

What You Need to Know About ISAAC & JACOB:

“The Lord who leads armies makes this solemn vow: ‘Be sure of this: Just as I have intended so it will be; just as I have planned, it will happen.’” Isaiah 14:24 NET

Study Number Four – Genesis 26:1-35

The significant thing about this passage is that it’s the only one that tells the story of Isaac.

If we take the life of Abraham, we have all those chapters, probably around 12-25. And then we follow with just one chapter on Isaac. Then we have got a whole series of chapters of Jacob.

Now Jacob’s going to come onto center stage these last two studies.

But Isaac is just all alone. He has this one chapter and it’s going to be very interesting to study him and see what the Lord has for us from these verses.

Steven Covey in his book *The 8th Habit*, which is probably his best work, says:

(The 8th Habit by Stephen R. Covey)

Any individual who has had profound influence on others, on institutions or on society, any parents whose influence has been intergenerational, anyone who has really made a difference for good or ill, possessed three common attributes: vision, discipline and passion. I suggest that these three attributes have ruled the world from its beginning. They represent leadership that works.

p. 68

Well, when we look at Abraham and at Jacob, and then look at Joseph, we see all kinds of potential for leadership. We see fantastic results and God gives them a lot of press in His Word. But Isaac, he's just kind of tucked away in the middle.

Isaac's got his problems, and we're going to talk about a few of those as we work our way through the passage.

C.S. Lewis said:

“If we only have the will to walk, God is pleased with our stumbles.”

(source unknown)

Because he's going to make some mistakes.

One writer put it this way:

“Isaac is an ordinary son of a great father (Abraham) but he's also an ordinary father of a great son (Jacob).”

(source unknown)

The other enigma about him is that he lived longer than all the rest of them. Abraham lived for 175 years, Isaac lived for 180, and of course we know Jacob lived 147, and Joseph we think lived about 110. So the longest, as far as life here is concerned, Isaac is our man.

Now we've had some introduction to him in that he is the miraculous son of Abraham and Sarah, when Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90. What a gift! It's like God saying, "I am going to provide the chain that's going to lead to the unconditional covenant and the fulfillment of it." And so He provides Isaac.

In our first study Abraham's so concerned over his own coming demise, he was really motivated to send his servant to find a bride for Isaac so the chain could go on into the next generation. And that has happened.

Now let's pick up at Genesis 26, verse 1:

v. 1 Now there was a famine in the land—besides the earlier famine of Abraham's time—and Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines in Gerar.

"Now there was a famine in the land—besides the earlier famine of Abraham's time—and Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines in Gerar."

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Isaac was going to follow in the steps of his father. Remember when Abraham and Sarah got to Canaan, there was a bad economic crisis and so they headed to Egypt along with Lot and embarrassed the Lord down there horribly. They were deported by Pharaoh because he lied about Sarah being his wife. Well watch it men, especially as a father, that we're going to reap what we've sown. It'll eventually come back. We're seeing exactly the same thing played out in Isaac's life that was played out in Abraham's.

Instead of staying and trusting God in the land that He would make the provision, he high-tails it, along with Rebekah, and heads to Gerar. That's a stopping-off place, because he was heading toward Egypt. We'll see that in the text in just a minute. So just like his dad, he was heading south.

But God is going to head him off for some reason. Probably because he did not have the stamina or the passion or the character or the leadership to understand that we have to get back if we're going to be blessed. And he probably would have ended up staying there and so the Lord knows all about that, and the Lord actually appears to Isaac here.

“Abimelech the king of the Philistines in Gerar.”

Now Abimelech was also king during the time of Abraham's life. This guy would have to be a real oldie, if in fact that were true.

So many of the commentators believe that Abimelech is a title

for a Philistine king. For instance, Pharaoh is the name for the king in Egypt. They'd have to name Abimelech who was king at that time.

And so the text just says, "Abimelech king of the Philistines [living] in Gerar." This is heading south from Beersheba, so he is indeed heading down toward the land of Egypt.

Max Lucado in his book *The Cure for a Common Life* says:

(Cure for the Common Life: Living in Your Sweet Spot by Max Lucado)

Lonely people fight feelings of insignificance.

What do you do with such thoughts? *No one knows me. No one's near me. No one needs me.* How do you cope with such cries for significance?

Some stay busy; others stay drunk. Some buy pets; others buy lovers. Some seek therapy. And a few seek God.

p. 64

The cry of the human heart is for significance. And Isaac is kind of lost in the midst of all this, and we're going to even feel that more and more as we go along.

v. 2 The Lord appeared to Isaac and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live.

