

Genesis 26:1-22 God's Faithfulness Through Opposition

I. God Confirms The Promise To Isaac (1-5)

A. Isaac Flees A Famine (1)

1. A Famine Comes To The Land

- a. There is another famine besides the famine in the days of Abraham
- b. Isaac will be faced with many of the same problems and temptations that Abraham faced

2. Isaac Moves To Gerar (Toward Egypt)

- a. Isaac is headed to Egypt just like Abraham did during the first famine
- b. Gerar is on the way toward Egypt at the southern tip of the promised land
 - i. Gerar is Philistine territory
 - ii. Abimelech is probably not the same man whom Abraham dealt with 80 years before
 - iii. Abimelech is a Philistine title ("My Father is King") – much like Pharaoh is an Egyptian title

3. Problems and Trials Are Already Arising For Isaac

B. God Appears To Isaac (2-4)

1. God's Command To Isaac (2-3a)

- a. Don't Go To Egypt (2a)
 - i. God commands Isaac not to go down to Egypt as Abraham did
 - ii. This would be a test of his faith – He must stay and trust God through the famine
- b. Stay Where I Tell You (2b)
- c. Sojourn in This Land (3a)
 - i. He is called to endure the famine among a hostile nation as a "sojourner" – a resident alien
 - ii. A foreigner among the Philistines would not necessarily enjoy the rights and privileges of the native people
 - iii. From a human perspective – this doesn't seem like a very good idea

2. God's Promise of His Presence (3b)

- a. I Will Be With You –
- b. God promises that even in the midst of the trial and uncertainty – His presence to bless will be with Isaac
- c. Isaac is called to trust in God's presence and not to lean on his own understanding

3. God Restates His Promise To Abraham (3c-4)

- a. NOTE: God restates the Abrahamic promise, showing that the covenant with Abraham has passed to Isaac and God will be faithful to the word he has promised

- b. I Will Give You The Land
 - i. Isaac is now the possessor of the land promise
 - ii. Notice that the lands (countries) are plural
 - Isaac is told to settle among these foreign nations because God has promised to give them into his hands
 - c. I Will Fulfill My Word To Abraham
 - i. God will not forget His word to Abraham
 - d. I Will Multiply Your Descendents
 - i. Isaac is now the seed through which the Abrahamic promise will come
 - ii. God restates the promise to Abraham to make his seed as numerous as the stars – Now that line is found in Isaac
 - e. All The Earth Will Be Blessed Through You
 - i. Isaac's line is the line through which the gospel will come
 - ii. Remember Paul applies this promise to the gospel in Gal. 3:8-9
 - C. God Bases His Promise on Abraham's Faithfulness? (5)
 - 1. Did Abraham always obey God perfectly?
 - 2. Did Abraham obey God enough to earn claim on God's Favor?
 - 3. How could God say that Abraham obeyed? (See Gen. 22:18)
 - a. God gives Grace to Obey
 - b. God blesses the obedience He gives
- II. God Protects The Promise Despite Isaac's Sin (6-11)
 - A. Isaac Obeyed God (6)
 - 1. Isaac stayed where God told him
 - 2. Isaac did not continue going into Egypt but settled among the foreign nations in the midst of the famine
 - 3. This took a great deal of faith for Isaac, but....
 - B. Isaac Demonstrates Faithlessness Like Abraham (7-10)
 - 1. Isaac Lies About His Wife (7)
 - a. Isaac falls into the same sin that Abraham did
 - b. Isaac does not trust God in the little things
 - i. He has obeyed God by staying among a foreign people during a famine – believing God will provide
 - ii. But he does not trust God when faced with the prospect of the Philistines taking his wife
 - c. Isaac has definitely been told about Abraham's experience with lying about his wife
 - d. Isaac has a hard time trusting God – even while he was trusting God
 - 2. Isaac's Deception Comes To Light (8-10)
 - a. Abimelech sees Isaac and Rebecca's Love (8)

