. Most historians consider the reference to Philistines in Gen. 26 to be anachronistic, since the Philistines did not arrive until 1200 BCE. See: *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 55.

Nahum Sarna does not view these texts as anachronisms:

These passages have occasioned considerable controversy. The Philistines are never listed in the various biblical registers of pre-Israelite peoples who inhabited the land, such as 15:18. They are not a factor in Joshua’s campaigns. They do not appear in the Tell el-Amarna letters of the fourteenth century B.C.E. In fact, the earliest historical reference to them so far discovered comes from the time of Ramses III. The *prst* (peleset) are among a group of peoples referred to by ancient Egyptian sources as the “sea peoples,” who invaded the Levant from the Cretan-Mycenaean area at the beginning in the twelfth century B.C.E. They tried to attack Egypt as well, but were repulsed by Ramses III... In light of what is known of the history of the Philistines, the references to them in the Abraham and Isaac narratives have generally regarded as anachronistic. Yet this conclusion itself raises serious difficulties. An anachronism is a chronological misplacing of events, institutions, concepts, objects, proper names, or place-names. That which is put in the wrong historical time frame must accurately reflect the time from which it is retrojected or into which it is projected. However, the picture of the Philistines in Genesis does not correspond to the realities the later period.

Unlike the depiction of the Philistines in Judges and Kings, these of the patriarchal period do not inhabit the Shephelah but are situated inland in the south. There is no pentapolis with *seranim* but a king of a single city who acts alone. The king has a Semitic name. Relationships between this people and the patriarchs are governed by formal treaties of friendship, whereas the later Philistines are inveterate enemies of Israel. Unless the Narrator had some particular reason for consciously falsifying history—and no such is forthcoming, especially since the ethnic identity of Abimelech and his subjects is of no significance for the understanding of the story—the references to the Philistines in the patriarchal narratives cannot be anachronisms. No later Israelite writer could possibly be so ignorant of the elementary facts of the history of his people as to perpetrate such a series of blunders, and to no purpose whatsoever.

Accordingly, **the “Philistines” of patriarchal times may have belonged to a much earlier, minor wave of Aegean invaders who founded a small city-state in Gerar long before the large-scale invasions of the Levant, which led to the occupation of the Canaanite coast.** The Narrator may be using a generic term for the sea peoples. At any rate, the Philistines of patriarchal times adopted Canaanite culture and lost their separate identity. Sarna, p. 390.

²³ See also Genesis 21.22-31, where this well receives its name from Abraham in the strife over water with Abimelech. See: [Stories told twice in the Bible](#).

- a. The well of opposition – Gen. 26.20.
 - b. The Lord appears to Isaac at night, “I will multiply thy seed!” – Gen. 26.24.
 - c. Isaac builds an altar there – Gen. 26.25.
 - d. An oath is made between Abimelech and Isaac – Gen. 26.28-29.
 - e. A covenant meal takes place – Gen. 26.30.
6. Esau marries Judith the Hittite – Gen. 26.34-35.²⁴

Genesis 27: Rebekah guides the Birthright Blessing

1. His eyes were dim – Gen. 27.1.²⁵
 - a. “Behold, here am I” הִנְנִי – Gen. 27.1²⁶
2. Esau sent out to hunt – Gen. 27.1-4.
 - a. Isaac's instruction to hunt him some game recalls the rather shallow reason for his favoring the uncouth Esau. There may also be a notion here that eating will fortify his innermost self, that is, his lifeforce (“nefesh,” נֶפֶשׁ v. 4) so that he may impart a more powerful blessing to his son.²⁷
3. Rebekah's efforts to thwart Isaac's plan – Gen. 27.6-13.
 - a. Two kids of the goats – Gen. 27.9.²⁸
 - b. Let the curse be upon me! – Gen. 27.13.
4. Jacob dresses up as Esau – Gen. 27.15-17.
5. The Deception – Gen. 27.18-27.
 - a. “Come near...” – 27.21.
 - b. “He felt him...” – 27.22.
 - c. He takes him by the hand – 27.23.²⁹

²⁴ **Source critics attribute these verses to P** and see them as the prologue to Genesis 27.46-28.9, the Priestly explanation for Jacob's flight to his uncle's homestead. In the genealogical notice in 36.2-4, Elon's daughter is not Basemath but Adah; Basemath is the daughter of Ishmael, not Elon; and Judith is absent altogether. Esau's intermarriages are a jarring contrast to Abraham's strenuous effort to find a wife for Isaac from within the clan (ch 24) and demonstrate Esau's unworthiness to serve as the next figure in the patriarchal line. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 55.

