

Unlocking The Mystery & Treasure Of My Inheritance

Lesson #10 Significant Lessons From The Life Of Isaac

Leaving Mt. Moriah - A Textual Omission? The Missing Person

Genesis 22:19 after the substitutionary offering is complete, immediately we read:

"So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba."

Question: Where's Isaac? Only Abraham and the two young men at the bottom of the hill are listed. Naturally, we infer Isaac also joined them. But that's not what the text says!

Note: It seems Isaac has disappeared and edited out of the record.

Genesis 24, the longest chapter in Genesis, records the story of how a man got his wife.

Note: Only 31 verses are devoted to Creation; 67 verses: How Rebekah became Isaac's wife!

Observation: Another picture or type of Abraham = God The Father; Isaac = The Son

Objective in Genesis 24: Find A Wife For Isaac

I. The Father's Concern & Will - Gen. 24:1-9

Note: Abraham is now 140 years old; Sarah has died; Isaac is 40

Key Point #1. Isaac must have a wife. Only then could God fulfill His covenant promises to bless Abraham with many descendants and give them Canaan for their inheritance. Note: Isaac was the next "living link" in the chain of blessing that culminated in the birth of the Savior.

#2. Abraham sends his servant to find the bride and made him swear to three things.

a. Do Not select a wife for Isaac from the Canaanite women - SEPARATION -Gen. 24:3

b. Choose her from Abraham's relatives [The Father's sons and daughters]

c. Do Not Take Isaac back to Abraham's former home

#3 Clear picture of the Heavenly Father getting a bride for His Son.

#4 Isaac seems to be missing from the time on Mt. Moriah until the bride is sought, found, prepared and ready to meet him at the well of LaHai-Roi [Well of The Living Water] - 2 chapters later. This work was done by the faithful servant of Abraham.

#5 The next major event after Jesus' death and resurrection was the sending of the Holy Spirit to find and prepare a bride for him.

Consider: Isaac appeared absent while his bride was being made ready.

Jesus' Bride is now awaiting being united with her "absent" Lord!

Note: During "this present age," the Holy Spirit is calling people to trust Christ and be "married to ... him." [Rom. 7:4] Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

II. The Witness of the Servant [Type of Holy Spirit] - Gen. 24:10-49

1. The task of finding the bride was given to an unnamed servant who was completely devoted to Abraham [the Father]. He calls him "my master" 19x in this chapter.

2. The servant received his orders from the master and did not change them.

3. The servant knew he would give an account to the master.

Servant Illustrates the Work of The Holy Spirit

1. He did not speak about himself but about Isaac and his great wealth.
2. The Holy Spirit speaks about Jesus Christ and His riches. [John 15:26; 16:13-14]
3. The servant gave tokens of his master's wealth just as the Spirit gives us the "firstfruits" and "down payment" of our spiritual riches in Christ (Eph.1:13-14). The best is yet to come!
4. The servant's job was not to argue or bribe but simply to bear witness to the greatness of his master. He did not force Rebekah to marry Isaac; he merely gave her the facts and the opportunity to make a decision.

Note: It is the place of the Spirit who alone can do the work of conviction in the human heart (John 16:7-11).

III. The Willingness Of The Bride (24:50-60)

1. Her family wanted her to wait at least ten days before leaving home.
2. Just as the servant would not delay in presenting his petition (24:33), so he would not delay in completing his mission.
3. Let Rebekah make the choice, and her reply was, "I will go."
4. This is the decision every sinner must make if he or she is to be "married to Christ."

Consider: What motivated Rebekah to make the right decision?

She heard the word about Isaac and believed it. She saw the proof of his greatness, generosity, and wealth and wanted to belong to him for the rest of her life.

She had never seen Isaac (I Peter 1:8), but what she had heard about him convinced her to go to Canaan with the servant.

"It's nearly 500 miles to where Isaac lives. That's a long trip!" "You may never see your family again!" But she was determined to make the long, difficult journey and become the wife of a man she knew only by hearsay.

"Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Heb. 3:7, 15).

Charles Spurgeon said to his London congregation: "Ten days did not seem too long; but they might have been ten days too late. One day does not seem much; but one day more may be one day too late, and one day too late is to be too late forever; yea, one minute too late is an eternity too late!" (*Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 13, 533)

IV. The Welcome Of The Bridegroom (24:61-67)

1. Scripture does not tell us that Isaac returned with his father from Mount Moriah.
2. This omission suggests the ascension of our Lord: He returned to glory to wait for the time to receive His bride (I Thess. 4:13-18).
3. Isaac was not living with his father at that time but was south of Hebron, getting ready to establish his own home.
4. The two saw each other at a distance, and Rebekah dismounted so she could meet him on foot.
5. It was "eventide" (Gen. 24:63). [When Jesus comes for His church, it will be a time of spiritual darkness (Rom. 13:11-14).] Just as a new day dawned for Rebekah, so also will the coming of Jesus Christ usher in a new day for His people (I Thess. 5:1-11).