"The Lord appeared to Isaac and said, 'Do not go down to

Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live.”

We have a **NEGATIVE COMMAND** and a **POSITIVE COMMAND**. Something they’re not supposed to do and something they’re supposed to do.

NEGATIVELY—“Do not go down to Egypt”—that’s quite clear.

POSITIVELY—“live in the land where I tell you to live.”

The **KEY** to God’s blessing in our lives is to be where He wants us to be, and to be doing what He wants us to be doing. That really will come out in the remainder of the study.

Proverbs 3:5, 6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and don’t lean on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 4:18

The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.

Our biggest problem is really listening. We have our plans and we want to get before God and be sure that He’s going to be blessed with them, and we pass them by Him. But who is it of us that is still enough to wait? And to be affirmed and

encouraged from the passages of scripture and from other things that God is really in this? And that He's doing something and that we're on track with that?

Ruth Haley Barton wrote a great article:

The Discipline of Listening

Discernment involves listening with love and attention to our experiences, to each other, to the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit deep within ourselves and others, to Scripture and Christian tradition, to pertinent facts and information, to those who will be affected most deeply by our decisions, to that place in us where God's Spirit witnesses with our spirit about those things that are [indeed] true.

—Ruth Haley Barton, spiritual director, teacher, and retreat leader

Ruth Haley Barton, Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership (IVP, 2008)

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Greenville Kleiser said:

(Life Lifters: Moments of Inspiration for Living Life Better by Zig Ziglar)

“Men who have attained things worth having in this world have worked while others idled, have persevered when others

gave up in despair, have practiced early in life the valuable habits of self-denial, industry, and singleness of purpose. As a result, they enjoy in later life the success so often erroneously attributed to good luck.”

—Grenville Kleiser

p. 190

God’s blessing on the obedient heart is what we’re looking at in this whole story of Isaac.

Now notice He not only tells him, “Don’t go down there”—just like we say to a dog, “Stay!”

v. 3 Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham.

“Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham.”

The other thing that He really zeroes in on is the Abrahamic covenant, isn’t it?

We see God taking the initiative to pass that covenant from Abraham now to Isaac, and then we’re going to see it from Isaac to Jacob and then from Jacob to Judah—all the way

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down to King David when he becomes king and the kingdom's involved in this. God means business that the land is theirs.

That's why so many of our leaders, politically and internationally, just assume that those covenants have been nullified. Therefore the Arabs and the Jews both have rights to that land and they never will and it will never be successful. Because God means this and we see what trouble He goes through. In the very first statement that He makes to Isaac, He's telling him exactly what He told his father in the unconditional covenant. Look at it, it's right there.

“I will be with you and will bless you.”—that's Genesis 12—“For to you and your descendants”—Genesis 12—“I will give all these lands”—this land right here is yours—“and [I] will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham.”

“It's going on to you Isaac! And you need to understand that I mean it and it will pass indeed to you.”

So what do we have in His first encounter with him? God confirms the Abrahamic covenant with Isaac, emphasizing those three elements:

the LAND, and

the SEED, and

the BLESSING.

So what's the COMMAND?

“Stay in this land.”

“Well, if you don't, you're going to experience that I won't be with you and I won't bless you. But if you stay, I'm going to be with you and I'm going to bless you. And then I'm going to give all these lands and I will confirm it because it indeed is an unconditional covenant that's involved.”

Notice, verse 4 just carries it on. It's still part of the covenant.

v. 4 I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed,

“I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky”—have we seen that before? Genesis chapter 12—there it is again.

“and will give them all these lands,”—is the same Person that talked to Abraham now talking to Isaac? It is God Himself and He's using the very same language.

“all these lands, and through your offspring all the nations of the earth will be blessed,”

The last time Isaac heard that, remember what happened? When he was taken as a sacrifice up on the mountain with

Abraham, as soon as that ram was provided and Isaac lived, what did God say to them both right there?

Genesis 22:17, 18

I will surely bless you, I'll make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all the nations on the earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

“You did what I told you to do. Even if it involved sacrificing Isaac, you went through with it because you trusted Me, you believed in Me.”

So Isaac has heard this before! And so, it's kind of like a reaffirmation of what God is doing now in Isaac. And then He tells him why.

v. 5 because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws.”

“because Abraham obeyed me and he kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws.””

The reason he was blessed is because he did that—he obeyed.

v. 6 So Isaac stayed in Gerar.

“So Isaac stayed in Gerar.”

