

Genesis Chapter 26 Continued

Genesis 26:23 "And he went up from thence to Beer-sheba."

In Beer-sheba God appeared to him and again confirmed the Abrahamic covenant.

So he worshiped there by building an altar (12:7-8; 13:4, 18).

I must lay a little ground work for this lesson.

In the last lesson, Abimelech had asked Isaac to leave, and he had gone to the valley Gerar.

There his herdsman and the herdsman of the land had trouble over two of the wells.

They finally dug the third well over which there was no dispute.

The third well was named Rehoboth.

Now, it appears Isaac had gone up to Beer-sheba.

"Beer-sheba""

Means well of the oath, or of seven.

Verses 24-25

This abbreviated reaffirmation of the Abrahamic Covenant was designed to relieve Isaac's anxiety at facing envy, quarrels, and hostility (verses 14, 20, 27), and to assure Isaac that he had reasoned right, fruitfulness in posterity would prevail.

That it was a significant reminder to Isaac is seen in a response reminiscent of his father, he built an altar of worship to mark the spot of God's appearance to him (12:7).

Genesis 26:24 "And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I [am] the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I [am] with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake."

"And the LORD appeared to him in the same night":

The first night he came to Beer-sheba, in a dream or vision, in which the LORD was represented as speaking to him.

"And said, I am the God of Abraham thy father":

Though he was dead, he remembered the covenant he made with him, and the promises he made unto him: and besides, though Abraham was dead as to his body, yet alive in his soul.

For God is not the God of the dead, but of the living (Matthew 22:32).

"Fear not":

Any future famine, or want of any good things, nor any enemies.

The Philistines his neighbors, who had driven him from their country, and had harassed him from place to place.

"For I am with thee, and will bless thee":

If God is with his people, they have nothing to fear from men; and if he blesses them, they are blessed, and no curse can light upon them.

"And multiply thy seed, for my servant Abraham's sake":

Who was a faithful, diligent, servant of his; whose service was, not forgotten by him, but would be rewarded in a way of grace, though not of debt.

God reassured Isaac that he was not only with his father, but that he was with Isaac also.

This reconfirmed God's oath to Abraham.

This was a three-fold blessing. "... I am with thee, will bless thee, will multiply thy seed..."

Genesis 26:25 "And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well."

"And he builded an altar there":

At Beer-sheba, where his father Abraham had planted a grove before.

Very probably had built an altar also, though it might not be now standing (Gen. 21:33).

"And called upon the name of the LORD":

And gave him thanks for all his mercies to him; for the care he had taken of him, and provision he had made for him and his during the time of famine; and for the protection and preservation of him in Gerar.

And for his deliverance of him out of the hands of envious, malicious, and unreasonable men; as well as prayed unto him for present and future mercies, for providential care of him and his.

And for communications of special grace, and for suitability for eternal glory; all which every good man daily prays to God for.

"And pitched his tent there":

Intending to take up his abode and settle there.

"And there Isaac's servants digged a well":

In order to find water for the family, and for the flocks and herds; and which was necessary to be done, as they perceived their master desired to fix his habitation here.

Wells of water being of great importance and consequence in those hot and desert countries, as the above struggles about them abundantly show.

Isaac was a believer also.

The first thing he did was build an altar, and worship God.

He settled there where he met God.

Again, Isaac had his servants to dig a well.

Isaac could have digged a well anywhere, and there would have been water.

Genesis 26:26 "Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phichol the chief captain of his army."

"Abimelech ... and Phichol":

Because 90 years had passed since Abraham was visited by men with the same names, they must have been titles rather than proper names (21:22; see note on verse 1).

Genesis 26:27 "And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?"

"And Isaac said unto them, wherefore come ye to me":

What is the meaning of this visit?

What has brought you here?

It cannot be from affection and friendship to me.

"Seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?"

The latter he mentions as a proof of the former; they envied his prosperity, and hated him on that account, and therefore expelled him from their country, or at least would not suffer him to dwell among them.

Still more glaring proofs were given of the hatred of the men of Gerar to him, not only by stopping up his father's wells, but by striving and contending with him about those he dug in the valley after he was gone from them; one of which he called "Sitnah", from their hatred of him.

Isaac was confused; Abimelech was the one who told him to leave.

Now, here, he was and with two of his men.

Isaac could not understand why they would follow him.

Isaac even felt that they hated him, but I believe it was closer to jealousy.

