

The Sojourning of Isaac

Genesis 26:1-35

- I. THE CONFLICTS FOR ISAAC (Genesis 25:1-21)
 - A. The Conflict of Famine
 1. A second famine, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham (Genesis 26:1; see Genesis 12:10)
 - a. Note: The famine came in a place of obedience. Isaac was where he was supposed to be (*"In the land"*).
 - b. It was the land that which God had given to him and his seed.
 - c. Thus, we learn that trials and troubles can come to those that obeying the Lord. Walking in the will of God does not exempt us from trouble (Psalm 34:19).
 - d. Note: How we deal with said trials shows us our true character.
 2. Isaac goes to Abimelech in Gerar (Genesis 26:1)
 - a. Reminiscent of what his father had done (Genesis 20:1)
 - b. Abraham had lied about Sarah (Genesis 20:2)
 3. The LORD appeared to Isaac (Genesis 26:2-5)
 - a. With a command not to go down into Egypt (Genesis 26:2)
 - (1) The direction was *"down"*
 - (a) A negative from the word of God.
 - (b) Isaac was warned in what direction not to go. Egypt was *"down"*. While Egypt was down geographically it was also *"down"* spiritually and morally being a type of the world.
 - (2) Egypt was a bad place and had a bad influence on Abraham.
 - (3) When you leave the place of God's will and go to the world for help in time of trouble, you are putting yourself in a place of strong temptation (Proverbs 7:24-27). A Christian has enough trouble with temptation let alone encouraging it by placing oneself in the way of trouble.
 - b. Restating the promises given to Abraham (Genesis 26:3-4)
 - (1) God's presence and blessing (Genesis 26:3)
 - (a) Note the *"I's"* of God in verses 2, 3 and 4.
 - i. Six times the Lord uses the word *"I"* in these verses.
 - ii. God was the one that would do these things, not Isaac.
 - iii. Therefore, these blessings were not dependent upon Isaac.

- 1) This reminds the Christian that his eternity isn't dependent upon what he has done, but upon the finished work of Christ (Titus 3:5).
 - 2) These promises were based upon God's oath that he had made to Abraham.
 - (b) He would do these things because of his promises that He had made to Abraham.
 - (2) The multiplication of seed (Genesis 26:4)
 - (3) Land for the seed (Genesis 26:3-4)
 - (4) Blessing through the seed (Genesis 26:4)
 - c. A reminder of the faithfulness of Abraham (Genesis 26:5)
 - (1) He obeyed God's voice.
 - (2) He kept God's charge, commandments, statutes, and laws.
- B. The Conflict of Failure (Genesis 26:6-11)
1. The lie of Isaac (Genesis 26:6-7)
 - a. This lie was brought on by fear.
 - (1) Fear will drive a man or woman to act irrationally.
 - (a) Note: Abraham denied that Sarah was his wife. (Genesis 12:10-13).
 - (b) Note: Isaac denies that Rebekah is his wife. (Genesis 26:6-7).
 - (c) Note: Peter denied Jesus as he stood by the fire (Mark 14:66-72; John 18:25-27).
 - (2) The fear of man brings a snare (Proverbs 29:25).
 - (3) The fear of God will strengthen one's faith (Ecclesiastes 12:13).
 - (4) Faith is taking God at His word (2 Corinthians 5:7).
 - b. Isaac repeated the lie of his father (Abraham) (Genesis 12:11-13; Genesis 20:2-13)
 - c. Both Abraham and Isaac lied because of their faithlessness.
 2. Isaac's lie was discovered (Genesis 26:8)
 - a. The lie was uncovered after "*a long time.*"
 - (1) Note: According to verse 3 Isaac was only to stay for a short time (temporarily) in Gerar.
 - (2) However, from verse 8 we see that Isaac overstayed his welcome. The Lord had never intended for him to stay this long. Thus, Isaac disobeyed God in this action as well as lying about Rebekah.
 - b. Abimelech looked out a window and saw Isaac and Rebekah.
 3. Isaac admitted that he had lied (Genesis 26:9).
 - a. Abimelech revealed his knowledge of their marriage.
 - b. Isaac claimed he lied for fear that he would have to die for Rebekah.
 4. God protected Isaac despite his lie (Genesis 26:10-11).
 - a. We see God's mercy at work here.
 - (1) God protected Isaac despite himself.
 - (2) One sees God's goodness at work here.