Actually Gerar was a better place to find in the Negev anyway. Like trying to turn soil in the desert, way down there in the Negev. Now he’s up here with a little bit better territory.

Why is it that we have such a hard time really listening to God and understanding and being sensitive to His leadership in our lives? Why is it that our culture is like that in ruling God out of so much?

Ravi Zacharias in his book *My Heart Cries* says:

(Cries Of the Heart: Bringing God Near When He Feels So Far
by Ravi Zacharias)

I suggest that our secular society has lost its ability to feel God because it has lost its ability to obey Him.

p. 53

When we learn to obey then we’re going to hear. When we’re doers of the word and not just hearers only, deceiving our own selves, are we going to then know the joy of communion and blessed fellowship with Him that we’ve never known before.

We have sinful natures so we offend the Lord all the time. But at least we have the motivation and the heart to be obedient. We are definitely dependent and directed toward what God wants for our lives.

Joni Eareckson Tada said this:

(365 Days of Hope: Encouragement for Those Facing Loss, Pain, and Disappointment by Joni Eareckson Tada and Dave & Jan Dravecky)

Love says, “I’d do anything for you, God, follow you anywhere.” Obedience says, “. . . and let me prove it.”

Obedience is not so much for God’s sake as for ours. God wants us to realize the depth of our love for him.

So he tests us.
(April 8)

And she goes on to describe how often He tests us.

Carol Kent had to face the experience in her life of losing her son, who had graduated from Annapolis and was on his first naval appointment. He was convicted of murder of the ex-husband of his wife. He has been put in prison for life and Carol wrote a book called *A New Kind of Normal*.

We have a choice when we face something so horrible and so inconsistent to what God’s trying to do. And by the way, God did not make a mistake on this because God has blessed Carol in a phenomenal way. The ministry is ten times bigger than it ever was and the impact is so great around the world because people see a woman trusting God in broken hearted

experiences:

(A New Kind of Normal: Hope-Filled Choices When Life Turns Upside Down by Carol Kent)

When Nothing Goes According to My Plan . . .
I CHOOSE RELINQUISHMENT

[Or we could use the word SURRENDER, couldn't we? I choose to relinquish it.]

LIVING WITH A MIRACLE MEANS FAR MORE
THAN EXPERIENCING ITS CONCEPTION.
IT MEANS RESTING IN GOD'S PROMISE AND POWER
EVEN WHEN IT SEEMS THE MIRACLE
ISN'T GOING TO BE BORN.
—JACK HAYFORD

p. 133

That's how she is conducting and living her life.

Now we were a little bit shocked by how quickly the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah fell apart. Here they are already having chosen their favorites among the twins. We will literally see no communication between the two of them.

But what happens in a marriage when there's a couple that looked like they were joined together as a marriage from heaven? Isaac loved her when she finally showed up on the scene and Eliezer brought her back in that second study. We

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just thought, “Oh boy, it’s just going to be wonderful.”

And then we get into the next study and we find already they’re picking and choosing who’s their favorite and what they’re going to do and how different they are. And they’re not communicating.

In *Men Are Clams and Women are Crowbars* we see the problem:

(Men are Clams Women are Crowbars by David Clarke)

When a man comes down from the mountain and hands the woman his decision on the stone tablets, he actually expects her to uncritically accept it. In fact, he thinks she ought to be grateful. He has given her the truth. “Oh, thank you, great swami, for these tablets on which is engraved ultimate truth.”

When the woman tries to share her view and her feelings about a situation, he’s offended. You see, her view isn’t necessary. He’s already delivered the one true view. Can’t she see that?

p. 174

That’s probably what’s happened to this marriage. The man is just oblivious to the needs of the gift that God’s given him in the woman that’s in his life.

Now look, to show us just how bad it gets, look at verse 7.

The only difference between this is Abraham and Sarah were

deported from Egypt. Thank goodness that Abimelech at last makes an edict that they're going to be protected so they can stay there for a while. But it's embarrassing.

v. 7 When the men of that place asked him about his wife, he said, "She is my sister," because he was afraid to say, "She is my wife." He thought, "The men of this place might kill me on account of Rebekah, because she is beautiful."

"When the men of that place asked him about his wife, he said, 'She is my sister,'"—WHY?—"because he was afraid to say, 'She is my wife.' He thought, 'The men of this place might kill me on account of Rebekah, because she is beautiful.'"

And that's what we learned in our first study. Rebekah is a very beautiful woman.