6. The servant gave an account of himself to his master's son (Gen. 24:66).
7. When Jesus Christ comes for His church, there will not only be a joyful wedding (Rev. 19:1-9) but also a solemn judgment seat (Rom. 14:10-13; II Cor. 5:9-10) where our works will be examined and rewards given out (I Cor. 3:13-15; 4:1-5).
8. Rebekah had received a few gifts from Isaac, but now that she was his very own, she possessed everything he possessed. Their lives were one. So it is with Christ and His church (Eph. 5:22-33).
9. Rebekah was willing to leave all that she knew, including her home, family and possessions to become Isaac's wife without even seeing him!
10. The greek word for the church is 'ecclesia,' the 'called out' ones. As His bride, the church has been called out of the world and its system to be separated unto Him.
11. Rebekah didn't hesitate to go with Abraham's servant back to Isaac. She was 100% committed to the man she had never seen! Likewise, we have not seen Jesus with our physical eyes, yet spiritually seeing Him we are called without reservation to be His. May we be like Rebekah, giving ourselves wholeheartedly to the one who gave Himself for us.

"Isaac was the ordinary son of a famous father, and the ordinary father of a famous son. Although he lived longer than Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph, Isaac's life is pretty much covered in one chapter whose most exciting feature is some squabbles over some wells. He spent his adult life just moving around in Canaan."

Genesis 26, the only chapter in Genesis devoted exclusively to Isaac, describes a striking parallel in the life of his father Abraham.

Background: Gen. 25:11 And Isaac dwelt at Beer Lahai Roi. [Him that lives and sees me]. Abraham has died. Esau [his favorite] has despised his birthright and involved with the wrong women. There is a famine in the land. God said "stay in the famine." His neighbors [Philistines] were persecuting him and filling his wells with dirt. Let's Dig In!

I. A Reiteration of the Abrahamic Covenant - Gen. 26:1-6

Early in the life of Abraham a famine set in motion a sequence of events which greatly shaped the life of the patriarch. Likewise, a famine occurred early in the record of the life of Isaac: Gen. 16:1 Now there was a famine in the land, besides the previous famine that had occurred in the days of Abraham. So Isaac went to Gerar, to Abimelech king of the Philistines.

Note: Abraham's descendants would be blessed because of their relationship to him; but, like Isaac, each one had to grow in faith and obedience.

[Unbelief tries to get out of the circumstance. Isaac left dwelling at the well that represents the presence of God and His fellowship.]

Note: There is a famine - where - in the Promised Land!

Key Points: #1 God could have provided Isaac with plenty of food.

#2 Trials Are Part Of The Process and the NORMAL experience of God's people.

Isaac did not question, "Why me"? He didn't rebuke the famine in the name of the Lord.

#3 - Sovereign God has always used trials, even with those who are in the center of His will, to drive us to greater dependence on Him.

#4 - If you read the experiences of Adoniram Judson, Hudson Taylor, and others, it helps put your "famine in the land" in perspective.

Consider: What do we do when trials hit? Panic! It would be great to read there was a famine in the land so Isaac sought the Lord. BUT...we read...

a. In an attempt to preserve his wealth and avoid the famine, he went to Gerar to Abimelech, king of the Philistines.

b. He wasn't planning to stop there; heading toward Egypt [familiar?] when God intercepted him.

God appeared to Isaac with words of Instruction and Promise:

Gen. 26:2b-3a Do Not Go Down To Egypt; Dwell In The Land Which I Shall Tell Thee

Of: ³ Sojourn In This Land, [humanly speaking, to stay in Gerar [in the trial] during the famine would be catastrophic] and I will be with you and bless you; [Promise]

Isa. 41:10 Fear not, for I *am* with you; Be not dismayed, for I *am* your God.

I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

God wants to provide for me in the midst of my impossible circumstances. He wants me to trust Him in the midst of my suffering. God will never lead me where His grace can't provide for me.

[Gerar comes from a root word in Hebrew that means 'to bring up the cud' and is used to express the idea of 'rumination.' Ruminant is the picture of scriptural meditation, of pondering and speaking out, over and over, what God has said--until those words become part of the ruminant's heart and are incorporated into his very life.]

Gen. 24:62-63 Now Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi, for he was living in the Negev.

He went out to the field one evening to meditate,

Gen. 3b-5 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; [As far as we know, this is the 1st time God spoke this to Isaac.] because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

This is a thrilling assurance: What God had promised Abraham, He now promised Isaac.

Implied in verse 5 is the necessity for Isaac to believe God's promise, accept it as a personal relationship, and to live obediently, even as his father had.

