



Parshah Toldot

- Parshah Toldot is the sixth parshah in the Torah. The text of this parshah is Genesis 25:19-28:9.
- We begin reading “And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begot Isaac.” The parshah is named toldot after the first distinct word of this parshah which means “generations.”
- This parshah can be broken into the following segments: birth of Jacob and Esau; sale of a birthright; Abimelech; struggle over the wells; promise to Isaac; covenant with Abimelech; Esau and his wives; blessing of Jacob and Esau; flight of Jacob, and Esau’s wife.
- Isaac was forty-years-old when he took Rebekah as his wife. Rebekah was barren and could not bear any children. Isaac prayed to God to take away Rebekah’s barrenness. Rebekah conceived and carried twins. The children struggled in her womb and God told her “Two nations are in thy womb, and two peoples shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.” The first-born was ruddy and like a hairy mantle so he was named Esau. The second-born was holding onto the first-born’s heel and was called Jacob.
- Esau was a hunter and beloved by Isaac for his venison. Jacob was a dweller in the tents and beloved by Rebekah. Esau returned to the tents after an unsuccessful hunt asking for “some of this red, red pottage; for I am faint.” Due to this incident Esau was given a second name of Edom. Jacob responded to the request by telling Esau to sell him his birthright first. Esau saw no reason to keep his birthright so he sold it to Jacob. “So Esau despised his birthright.”
- There was a famine in the land forcing Isaac to take his household to King Abimelech in Gerar. God spoke to Isaac telling him that unlike his father Abraham he was not to go to Egypt due to the famine. God told Isaac to sojourn in the land of Canaan for he would be given all the land and God will “establish the oath which [He] swore unto Abraham your father.” God also blessed Isaac and told him that he would have numerous descendants “because Abraham hearkened to My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.” Isaac obeyed God’s command and remained in Gerar. When the men of Gerar asked about Rebekah, Isaac out of fear, said that she was his sister. When Abimelech saw Rebekah and Isaac “making sport” Abimelech confronted Isaac about his lie and Isaac confessed. Abimelech made a decree that anyone “that touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.” Isaac and Rebekah stayed in Gerar and became very prosperous.

- Isaac re-dug the wells of his father Abraham that were stopped up by the Philistines after Abraham's death. Isaac's servant dug a well and found a "well of living water." The Philistines declared that the water belonged to them. Isaac's servants dug yet another well over which Isaac and the Philistines struggled. Isaac's servant dug yet a third well which was not fought over with the Philistines therefore Isaac named it Rehoboth "[f]or now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."
- Isaac journeyed to Beer-sheba where God appeared to Isaac. God told Isaac not to fear for He would bless Isaac and give him many descendants. Isaac built an altar to God and called upon God's name. Isaac set up his tents at this place and his servants dug another well.
- Abimelech saw that God was with Isaac and blessed him so he approached Isaac and requested an oath be made between them. A covenant was established between Abimelech and Isaac that neither party would interfere with, or harm, the other.
- Esau was forty-years-old when he took two Hittite women for wives. These wives became a source of bitterness to Isaac and Rebekah.
- When Isaac grew old and his eyes dimmed he called to his son Esau requesting that Esau bring some venison to him so he may eat and bless Esau before he died. Esau went from before his father to hunt for venison. Rebekah overheard this exchange and told Jacob what she had heard. Rebekah told Jacob to fetch two kid goats to "make them savory food for your father, such as he loves and you shall bring it to your father, that he may eat, so that he may bless you before his death." Jacob protested for he had smooth skin and his brother was hairy. Jacob worried that Isaac might think he is being mocked and would curse him rather than bless him. Rebekah insisted that Jacob follow the plan. Rebekah made the savory food and took the choicest garments of Esau and placed them upon Jacob. She then placed the skins of the kids upon his hands and neck, placing in his hands the food and sent him to Isaac. Jacob went to his father and presented himself as Esau. Jacob commented that his voice was the voice of Jacob but upon feeling Jacob's hands he declared that he was indeed his son Esau. Isaac ate the food offered by Jacob and drank wine. When he was finished he called Jacob over and blessed him included in this blessing was the blessing that he would rule over his brethren. Jacob had just left his father's presence when Esau came home from the hunt. Esau prepared the venison and brought it to Isaac saying "Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me." Isaac asked who he was and Esau replied that he was Isaac's firstborn. Trembling, Isaac who is "he that has taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before you came, and have blessed him? Yea, and he shall be blessed." Upon hearing these words Esau cried bitterly saying that his brother has taken his blessing and he asked if Isaac did not have a blessing for him also. Isaac blessed Esau but told him that he would live by the sword and be a servant to his brother. Esau hated Jacob and said in his heart "Let the days of mourning for my father be at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob."

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- The words of Esau were told to Rebekah his mother. Upon hearing the threatening words she called Jacob and told him to flee to Laban her brother in Haran. Jacob was to stay with Laban a few days until Esau's fury was gone when Rebekah would bring Jacob back home. Rebekah explained to Isaac that Jacob should leave to find a wife from her kindred for the wives of the children of Heth would only cause misery. Isaac blessed Jacob and told him to go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, and take a wife from among his kindred for he was not to take a wife from the people of Canaan. Isaac blessed Jacob with many descendants and the land that God gave to Abraham.
- Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away telling him not to take a wife from the people of Canaan. Seeing that the daughters of Canaan displease Isaac he took Ishmael's daughter Mahalath to be his wife.