Genesis 26:28 "And they said, We saw certainly that the LORD was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, [even] betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee;"

“An oath ... a covenant”:

In a mirror image of a former occasion (21:22-32), Abimelech in the company of a friend and the highest ranking officer in his army (verse 26), sought after a treaty with one they estimated to be superior and stronger than themselves and a possible threat (verse 29).

Isaac, on the other hand, perceived them as hostile (verse 27).

The outcome was most desirable for both, peace between them (verse 31).

It was no secret that God was with Isaac.

His crop that produced a hundred fold was one witness.

The four wells that he dug, that produced in such a dry land, was another.

Even someone looking on, who was not acquainted with God, could easily see that Isaac was blessed above other men.

Abimelech wanted an agreement that there would be no trouble between them.

He knew which one God will help in a battle, and it would not be him.

God and one is a majority.

There was no question who would win.

Genesis 26:29 "That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou [art] now the blessed of the LORD."

"That thou wilt do us no hurt":

Neither to our persons nor properties, to our kingdom and subjects, by invading our land, and seizing on our kingdom, all which was feared from Isaac's growing wealth and power.

"As we have not touched thee":

Not done the least injury to him, to his person, family, and substance, but suffered him to go away with all he had untouched.

"And as we have done unto thee, nothing but good":

By royal authority, or by the command and direction of the king and his nobles; for as for the stopping up the wells his father's servants had dug, and the controversy that was about those in the vale, and the trouble Isaac had on that account, these things were not by the order of the king and council, and perhaps without their knowledge.

"And have sent thee away in peace":

No one being suffered to do any injury to him, or molest him in carrying off everything that belonged unto him.

"Thou art now blessed of the LORD":

So, it appeared by the prosperity he was attended with, and by the LORD's protection of him, and the constant and continual favors he was bestowing on him; and this induced Abimelech and his nobles to seek to cultivate friendship, and be on good terms with him.

Abimelech was reminding Isaac that he did not harm him in any way.

I do not believe it was out of the goodness of his heart that this was so.

Abimelech knew that God was with Isaac, and he feared to do him any harm, because of the reprisal from God.

He forgot his men gave Isaac a hard time about the first two wells, and Isaac just moved on to keep from having trouble with them.

Genesis 26:30 "And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink."

"And he made them a feast":

Made a feast for a king and those of eminence or high rank; he treated them in a generous way, according to their dignity, and agreeable to his own disposition and substance.

"And they did eat and drink":

Freely, cheerfully, and in a friendly manner; for both having spoken their minds, they agreed to bury all former things, and live in peace and friendship.

Though this feast was not on account of the covenant made between them, as is observed by some interpreters; but as a hospitable act, and a token of good will.

Genesis 26:31 "And they rose up betimes in the morning, and swore one to another: and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace."

"And they rose up betimes in the morning":

Abimelech and his friends, in order to return home.

Isaac to take his leave of them, and both to make the covenant between them in form, and confirm it by an oath, for which the morning was the fitter time.

A transaction should be performed with the utmost attention and seriousness.

"and swore one to another":

To live in harmony and friendship, and not distress and disturb each other.

"And Isaac sent them away":

And they departed from him in peace.

He took his leave of them in a friendly manner, and they departed well pleased with the reception they had met with, and the success they had had, having agreed on and settled articles of peace to each's mutual satisfaction.

Isaac was a good host.

He made them a feast and they ate, drink, and fellowshiped together.

They got up the next morning and agreed on a peace treaty between them.

They sealed this agreement with an oath.

I do not believe that the statement "Isaac sent them away" meant "forcefully".

He just let them go in peace.

Genesis 26:32 "And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water."

"And it came to pass the same day":

That the above things were transacted.

"That Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged":

They had dug it before Abimelech came to Isaac, but they had not had an opportunity of acquainting him with it until he was gone, and then they came to give him an account of it.

What sort of a well it was, and how it answered their expectations and wishes; and which in those countries was a very great blessing, serving very much to recommend a place to dwell in.

"We have found water":

Not only had they dug a well, but they had found plenty of water, and that which was good.

Otherwise it would not have been worthwhile to have troubled Isaac with the account of it.

You know, it was a well like this where Jesus talked to the woman at the well.

It was spoken of that Abraham had dug the well.

These wells that God blesses never go dry.

They flow generation after generation.