Can't God protect that woman and him in view of the Abrahamic covenant to see that it's fulfilled? We don't think that way. We get involved in it and we get scared, we get worried and we get upset.

"She's my sister,"

How do we think she feels?

"because he was afraid to say, 'She is my wife.'...because she is beautiful."

We see the failure of leadership and the devastating effects this must have upon her self-image and upon herself as a person.

Men need to understand that they need a wife and they should thank God for the gift and protect it and provide for it and nurture it. And that's where Isaac has really failed. He has his own agenda and he is not aware of Rebekah's needs. And as a result, it's going to get worse.

v. 8 When Isaac had been there a long time, Abimelech king of the Philistines looked down from a window and saw Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah.

“When Isaac had been there a long time,”

When we lie and time goes by, we're eventually going to get caught.

“Abimelech king of the Philistines looked down from a window and saw Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah.”

You don't just caress your sister in public and obviously Abimelech has got some real questions about their relationship. And he failed in the situation.

What are we supposed to do? “Let our light so shine before men,” aren't we?

Isaac didn't do that. He's living untruthfully.

It takes a lot to lie and it takes a lot to live it. And he's been caught.

We look at that and sure he's looking out the window. But did we ever stop to think that God is looking into our heart and at everything we've done today? "All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." (ref. Hebrews 4:13)

There are no secrets with Him. He knows everything we've thought today, He knows everything we said today, He knows everything we did today. And guess what? He's known it every day and He's not surprised and He hasn't given up on us, and His love is still unconditional so we can rest in that.

But we just need to be aware that He's there and constantly watching.

Of course all these guys are getting so into surveillance and all the technology and somebody's always watching, and somebody's always got a camera phone. We can get caught and tricked into all kinds of things. But thank God that he did something different with Abimelech than he did with Pharaoh here, because this is crucial.

v. 9 So Abimelech summoned Isaac and said, "She is really your wife! Why did you say, 'She is my sister'?" Isaac answered him, "Because I thought I might lose my life on account of her."

“So Abimelech summoned Isaac and said, ‘She is really your wife! Why did you say, “She is my sister”?’ Isaac answered him, ‘Because I thought I might lose my life on account of her.’”

Well at least he comes clean when it comes time to tell the truth.

Charles Colson has the neatest prayer in one of his books:

(How Now Shall We Live? by Charles Colson with Anne Morse)

Lord, may my conscience never become so corrupted that I use it to write permission slips for sinful behavior rather than allow it to guide me into goodness. May those under my influence never see me doing what I see fit instead of following your commands.

p. 472

What a testimony! And that’s certainly the way Isaac should have conducted himself in the foreign land.

v. 10 Then Abimelech said, “What is this you have done to us? One of the men might well have slept with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us.”

“Then Abimelech said, ‘What is this you have done to us? One

of the men might well have slept with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us.”

He’s fearful over what could have happened and so he warns him about it. And the whole thing is a sad, sad picture of much of what’s in our own society today.

Isn’t it amazing the nature of the beast? How we lie? How we connive? How we cheat? And how we try to hide it?

Thank God for Abimelech—verse 11.

**v. 11 So Abimelech gave orders to all the people:
“Anyone who molests this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.”**

“So Abimelech gave orders to all the people: ‘Anyone who molests this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.’”

Well they have a restraining order on them and so now they can live comfortably.

Now notice what happens. As soon as he tells the truth and he gets his heart right, God blesses the project. Look at the next verse. It’s just so easy to see it.

v. 12 Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the Lord blessed him.

“Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the Lord blessed him.”

When we’re living with compromise in our lives, or deliberate disobedience, or even ignorant disobedience, God is restrained from blessing. And look what we miss.

Now his heart’s right, he’s been brought out in the open, he’s dealt with it, and now he is a citizen who is farming—which is what he knows well—and God blessed him “a hundredfold” in that.

So what are we saying? Let’s pray every morning, “Search me O God and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts. God, see if there’s some wicked way in me. Am I denying something? Are you trying to say something to me so that I am being honorable to You? And so I can put myself in a position of blessing.” (see Psalm 139:23-24)

So what does the man do?

v. 13 The man became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy.

“The man became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy.”

Looks like Abraham—looks like Isaac. It’s also going to look like Jacob as we’re going to see, and it looks like Joseph. It ought to tell us that when people are walking in obedience,

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God's in the business of blessing.

v. 14 He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him.

“He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him.”

So what did they do?

v. 15 So all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the time of his father Abraham, the Philistines stopped up, filling them with earth.

“So all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the time of his father Abraham, the Philistines stopped up, filling them with earth.”