²⁵ In a way, there is a veil betwixt these two men. This will culminate in an embrace with promised blessing from father to son.

²⁶ We see this same statement in Genesis 22.1 – הִנְנִי. Esau's response to his aged father's summons, Here I am (v. 1), recalls the refrain of the 'Akedah (22.1, 7, 11), another but very different story of a loving father and the near-loss of his beloved son. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 55.

²⁷ *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 55. Sarna offers the following: Literally, “that my being (Heb. *nefesh*) may bless you.” This formulation, which appears again three times, is clearly of great importance to the understanding of the blessing. **We see from verse 28 that the source and sanction of the blessing is not man but God.** Isaac summons from the very depths of his own soul all the vitality and energy at his command in order to invoke God's blessing upon his son. He communicates the blessing to his offspring by virtue of his own special relationship with God and by dint of his power and authority as patriarch. Sarna, p. 190.

²⁸ **Kids will again be an instrument of deception, turned on Jacob, when his sons bring him Joseph's tunic soaked in kid's blood.** And in the immediately following episode (chapter 38), Judah, the engineer of the deception, will promise to send kids as payment to the woman he imagines is a roadside whore, and who is actually his daughter-in-law Tamar, using deception to obtain what is rightfully hers. Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary, Norton and Company*, 1996, p. 138.

²⁹ I see a connection to this and the sacred embrace. Hugh Nibley writes, “**The embrace is a perfect representation or metaphor for the word atonement.** The word atonement appears only once in the New Testament, but 127

d. The embrace/kiss – 27.26-27.³⁰

times in the Old Testament. . . . In the other Standard Works of the Church, atonement (including related terms atone, atoned, atoneth, atoning) appears 44 times, but only 3 times in the Doctrine and Covenants, and twice in the Pearl of Great Price. The other 39 times are all in the Book of Mormon. This puts the Book of Mormon in the milieu of the old Hebrew rites before the destruction of Solomon's Temple, for after that the Ark and the covering (kapporeth) no longer existed, but the Holy of Holies was still called the bait ha-kapporeth. . . . It has often been claimed that the Book of Mormon cannot contain the 'fullness of the gospel,' since it does not have temple ordinances. As a matter of fact, **they are everywhere in the book if we know where to look for them, and the dozen or so discourses on the Atonement in the Book of Mormon are replete with temple imagery.** From all the meanings of *kaphar* and *kippurim*, we concluded that **the literal meaning of *kaphar* and *kippurim* is a close and intimate embrace, which took place at the *kapporeth*,** or the front cover or flap of the tabernacle or tent. The **Book of Mormon instances are quite clear, for example, 'Behold, he sendeth an invitation unto all men, for the arms of mercy are extended towards them, and he saith: Repent, and I will receive you' (Alma 5:33). 'But behold, the Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love' (2 Nephi 1:15). To be redeemed is to be atoned.** From this it should be clear what kind of oneness is meant by the Atonement—it is being **received in a close embrace** of the prodigal son." See Hugh Nibley, *Approaching Zion*, p. 566-67.