- i. We don't exactly know what Abimelech saw
 - ii. The Hebrew uses a play on Isaac's name
 - Remember Isaac means laughter
 - It says, "Isaac was 'Isaacing' with Rebecca
 - It could mean "laugh, play, toy with, etc..."
 - iii. Whatever Abimelech saw, it was clear that it wasn't something brothers and sisters do – but only husbands and wives
- b. Abimelech Confronts Isaac (9a)
- c. Isaac Confesses His Fear and His Lie (9b)
- d. Abimelech Scolds Isaac For His Deception (10)
 - i. Once again God's man has put the promise in jeopardy
 - ii. Once again a pagan unbeliever corrects God's man in the area of morality
 - iii. Once again we see that even among the ancient pagans, the marriage bond was a sacred union
 - iv. Do you think Abimelech knew the story of Abraham and the previous Abimelech?
- C. Isaac is Protected By Abimelech's Decree (11)
 - 1. God uses the pagan king to protect His promise
 - 2. Not only does the king decree the protection of the marriage, but of Isaac himself
 - 3. Now all the people of the Philistines knew that Isaac was untouchable
- D. Isaac is probably humbled and shamed as his sin has come to light
- III. God Blesses Isaac Despite The Opposition From Man (12-22)
 - A. God Blesses Isaac's Means (12-14)
 - 1. Isaac Reaps A Great Harvest (12a)
 - a. 100 fold harvest means that his crop was 100x the seed that he sowed
 - b. This would be amazing in any conditions, let alone in the midst of a famine – and in the first year that he planted
 - 2. Isaac is Blessed With Prosperity (12b-14a)
 - B. God Blesses Isaac As The Philistines Oppose Him (14b-22)
 - 1. Isaac is Forced To Leave (14b-18)
 - a. Isaac is Envied By The Philistines (14b)
 - i. People always envy and oppose those under the blessing of God
 - ii. Everyone else is experiencing famine and Isaac is prospering
 - b. Isaac's Prosperity Leads To His Expulsion (15-16)
 - i. Narrator's note: Abraham's wells had been filled in by the Philistines
 - Isaac is going to be forced to leave

- He will not be able to rely on the wells Abraham dug – He will have to re-dig them
 - This is also unfair because a son would have a rightful claim over the wells possessed by his father
 - ii. Remember water was scarce and precious – there was a famine going on
 - iii. Abimelech Tells Isaac to Leave Gerar
 - They fear Isaac's prosperity and growth
 - A foreigner growing among them (as they are in the midst of famine) meant that he would become a threat
 - c. Isaac Settles In A Nearby Valley (17)
 - i. He leaves Gerar and settles in the valley nearby Gerar -
 - d. Isaac Must Re-dig Abraham's Wells (18)
 - i. He reopens the wells of Abraham
 - ii. He gives the wells the same names his father did
 - By doing this, he is staking his claim on them
 - By right, the son inherited the property of his father
2. Isaac Continues To Move Further From Gerar (19-22)
- a. Isaac continues to be pushed further and further out by the Philistines
 - b. Isaac's Wells Are Claimed By The Philistines (19-21)
 - i. The Well Named Esek Is Disputed (19-20)
 - Isaac's men find an underground spring ("a well of living water")
 - In a famine, finding this would have been like finding gold
 - The Philistines lay claim on Isaac's well
 - Isaac names the well "Esek" (Contention) and moves on to dig another
 - Isaac trusts that God will supply his needs even though he is faced with opposition
 - ii. The Well Named Sitnah is Disputed (21)
 - Again, Isaac finds a well and the Philistines lay claim to it
 - He names the well Sitnah (hatred or hostility)
 - Isaac is being pushed further and further away from the people – It should be getting harder and harder to survive – but Isaac keeps finding water!

- c. Isaac Finally Finds An Undisputed Place (22)
 - i. Isaac finds water far enough away that the Philistines don't dispute his claim
 - ii. He names the well Rehoboth (room) because God has made room for them
 - Notice that he doesn't focus on the fact that the Philistines have pushed him farther and farther out
 - He says that God has made room for them
 - iii. He trusts that even during famine – even under the unfair persecution of the Philistines – God will make them fruitful according to His promise.