One of the things they had to have was water in this territory to farm, for irrigation purposes. And so Abraham, when he was living there, dug a lot of wells. And now they come along in the night wanting to frustrate the whole operation and slow him down a little bit—stopping up the wells.

This is the one thing Isaac's famous for. He incorporates and forms the Isaac Well Drilling Company, Incorporated.

v. 16 Then Abimelech said to Isaac, “Move away from us; you have become too powerful for us.”

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“Then Abimelech said to Isaac, ‘Move away from us; you have become too powerful for us.’”

In other words, now he’s being blessed. Now he’s being honored and he can see God in it. And it makes him really wonder what God is doing in separating.

But what’s God doing? He’s just in the process of taking him back to the land. And when we end the study, he’s not only going to be in a place of blessing, he’s also going to be back in the land when we get done. So it’s just little things going along the way here.

Isaac’s at a point now where he’s going to have to go, to leave, but all of it is God’s greater plan to get him to that place of His choosing. So watch what he does, in obedience—verse 17.

v. 17 So Isaac moved away from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar and settled there.

“So Isaac moved away from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar and settled there.”

He moved out of town, got a little farther away.

Stephen Covey quotes Warren Bennis:

(The 8th Habit by Stephen R. Covey)

Leaders do not avoid, repress, or deny conflict, but rather see it

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as an opportunity.

WARREN BENNIS

p. 186

He moves! He gets a little further away from them.

Abraham Lincoln said:

“There is nothing stronger than gentleness.”
(source unknown)

And this guy is gentle. He doesn't stand up for his rights, he doesn't pitch a fit or get angry and upset. He just moves away! He's just kind of a peace-loving guy and he's heading back toward the land.

So what does he do next? He has to have some water.

v. 18 Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died, and he gave them the same names his father had given them.

“Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died, and he gave them the same names his father had given them.”

In these remaining verses, we're going to have a lot of water and a lot of wells. Before the study's over, focus on the Living

Water as we wrap up.

But we see him developing Isaac's Well Drilling, Incorporated. Because he digs five wells here in just a few verses.

This company's byline is: Deep or shallow drilling, free written estimates, all work is guaranteed. Our mission statement is "Cool, Clear Water is Our Goal."

So what's their first project?

Project #1, they have to reopen all those wells that were stopped up.

So they "reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham." That's the first project.

v. 19 Isaac's servants dug in the valley and discovered a well of fresh water there.

"Isaac's servants dug in the valley and discovered a well of fresh water there."

Here comes Project #2. Fresh water means artesian. This is a cool well.

So they really hit pay dirt on this one. But what happens? The citizens are going to get it away from them. This is kind of sad. They're going to lose this one.

v. 20 But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac’s herdsmen and said, “The water is ours!” So he named the well Esek, because they disputed with him.

“But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac’s herdsmen and said, ‘The water is ours!’ So he named the well Esek, because they disputed with him.”

“Esek” means “dispute” or “contention.”

Now does he get mad and pitch a fit over the fact that his men had dug that well and it really was theirs? He could quarrel over pastureland like Abraham and Lot did, but he doesn’t. He just keeps on going.

So, here comes well #3—verse 21.

v. 21 Then they dug another well, but they quarreled over that one also; so he named it Sitnah.

“Then they dug another well, but they quarreled over that one also; so he named it Sitnah.”

“Sitnah” means “accusation.”

They’re still in conflict. We’ve dug three well projects and on this third one they named it “Sitnah,” which means “contempt” or “hatred.”

What is the dominant thing that we think of now of Isaac? It's tenderness, isn't it? It's David saying, "your gentleness has made me great."

He had every reason to be upset. He had every reason to get angry and to contend with them. But he just backs away. He is not going to be involved in that.

Brennan Manning wrote a great book and in it he says:

(The Wisdom of Tenderness: What Happens When God's Fierce Mercy Transforms Our Lives by Brennan Manning)

To live in the wisdom of tenderness is to let go of cares and concerns, to stop organizing means to ends, and to simply *be* in each moment of awareness as an end in itself. It's to hear with the heart the word of Paul to Titus: "The tenderness and love of God our Savior has dawned in our lives; he saved us not because of any righteous deeds we had done but because of his mercy" (3:4-5).

p. 32

Tenderness is there.

There's a way for things to happen when we don't have to be so angry and so upset and so defensive of our position or of our plan or whatever is on the agenda. Tenderness is going to get it done.

v. 22 He moved on from there and dug another well,

and no one quarreled over it. He named it Rehoboth, saying, “Now the Lord has given us room and we will flourish in the land.”