³⁰ Speaking of the **sacred embrace**, Nibley writes, "Nut, the Lady of Heaven, here symbolized by the grave itself, receiving the dead into its embrace. First the King is embraced by the Lady Nephthys, whose outspread waiting arms are represented and carved on the lid of the coffin. Passing over the Field of Reeds to his highest station, the same King is met by "his Sister Sothis, his mother the Dawn," representing a marital union at the rising of the Sirius. Finally he "flies to heaven among the gods," only to be met by Nut again, whom he hails with a joyful cry of recognition: "Hail to thee, O garden of my Repose!" —the journey ending as it began with a lady in a garden. The Book of Night opens with "the Great Lady, Mistress of all the Earth," the Lady of Life, receiving the initiate at the gate of the new world. In the 16th Hour of the Amduat comes the joyful announcement, "Thy Mother Nut joins herself to thee, she dispels thy sorrow ... **she embraces thee**.... Awake, awake, in peace! Nibley, *Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*, part IV, The Garden Story. In his chapter explaining what kind of document the Book of Breathings is, Hugh Nibley states, "**First there is the idea of air and breath ... being to smell, breathe; (3) to exude an odor; (4) to inhale air or the breath of life; (5)... the breath of life itself;... In charge of this department is the goddess Mert, identified with Maat, who enjoys considerable prominence in our Book of Breathings. Supervising the functions of esophagus and windpipe, she supplies both nourishment and breath of life (one actually eats and breathes her), and in that capacity enjoys a relationship of peculiar intimacy with every individual, even as she hangs on the kingly and priestly breast as a pectoral that both embraces and is embraced by the royal person. In this sense "The son of Atum-Re says, **He hath begotten me by his nose: I came forth from his nostrils. Place me upon his breast, that he might embrace me with his sister Maat.**" *Snsn* is the air that infuses and pervades: "**Thy nostrils inhale (*snsn*) the air, thy nose breathes (*snsn*) the north wind, thy throat gulps in air, thou incorporatest life into thy body.**" Isis and Nephthys prevent decay and evil odor by fanning with their wings, but that is also the favorable wind which enables the dead to progress by ship on his journey in the hereafter.**

But breathing is only half the story. It is significant that the clear statement of the purpose of the "Sensen" Papyrus as given in its introductory lines makes no mention whatever of breathing! **This bids us consider the broader and more venerable ritual background of the word. The rites set forth in the Shabako document, the earliest coronation drama and perhaps the oldest of all Egyptian ritual texts, culminate when the new king "unites himself with the royal court and mingles (*snsn*) with the gods of Ta-tenen."** The expression for "mingle with," *snsn r*, Sethe finds also in the Pyramid Texts, and means, according to him, "sich zu jemand gesellen." He duly notes that "the writing is commonly used in later times for *snsn*, 'inhale,' being mistakenly regarded as a reduplication of *sn*, 'to kiss.'" Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*, p. 17-18. Nibley opens the door to see the use of *nefesh*, touching of the hands, the smelling of Jacob's raiment, the embrace, as connected to Egyptian temple rites. The connection is there, and the question is only, "was this one of the intents of the author or Genesis 27?"

6. The Blessing – Gen. 27.28-29.
7. Esau’s return – Gen. 27.30-37.
8. Esau lifted up his head and wept – Gen. 27.38.
9. Isaac blesses Esau – Gen. 27.39-40.³¹
 - a. “When thou shalt have dominion, thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck” – Gen. 27.40.³²
10. Esau hated Jacob – Gen. 27.41.
11. Rebekah commands Jacob to depart out of the land and go to Haran, he will never see his mother alive – Gen. 27.43-45.
12. Rebekah’s lament – Gen. 27.46.

³¹ Here, Isaac’s default blessing to Esau (Genesis 27:39-40) **depicts the political world of the early monarchy**, specifically the realities of the 9th and 8th centuries BC when in fact Edom rebelled against Israel’ rule and broke free (2 Kings 8:20-22). Since Edom was an ethnic neighbor bordering the eastern territory of the southern kingdom of Judah, **this particular tradition probably was a product of a southern author, the Yahwist, writing in the late 9th century BC.** Thus, the prophetic announcement of Jacob and Esau’s discord and the latter’s servitude to and liberation from the former is a way of describing, explaining, and legitimizing the political realities of Israel and Edom known to a later historical period. In other words, the brotherly rivalry depicted in Genesis with its divine justification for Jacob/Israel’s supremacy over Esau/Edom is a story of etiology, a way of explaining why things are the way they are in the world of the author of this text.

³² Edom shall subsist, not from pastoral or agricultural pursuits but from violence and pillage, raiding its neighbors and plundering the caravans that pass through its land. For a long time it is destined to be a vassal of Israel. However, it will eventually free itself of domination. **Historically, it was King David who first made vassals of the Edomites.** The first sign of their restiveness occurred during Solomon’s reign, but in the time of Jehoshaphat (873—849 B.C.E.) it was still 8 province of Judah. However, Edom successfully revolted in the days of Jehoram (Joram, 849-842 BCE.), Amaziah (800-783 BCE.) had to war against Edom, and by the time of Ahaz (735—715 BCE.) Judah was forced to yield the port of Elath to the Edomites who settled the town. Sarna, p. 194.