- b. Abimelech warned Isaac of the dangers of lying about the situation (Genesis 26:10).
- c. Abimelech warned his people of the dangers of touching either Isaac or Rebekah (Genesis 26:11).
- C. The Conflict of Fortune (Genesis 26:12-16)
 - 1. Isaac was greatly blessed in the land (Genesis 26:12-13).
 - a. Isaac received a hundredfold of what was sowed (Genesis 26:12).
 - (1) In the same year he sowed.
 - (2) Because the LORD blessed him.
 - (3) Note: God does not bless men in a way that encourages laziness and irresponsibility. Notice that the Bible says that “*Isaac sowed in that land*” (Genesis 26:12). Divine favour is related to diligent endeavour. Those who do not sow do not harvest (Proverbs 22:29).
 - b. Isaac waxed great and grew until he became very great (Genesis 26:13).
 - 2. The envy of the Philistines (Genesis 26:14).
 - a. Isaac had possession of flocks.
 - b. Isaac had possession of herds.
 - c. Isaac had great store of servants.
 - d. The Philistines envied Isaac because of his great wealth.
 - e. Note: that envy leads to enmity. The Philistines envied Isaac because of what he had and because of this this brewed enmity between them and Isaac. Instead of putting their shoulder to the plow and working for themselves they filled Abraham’s wells with earth (which Isaac would use to water his flocks). Those who have envy for others will many times resort to doing evil (Acts 13:45; Acts 17:5; Romans 1:29-32; Titus 3:1-7).
 - 3. The Philistines stopped up the wells of Abraham (Genesis 26:15).
 - a. They stopped the wells.
 - b. They filled them with earth.
 - 4. The Philistines asked Isaac to leave (Genesis 26:16).
 - a. Abimelech asked Isaac to leave because of Isaac’s might.
 - b. Isaac was only one man with possessions, yet the Philistines realized Isaac was mightier alone than they were collectively.
- D. The Conflict of Friction (Genesis 26:17-21)
 - 1. The Philistines as an enemy
 - a. It is well known that you have three main enemies in this life: the world, the flesh and the devil.
 - b. As such, the Philistines (the flesh) in this story stop up the wells that Isaac’s father had dug the first time.
 - (1) Your flesh is right at hand and will hinder your every move if you allow it.
 - (2) You must crucify the flesh (Galatians 5:24-25. This is needed daily).
 - (a) Our daily walk requires us to mortify the flesh (Romans 8:13).
 - (b) We must abstain from fleshly lusts (1 Peter 2:11).
 - i. This is done by faith in the Lord (Galatians 2:20)
 - ii. This is done by walking in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-18).
 - iii. This is done through the Lord (Galatians 6:14)

2. Isaac dug the wells again of Abraham (Genesis 26:17-18).
 - a. Isaac departed and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar (Genesis 26:17).
 - b. Isaac dug again the wells digged in Abraham's days (Genesis 26:18).
 - (1) The Philistines had stopped up the wells after the death of Abraham.
 - (a) Isaac dug out the dirt and filth that the Philistines had placed in these wells.
 - (b) He was undoing the evil that the Philistines had done.
 - i. In this life we sometimes have to dig out what the world, the flesh and the devil has thrown into our lives and the lives of our families.
 - ii. This will come at no easy task.
 - 1) For Isaac (Genesis 26:20-21).
 - 2) For the Christian today (1 Timothy 6:12; Ephesians 6:4; cp. Deuteronomy 4:9; Deuteronomy 6:6-7, 20-24; Deuteronomy 11:19-21; Joshua 4:6-7, 21-24; Joshua 24:15; esp. Psalm 71:17, 18; Psalm 78:4-7).
 - (2) Isaac called the wells by the names that his father had originally called them.
 - (a) At first this might seem trivial; however, Isaac was maintaining the landmarks that his father had set.
 - (b) Later the Jews would be told not to destroy the ancient landmarks that their fathers had setup (Psalm 22:28). This was a warning as some would do so with evil intentions (Deuteronomy 19:14; Job 24:2).
3. Isaac's servants found a well of springing water in the valley (Genesis 26:19).
 - a. The herdmen of Gerar strove with Isaac's herdmen claiming that the water was theirs.
 - b. Isaac named the well Esek because they strove with him.
 - (1) Note: This was a place of springing waters, a very valued source of water. Certainly, the Philistines did not want Isaac to have such a place (Genesis 26:19-20).
 - (2) The Jews would later be called out by God to Jeremiah for their forsaking of "*the fountain of living waters*" (God) for broken cisterns (Jeremiah 2:13).
 - (3) Christ told the Samaritan woman and his disciples of living water that would flow out of them (John 4:10, 11; John 7:38).
 - (4) Is it any wonder that just like the Philistines, this flesh wars against the soul to not take the living water of God.
4. The Philistines fought Isaac over Esek (Genesis 26:20). – Note: some Bible students have noted the name Esek means *contention*.
5. The Philistines fought Isaac over a well called Sitnah which means *hatred* (Genesis 26:21).