“He moved on from there and dug another well, and no one quarreled over it. He named it Rehoboth, saying, ‘Now the Lord has given us room and we will flourish in the land.’”

“Rehoboth” means “space.” He finally got away from these creeps after they took two of his wells that he had already dug.

In well project #4, they’re getting ready to flourish in the land, he’s now away from them.

And when you get to verse 23, that’s the greatest verse in the study.

v. 23 From there he went up to Beersheba.

“From there he went up to Beersheba.”

He’s back in the land.

Just the thrill of those words. It’s great when we see geographically someone returning to where they need to be because they’re in the place of God’s blessing. And this verse is so exciting!

Isaac, through all of those struggles, all those well projects—

unstopping his dad's wells, digging these other three wells—he's beginning to understand. He's back where he belongs. He knows where he needs to be.

And what happens when he gets there?

v. 24 That night the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham.”

“That night the Lord appeared to him and said,”

There it is, the Abrahamic covenant all over again. Does God really mean it?

“I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham.”

The wonderful truth, the reaffirmation of the covenant, now takes place with new significance and new power, because they're back in the land.

This is just the way God does it.

v. 25 Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord. There he pitched his tent, and there his servants dug a well.

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“Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord. There he pitched his tent, and there his servants dug a well.”

The first thing he does is Matthew 6:33, “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness;” then all this other stuff will begin to take care of itself. He lives by that.

“[He] built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord.” He’s back in the place of fellowship in the land where God wants him to be.

And this is the fifth and final project of Isaac’s Well Drilling Incorporated. Verse 25—this is the well that was dug by the servants in Beersheba.

John Piper puts it this way so well:

(Life as a Vapor by John Piper)

Since every moment is the beginning of the rest of your life, and every moment is the end of the past, every moment should be governed by the glad affections of both gratitude and faith.

p. 48

Gratitude over the moment we’ve just spent, and faith for the moment that is coming before us.

v. 26 Meanwhile, Abimelech had come to him from

Gerar, with Ahuzzath his personal adviser and Phicol the commander of his forces.

“Meanwhile, Abimelech had come to him from Gerar, with Ahuzzath his personal adviser and Phicol the commander of his forces.”

“We need to have a covenant. You’re getting too strong.”

v. 27 Isaac asked them, “Why have you come to me, since you were hostile to me and sent me away?”

“Isaac asked them, ‘Why have you come to me, since you were hostile to me and sent me away?’”

He’s beginning to understand.

v. 28 They answered, “We saw clearly that the Lord was with you; so we said, ‘There ought to be a sworn agreement between us’—between us and you. Let us make a treaty with you

“They answered, ‘We saw clearly that the Lord was with you; so we said, “There ought to be a sworn agreement between us’—between us and you. Let us make a treaty with you”

v. 29 that you will do us no harm, just as we did not molest you but always treated you well and sent you away in peace. And now you are blessed by the Lord.”

“that you will do us no harm, just as we did not molest you but always treated you well and sent you away in peace. And now you are blessed by the Lord.”

What a statement by a foreign dignitary who knows nothing about God and God’s blessing, but he can recognize it and he pays tribute to Isaac by saying, “you are blessed by the Lord.”

Ever had someone say that? “You’re really blessed by the Lord.”

v. 30 Isaac then made a feast for them, and they ate and drank.

“Isaac then made a feast for them, and they ate and they drank.”

v. 31 Early the next morning the men swore an oath to each other. Then Isaac sent them on their way, and they left him in peace.

“Early the next morning the men swore an oath to each other. Then Isaac sent them on their way, and they left him in peace.”

v. 32 That day Isaac’s servants came and told him about the well they had dug. They said, “We’ve found water!”

“That day”—sure enough—“Isaac’s servants came and told him about the well they had dug. They said, ‘We’ve found water!’”

Isn’t God’s timing beautiful once again?

Waiting on God’s timing, it all falls together.

And that well is still there, by the way. That’s in Beersheba. It’s on the southern border of the land. And in this place, God has blessed abundantly.

Samuel Rutherford says:

(The Loveliness of Christ: Extracts from the Letters of Samuel Rutherford selected by Ellen S. Lister)

I wonder many times that ever a child of God should have a sad heart, considering what their Lord is preparing for them.

p. 33

Daily we see so many manifestations of it.

v. 33 He called it Shibah, and to this day the name of the town has been Beersheba.