The first step in Isaac's life of obedience was to remain in Gerar, which he did.

Gen. 26:6 So Isaac DWELT in Gerar. [He was told to SOJOURN.]

II. *A Repetition of Abraham's Sin - Gen.26:7-11*

Again? The same old Sin Of Deception raises its ugly head. Frightened for his own safety, Isaac succumbs to the temptation to pass off his wife as his sister.

The similarities between this sin of Isaac and that of his father Abraham are numerous.

1. Both sinned in the presence of Abimelech. [title such as Pharaoh]
2. Both were rebuked by the ruler of the Philistines.

3. Both had a beautiful wife and feared for their own safety.
4. Both lied by saying that their wife was their sister.

The differences between the sin of Abraham and of Isaac cannot be overlooked.

1. Abraham's policy of deception was established before he entered into any danger (Genesis 12:11-13; 20:13). From the very outset Abraham introduced Sarah as his sister.
2. Isaac, however, waited until he was approached concerning Rebekah. At this point his confidence left him, and he resorted to a lie.
3. God sharply warned Abimelech when he took Sarah; "you are as good as dead"
4. Here Abimelech learned of the deception by observing the conduct of Isaac with Rebekah. He did not treat her like a sister, but like a wife.

Look at the mixture of sin and obedience in Isaac's life. He starts off for Egypt without consulting the Lord who graciously appears to him and tells him not to go any further. He obeys. God reaffirms the covenant and applies it to Isaac. Next, Isaac lies about Rebekah due to fear. Consider: I am not to tolerate my sin, but I am not to despair thinking God cannot use me because I wrestle with sin.

God Cuts To The Root Sin. Deception is sin, and God hates the lying tongue (Prov. 6:17).

a. Lying is a symptomatic sin and not the root sin. God did not smash the red warning light (deception), because He was concerned about getting to the root of the problem.

b. The root sin was unbelief or lack of faith.

c. In each case of deception, Abraham and Isaac lied out of fear (cf. 12:11-13; 20:11; 26:7).

d. This fear was the product of an inadequate concept of God.

They did not believe God could protect them, under any and every circumstance.

e. Having solved the problem of too little faith, the sin of deception is no longer an issue.

Consider: Sometimes we become preoccupied with "symptom sins," rushing about trying to stomp them like roaches. While sin should always be taken seriously, many of our sins will be dealt with by an adequate conception of who God really is.

Note: The fundamental sin is UNBELIEF, for the unsaved and also the saved.

III. Return to the Place of Blessing Gen. 26:12-25

God had promised to guide Isaac [v.2] to the place where he should dwell. God would lead him back to the place of His promise and His presence - mainly by means of Adversity & Opposition.

Staying on in Gerar after Abimelech had confronted him, Isaac harvested a bumper crop:

Gen. 26:12-14 Now Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold.

[A miracle] And the LORD blessed him, and the man became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy; for he had possessions of flocks and herds and a great household, so that the Philistines envied him.

Observation: In spite of Isaac's deception, God poured out His blessings upon him.

1. God's grace is greater than our sin. [Ps. 103:10]

a. Shows that God's covenant promises are based on grace; not on works.

2. While God blessed Isaac materially, the very blessing was also a source of chastening, because it made the Philistines envy Isaac and stop up his wells (26:14-15).

a. This chastening served to move Isaac back toward Beersheba, where God wanted him.

Isaac & The Water Wars: Gen. 26:15-21

Isaac had ordinary hassles with neighboring shepherds over his wells.

Gen. 26:15 Now ALL THE WELLS which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines stopped up by filling them with earth.

Isaac dug them out again as well as some new wells.

Consider: [All the wells] Our children must begin their own journey and come to a personal relationship with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Then they must be allowed to make mistakes so they may come to a more mature faith and trust in the God who has called them.

Digging a well was considered tantamount to a claim of ownership of the land on which it was located. It enabled a man to dwell there and to sustain herds. Rather than recognize this claim, the Philistines sought to wipe it out by filling up the wells dug by Abraham. [These are ours!]

Question: What does all this have to do with the purpose of God? Sounds spiritual; glorious! Isaac spent much time digging out wells the enemy stopped up. Their desire to overthrow all claim on their land was so intense they would rather fill in a well, an asset of great value in such an arid land, than to allow this claim to remain unchallenged.

Truth: The Enemy hates my wells and knows the "living water" is life to me. The enemy will DAILY look for ways to fill in my wells and do anything to stop the flow of God's Spirit in me.

The sentiments of the Philistines were concisely expressed in Abimelech's terse suggestion:

Gen. 26:16 Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we."

Rather than fight for possession of this property, Isaac retreated.

Gen. 26:17-20 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.

