

Down To Gerar (Gen. 26:1-5)

1 There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar.

2 Then the LORD appeared to him and said: “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. 3 Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. 4 And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; 5 because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.”

- Isaac is unique among the patriarchs, because there’s so little written about him, even though he lived longer than any of them. In many of the stories about him, he is actually a secondary character. This is the longest story about Isaac’s life, and it gives us a spiritual picture of our own lives.
- Gerar, which is near Egyptian territory, is at the edge of the Promised Land.
- Isaac had been living by the well called *The Well of the Living One Who Sees Me*, and yet he left. Perhaps he was no longer trusting in the providence of God.
- God gives him two commands or encouragements, and He will do the same for us: *First*, He will give us general principles for our life. God says to him: Don’t go down into Egypt. *Second*, He will give us specific directions that help us to accomplish His Will for our lives, and they are directions that will keep us leaning on Him in close fellowship: *Live in the land of which I shall tell you.*
- God was gracious to keep him from the mistake of leaving the Land of Promise.

- He is confirming to Isaac the covenant He had with Abraham.
 - There is a promise of God’s presence, that He will be with Isaac.
 - There is a promise of blessing, supernatural favor.
 - He says He’s blessing him because He will fulfill the oath to Abraham.
 - There is also a promise to multiply his seed; and finally,
 - The promise to bless the whole earth through his seed.

Isaac and Rebekah in Gerar (Gen. 26:6-9)

6 So Isaac dwelt in Gerar. 7 And the men of the place asked about his wife. And he said, “She is my sister”; for he was afraid to say, “She is my wife,” because he thought, “lest the men of the place kill me for Rebekah, because she is beautiful to behold.”

8 Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked through a window, and saw, and there was Isaac, showing endearment to Rebekah his wife. 9 Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, “Quite obviously she is your wife; so how could you say, ‘She is my sister?’” Isaac said to him, “Because I said, ‘Lest I die on account of her.’”

- We see the same deception that Abraham had performed at least twice.
- What did Abimelech see? The Hebrew means that Isaac was caressing Rebekah, being tender and loving. It was obvious to the king that they were not siblings.
- Again, a pagan king is portrayed as more righteous than the patriarch.
- I want to suggest that these people were afraid, knowing that Isaac was blessed by God. Perhaps attacking Isaac would bring retribution from **EL**.

Prosperity And Trouble (Gen. 26:10-16)

10 And Abimelech said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the people might soon have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us." 11 So Abimelech charged all his people, saying, "He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."

12 Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him. 13 The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; 14 for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So the Philistines envied him. 15 Now the Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, and they had filled them with earth. 16 And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we."

- Isaac stayed in that region and reaped 100-fold. There is no way to understand that except in terms of a supernatural return.
 - There has been a famine.
 - Second, the return itself is big.
 - Third, it was a quick return. He got 100-fold in the same season.
 - Here are three types of material blessing: blessing when others are in famine; abundant blessing; and, rapid blessing.
- From this we can see Isaac's faith: he had faith to sow in a time of famine.
- The Philistines envy him because of his remarkable prosperity. Their disputes were probably about water.
- The harassment tactic they used was to ruin the wells of your adversary.

The Wells (Gen. 26:17-22)

17 Then Isaac departed from there and pitched his tent in the Valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. 18 And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. He called them by the names which his father had called them.

19 Also Isaac's servants dug in the valley, and found a well of running water there. 20 But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours." So he called the name of the well Esek, because they quarreled with him. 21 Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also. So he called its name Sitnah. 22 And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, because he said, "For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

- Sometimes we are a little too close to the world. We try to do things the way the world would. God will begin to restore us if we return to the old wells.
- Notice that Isaac re-dug those wells. We may have new things being discovered, but we still need to draw water out of the wells that have already been dug.
- The world will come along and in its hatred and spite they will damage those wells. Those wells could have been a help to them as well, but they would rather have ruined them so that Isaac and his people would stay away from them.
- Now, as we continue to dig, as we continue to seek God and pray, He will of course also be faithful to bring us into new things, new blessings from His Spirit.
- Sometimes you have to keep digging and keep contending for what the Spirit is giving you. Esek and Sitnah, mean *contention* and *strife*.
- Isaac was a peaceful man who didn't go to war easily, he just kept moving on and digging. Finally, he dug a well and the people didn't fight with him about it.

The Lord Appears (Gen. 26:23-25)

23 Then he went up from there to Beersheba. 24 And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham’s sake.” 25 So he built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac’s servants dug a well.

- Now he went all the way back to Beersheba, where the family had lived for a long time and had been so blessed. Beersheba means the Well of the Oath.
- Notice that Isaac also immediately builds an altar and prays. He decides to stay there. And he digs another well. Everywhere he goes, there is a blessing.

A Covenant And A Blessing (Gen. 26:26-33)

26 Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and Phichol the commander of his army. 27 And Isaac said to them, “Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?”

28 But they said, “We have certainly seen that the LORD is with you. So we said, ‘Let there now be an oath between us, between you and us; and let us make a covenant with you, 29 that you will do us no harm, since we have not touched you, and since we have done nothing to you but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the LORD.’”

30 So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. 31 Then they arose early in the morning and swore an oath with one another; and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.

32 It came to pass the same day that Isaac’s servants came and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, “We have found water.” 33 So he called it Shebah. Therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day.

- Now God moves on the Philistines again. They say they've seen that YHWH is with him, using God's actual covenant name. Is this a sincere approach?
- Isaac doesn't rebuke them as Abraham might have. He shows his mild and patient temperament and makes them a feast, and they make a covenant.
- His servants find water again, on the very same day. He calls it Sheba, meaning *oath*. Beersheba, which means the *well of the oath*, becomes generally known as the southern boundary of the Land of Israel.
- The word Sheba also is connected to the word for *seven*. And Isaac had seven wells or sets of wells: the well he started at, the wells of Abraham, and five new wells. God has a blessing for you of things old and new, of blessings that will come when you're persistent, of blessings that will come when you pray, and of blessings that will come when you make peace. Amen!

Esau's Marriages (Gen. 26:34-35)

34 When Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. 35 And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah.

- Rather than going back and marrying a woman from Mesopotamia, rather than going back to Rebekah's family, he marries into the Hittite people.
- These women were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah. They were likely disappointed that Esau was not interested in the family heritage and the religious heritage of the family. All this is further evidence that Esau is disreputable.