“He called it Shibah,”

Which is Beersheba, “the well of an oath”—that was the well

where the oath was made.

“and to this day the name of the town has been Beersheba.”

And that’s one passage of scripture we can take to the bank because it still is. It’s there in that place.

Swindoll writes a book called *Perfect Trust* and in it describe how much we must grow in relaxing in God’s purposes and in God’s plan:

(Perfect Trust by Charles Swindoll)

The secret to responsible trust is *acceptance*. Acceptance is taking from God’s hand absolutely anything He gives, looking into His face in trust and thanksgiving, knowing that the confinement of the hedge we’re in is good and for His glory. Even though what we’re enduring may be painful.
p. 16

He quotes Andrew Murray:

(Perfect Trust by Charles Swindoll)

First, He brought me here, it is by His will I am in this straight place: in that fact I will rest.

Next, He will keep me here in His love, and give me the grace to behave as His child.

Then, he will make the trial a blessing, teaching me lessons He intends for me to learn, and working in me the grace He means to bestow.

Last, in His good time, He can bring me out again—how and when, He [is the one who] knows.²

2. Andrew Murray, *Abiding in Christ* (Whitaker House, 1979).
pp. 17-18

v. 34 When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and also Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite.

“When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and also Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite.”

Part of our last study was about how affected Isaac and Rebekah were about their oldest marrying outside the family. We’ll see that again in our next study and we’ll see it more and more. Scripture makes it clear, “Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, is the manner of some is.” (ref. 2 Corinthians 6:14)

Our last verse kind of tells us the sad story. Esau’s forty, Jacob’s forty, Abraham died at 175 so he’s been dead for 25 years. And now Isaac is 100 years old as we say farewell.

v. 35 They were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah.

“They were a source of grief for Isaac and Rebekah.”

Now there are twelve lessons that come out of this study.

Lesson #1: The Lord often uses famines or natural disasters in our lives to get our attention and to see whether or not we will trust Him in our time of need.

Lesson #2: The Lord cares about His children when they are about to make a mistake because He said to Isaac: “Do not go down to Egypt” (verse 2).

Lesson #3: When we are obedient to the Lord’s direction, He has promised us His presence: “I will be with you” (verse 3).

Lesson #4: Abraham’s legacy is given by the Lord: “[He] obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws” (verse 5).

Lesson #5: Isaac turns to the sins of his father when he lies about Rebekah and their relationship.

Lesson #6: How tragic to be rebuked by a pagan king for our sin.

Lesson #7: When Isaac’s lying had been brought to the surface he was then in a position for the Lord to provide blessing and the Lord did just that. “Isaac planted crops in that land and

the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the Lord blessed him” (verse 12).

Lesson #8: Isaac was a meek and gentle man in his relationships with the citizens of this foreign country.

Lesson #9: When Isaac crossed the borders into the land by going to Beersheba, the Lord appeared to him and said: “I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you” (verse 24).

Lesson #10: “Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord” (verse 25).

Lesson #11: Has anyone ever said to you: “We saw clearly that the Lord was with you” (verse 28)?

Lesson #12: Esau teaches us the tragedy of being unequally yoked together with unbelievers. (See 2 Corinthians 6:14)

Let’s talk about water first okay?

John 4:10

Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.”

John 7 tells us what the Living Water was:

John 7:37-39

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out saying, “If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.’” But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The presence of the Spirit is the key to satisfaction and slaking our thirst from the things of this world, for the things of God. That’s Living Water.

Revelation 7:17

the Lamb is the center of the throne and He shall be their shepherd, and He shall guide them to springs of the water of life; and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Sam Rayburn was a well-known as a politician. The way he chose to end his life is an incredible testimony:

Sam Rayburn Defined Community

Years ago, when speaker of the house Sam Rayburn heard he had terminal cancer, he shocked everyone when he announced he was going back to his small town in Bonham, Texas. People said to him: “They have got the finest facilities in Washington, D.C. Why go back to that little town?”

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Rayburn's response:

“Because in Bonham, Texas, they know if you're sick, and they care when you die.”

Citation: J.R. Love, Rushton, Louisiana

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A. W. Tozer put it this way, and with this we close:

(Christ/Life by Ruth Myers)

A. W. Tozer, in *The Pursuit of God*:

*“O God, I have tasted Thy goodness,
and it has both satisfied me and made me thirsty for more.
I am painfully conscious of my need of further grace.
I am ashamed of my lack of desire.*

*“O God, the Triune God, I want to want Thee;
I long to be filled with longing; I thirst to be made more thirsty
still.*

*Show me Thy glory, I pray Thee, so that I may know Thee
indeed.*

*Begin in mercy a new work of love within me.
Say to my soul, ‘Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.’
Then give me grace to rise and follow thee up from*

this misty lowland where I have wandered so long.