At any rate, this well that Isaac's men dug like all the others, found water.

Water symbolically can mean so many things (the Word, the Holy Spirit).

Without water (spiritual and physical), it would be next to impossible to live.

Genesis 26:33 "And he called it Shebah: therefore the name of the city [is] Beer-sheba unto this day."

"And he called it Sheba":

Which, according to Jerome, signifies "fullness", as if it had its name from the abundance of water in it.

But rather it signifies an "oath", and was so called from the oath, which he and Abimelech had just taken to one another.

This well he calls Sheba, "an oath," and hence the town is called Beer-sheba, "the well of the oath."

It had been so called by Abraham a hundred years ago or more; but now upon this occasion it was renewed and confirmed, and so continued until the times of Moses, and many ages after.

This was the very place where his father Abraham had made an oath with another Abimelech and Phicol (see note on verse 26), and which Abraham had named Beer-sheba (21:32).

This city was located in the southern part of Palestine, about half way between the Mediterranean and the Dead sea.

Genesis 26:34 "And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite:"

"And Esau was forty years old":

The same age his father was of when he married (Genesis 25:20).

"When he took to wife Judith, the daughter of Beeri the Hittite":

Josephus makes her to be the same with Aholibamah; but her father's name was Zibeon, and a Hivite, and must therefore be another person, not only the name being different, but the tribe (Genesis 36:2).

"And Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite":

Whom Aben Ezra takes to be the same with Adah, and so does Josephus; and in this they may be right, since the name of her father, and his nation or tribe agree (Genesis 36:2).

The fathers of these two women are represented by Josephus as men of great power and authority among the Canaanites, as very probably they were.

Esau had another wife of the same name with this last, but she was daughter of Ishmael, and sister of Nebajoth (Genesis 36:3).

He had more wives than those but these were his two first, who very probably were not taken together, but one after another, though it may be but at a short distance from each other.

Genesis 26:35 "Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah."

"Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac, and to Rebekah":

The marriage of them itself was a trouble to them, it being contrary to their will that any of their children should marry with the Canaanites, and those the worst sort of them, the Hittites.

It having been the care of Abraham, the father of Isaac that his son should not marry with them, laid a strict injunction on his servant not to take a wife for his son from among them.

This was an example to be followed in later times, and therefore which Esau very likely was not ignorant of.

Besides this, the women themselves he took for wives were very disagreeable on all accounts, partly because of their religion, being idolaters, and partly by reason of their temper and behavior, being proud, haughty, and disobedient.

His action had deliberately ignored the standard set by Abraham for Isaac (24:3; 27:46).

Esau married two heathen women, providing additional evidence of his spiritual dullness (24:3).

This sorrow that Esau brought on his family had several facets to it.

Hebrew men were not to marry out of their faith.

These two women were from the Hittites.

God had forbidden Hebrew men to intermarry with them.

To marry two of them made it doubly bad.

This son was of marrying age (40).

He broke the custom of the Hebrews.

Esau went out on his own and sought wives of his own choosing, not the one his father and mother had chosen for him.

Esau was a rebellious son, who did not like authority.

He would be nothing but grief to his mother.

He was attempting to satisfy his lustful flesh, rather than to wait and marry someone God had chosen for him.

His children would be worldly.

He didn't regard spiritual things very highly, or he would not have sold his birthright for a bowl of soup.

We are looking at a very selfish man, who thought only of himself.

Genesis Chapter 26 Continued Questions

1. When Isaac left Abimelech, where did he go?
2. What does Beer-sheba mean?
3. When did the LORD appear to him?
4. Who did God say He was?
5. What three promises did God make to Isaac?
6. What was this encounter with God for Isaac?
7. What did Isaac do to honor God?
8. What did Isaac move to another location?
9. Who did Abimelech bring with him to meet Isaac?
10. Why was Isaac surprised at their visit?
11. Why did they want an agreement with Isaac?
12. What was Abimelech quick to remind Isaac of?
13. What did Isaac do to show his hospitality?
14. How do they seal the agreement?
15. Name two things water can mean symbolically?
16. Where is Beer-sheba located?
17. How old was Esau, when he took a wife?
18. Who did he marry?
19. What nationality were they?
20. How did this effect Isaac and Rebekah?
21. What was a Hebrew man not to do pertaining to marriage?

22. What custom did Esau break?
23. What would his children be from this type marriage?
24. What did he trade his birthright for?