Open the Wells: You have to be more determined to open the wells than the devil is to fill them in. If you have a great desire for the "living water," you will have a great determination to dig. One of the main reasons for the lack of power in our lives is our desire isn't great enough to put forth the effort it takes to stay abiding in Him. Satan throws a lot of stuff in the well. If you truly want to live in His Presence, Power, and Victory, you MUST empty your well of everything but God and His Word.

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, [contention] because they quarreled with him.

Well Of Contention First well that must be opened in our walk with God. This is the place where we contend with the enemy; early struggles in our Christian walk. Most days seem to be a battle.

Living for God seems to be a task. Discouragement can weigh us down.

In the midst of this battle, God moves us on to open another well.

Gen. 26:21 Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that *one* also. So he called its name Sitnah. [hatred; root word for Satan; the idea of "*laying in wait to ensnare someone*".]

Well Of Separation This well relates to enmity between us and the world which hates us so we dig a well of separation. We are stepping out with God by faith; away from our comfort zone. Spiritual warfare increases.

Observations:

1. To Isaac these wells were a necessity for survival, but to the Philistines the wells were his claim to the land.
2. Essentially, Isaac refused to stay where there was conflict and hostility.
3. If there had been no hassles in Gerar, he would probably have been content to remain there.
4. Disputes over well ownership FORCED Isaac to move even closer to where God wanted him.
5. The adversity and opposition were divinely ordained and served to guide him to that place.
6. In the process, Isaac chose to keep peace by giving preference to the other party.

Finally a well was dug: Brought No Opposition

Gen. 26:22 And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth [fruitfulness], because he said, "For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

The Well of Room The Lord has enlarged us; He will cause us to be fruitful here. This is a well of maturity; of those who have made it through many struggles. It was at Rehoboth that the Philistines finally left Isaac alone!

"If you will make room for God in your life, God will make room for you." Rehoboth is the place where you get up for another day of struggle, only to find that you have grown to the place where you walk in victory instead of defeat. Instead of the enemy moving you, you have moved the enemy as you walk in the spirit.

Note: You can't get to this place without Esek and Sitnah. Many people never reach this place because they give up or burn out in the struggles of opening wells. Today, keep digging, keep believing God's promises for your life. If you will press on, if you will live by faith, you will arrive at Rehoboth.

It seems verses 23-25 are the key to chapter 26. There is a Significant Change!

Note: Up to this time Isaac's decision as to where he should stay was based upon the finding of abundant water and the absence of hostilities. His circumstances ruled his decisions.

But now, having dug a well that was uncontested, we would have expected Isaac to dwell there. Does he stay there? No! He moved on to Beersheba, with no reason stated for this move:

Gen. 26:23-25 "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.

Key Points: #1 The same night he moved to Beersheba, in the land of promise, God appeared to him [2nd revelation], calmed his fears and reconfirmed the promises made to Abraham.
#2. God had been guiding him back [through adversity and opposition] to the land of promise to those places where Abraham had walked in fellowship with God.
#3. Often, God allows adversity to move us physically to where He wants us to be. [Acts 17:10] He may move us spiritually to "be mature and complete, not lacking anything." [James 1:4]
#4. God used conflict to deepen Isaac's confidence and dependence upon Him. Growing his faith
#5. The decision was the right one, for God immediately spoke words of reassurance:
#6. Isaac's response: Note the order in which Isaac set up residence in Beersheba. Previously, he thought he knew God's will by his circumstances:
Dig a well, find sufficient water and no opposition.
Sequence of events is now reversed: Build an altar, worship, pitch his tent. Last, he dug a well.

Consider: Everyday hassles of life are meant to move us closer to the place God wants us - the place of His blessing. Isaac never built an altar until the Lord got him back to Beersheba. When he got there, he built an altar and called upon the name of the Lord.

Consider: The place for God's people is the place of God's presence. The place of intimacy, worship, and communion with God is the place to abide. There we should dwell, and there we may be assured of God's provision for our needs. Material needs are thus considered last, while spiritual needs are primary. Is this not what our Lord referred to when He said:
Matt. 6:33 But seek first His kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.

Gen.26:26-31 From this point, the blessings and guidance of God are far more evident in his life.
1. Previously, the Philistines attributed his prosperity to just good luck.
2. Now that Isaac's priorities were changed and his life operating along spiritual guidelines, the blessing of God was evident.

Question: Is the sufficiency of God evident in my life in the midst of my circumstances?
There is a process, a long and extensive one, which God employs to bring a person first to Himself and then to maturity. Everyone must begin his relationship at the place of personal relationship with God through acceptance of the covenant He has offered. From this beginning we embark upon a spiritual voyage that is, in many ways, very similar to that of previous saints. If we look back over our lives, I suspect we will be amazed how similar the path has been for us compared to that of others before us.

There Are No Shortcuts In The Sanctification Process.

No Matter How Hard The Struggle, The Reward Is Greater Than The Cost.