“In Jesus’ Name, Amen.”

p. 33

What You Need to Know About ISAAC & JACOB:

“The Lord who leads armies makes this solemn vow: ‘Be sure of this: Just as I have intended so it will be; just as I have planned, it will happen.’” Isaiah 14:24 NET

Study Number Four – Genesis 26:1-35

NOTES

v. 1 Now there was a famine in the land—besides the earlier famine of Abraham’s time—and Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines in Gerar.

v. 2 The Lord appeared to Isaac and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live.

v. 3 Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham.

v. 4 I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed,

v. 5 because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws.”

v. 6 So Isaac stayed in Gerar.

v. 7 When the men of that place asked him about his wife, he said, “She is my sister,” because he was afraid to say, “She is my wife.” He thought, “The men of this place might kill me on account of Rebekah, because she is beautiful.”

v. 8 When Isaac had been there a long time, Abimelech king of the Philistines looked down from a window and saw Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah.

v. 9 So Abimelech summoned Isaac and said, “She is really your wife! Why did you say, ‘She is my sister?’” Isaac answered him, “Because I thought I might lose my life on account of her.”

v. 10 Then Abimelech said, “What is this you have done to us? One of the men might well have slept with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us.”

NOTES

v. 11 So Abimelech gave orders to all the people: “Anyone who molests this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.”

v. 12 Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the Lord blessed him.

v. 13 The man became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy.

v. 14 He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him.

v. 15 So all the wells that his father’s servants had dug in the time of his father Abraham, the Philistines stopped up, filling them with earth.

v. 16 Then Abimelech said to Isaac, “Move away from us; you have become too powerful for us.”

v. 17 So Isaac moved away from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar and settled there.

v. 18 Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died, and he gave them the same names his father had given them.

v. 19 Isaac’s servants dug in the valley and discovered a well of fresh water there.

v. 20 But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac’s herdsmen and said, “The water is ours!” So he named the well Esek, because they disputed with him.

v. 21 Then they dug another well, but they quarreled over that one also; so he named it Sitnah.

v. 22 He moved on from there and dug another well, and no one quarreled over it. He named it Rehoboth, saying, “Now the Lord has given us room and we will flourish in the land.”

v. 23 From there he went up to Beersheba.

v. 24 That night the Lord appeared to him and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham.”

v. 25 Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord. There he pitched his tent, and there his servants dug a well.

v. 26 Meanwhile, Abimelech had come to him from Gerar, with Ahuzzath his personal adviser and Phicol the commander of his forces.

v. 27 Isaac asked them, “Why have you come to me, since you were hostile to me and sent me away?”

NOTES

v. 28 They answered, “We saw clearly that the Lord was with you; so we said, ‘There ought to be a sworn agreement between us’— between us and you. Let us make a treaty with you

v. 29 that you will do us no harm, just as we did not molest you but always treated you well and sent you away in peace. And now you are blessed by the Lord.”

v. 30 Isaac then made a feast for them, and they ate and drank.

v. 31 Early the next morning the men swore an oath to each other. Then Isaac sent them on their way, and they left him in peace.

v. 32 That day Isaac’s servants came and told him about the well they had dug. They said, “We’ve found water!”

v. 33 He called it Shibah, and to this day the name of the town has been Beersheba.

v. 34 When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and also Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite.

v. 35 They were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Genesis 26:1-35 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What did the Lord say to Isaac, according to verses 2 & 3?

3. Why was Abraham blessed, according to verse 5?

4. Summarize what Isaac did wrong in verses 7-9 and how it affected his relationships.

5. What did the Lord do for Isaac, according to verses 12-14?

6. Trace Isaac's water well projects beginning in verse 18 and going down to verse 33.

7. How did the citizens of the land respond to Isaac in verses 28 & 29?

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8. What did Esau do wrong, according to verse 34? What was the response of Isaac and Rebekah?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: The Lord often uses famines or natural disasters in our lives to get our attention and to see whether or not we will trust Him in our time of need.

LESSON #2: The Lord cares about His children when they are about to make a mistake because He said to Isaac: “Do not go down to Egypt” (verse 2).

LESSON #3: When we are obedient to the Lord's direction, He has promised us His presence: "I will be with you" (verse 3).

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