

Genesis 26:23-33 The Promise of God's Presence

I. God's People Have The Promise Of His Presence (23-25)

A. Isaac Moves To Beersheba (23)

1. Why Does Isaac Move from Rehoboth to Beersheba?
2. Is Isaac Moving Because of Abraham's History there (Back to His Heritage?)
 - a. Remember, this is the place Abraham made an agreement with Abimelech for rights to a well (See 21:22-31)
 - i. Beersheba means "well of the oath" or "well of swearing"
 - ii. Does he move because this well is protected by the oath?
 - b. This is where Abraham planted a Tamarisk tree (i.e. a grove) and "called upon the name of the Lord"

B. Isaac Is Reassured of God's Presence (24)

1. God Declares His Identity (24a)

- a. "I am the God of Your Father Abraham"
 - i. Isaac's trust must be based on the Unchanging God
 - ii. God invokes the name of Abraham to show that He is the promise keeping God – the God who made a covenant with Abraham
- b. God's Nature and Identity gives us Assurance of What He Will Do.
 - i. He is the God who was with Abraham
 - ii. God had been faithful to Abraham every step of His life – God had fulfilled his word to Abraham, and made promises for Abraham's seed
 - iii. By pointing to God's past with Abraham, He is giving assurance that He is the same today for Isaac

2. God Promises His Presence (24b)

a. God Commands Isaac Not to Fear

- i. Remember, Isaac is in the midst of opposition. He has been pushed further and further away by the Philistines in the midst of a famine
- ii. He has prospered every step of the way – God has protected Him through it all
- iii. If he were to look back at God's hand upon him, he really doesn't have any reason to be afraid – but evidently he is because God tells him not to be.
 - Maybe the "what ifs" are getting to him

- Maybe he is worried about things that haven't happened yet
 - What if the famine overtakes us? What if the Philistines come to claim this land?
 - What else might Isaac be afraid of?
 - b. God Gives The Reason Isaac Should Not Fear
 - i. Because "I am with you" (Earlier in this chapter God promised "I will be with you.")
 - ii. The presence of God to bless is with Isaac, meaning He will bless, protect, and fulfill His promises to Isaac.
 - Reminds us of New Testament passages that tell us God is "for us" through Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:31, Heb. 13:5)
 - Today, the believer has assurance that God's presence (i.e. protection, watch-care) is always with us –
 - This doesn't mean there will never be suffering or trial – it means that all things work together for our good
 - iii. Bearing the promise and presence of God is a comfort and a peace to the soul
 - This is the reason why fear doesn't even make sense
 - If Isaac trusts in God's provision and promise, what is there to fear?
- 3. God Promises To Bless Isaac and Descendents (24c)
 - a. God Reminds Isaac of the Promise that Has passed to Him
 - i. God promised to bless Isaac
 - ii. God promises to multiply Isaac's descendents
 - iii. God's promise (the promise made to Abraham) now belongs to Isaac
 - b. God is Powerful Enough To Bring His Promise To Pass
 - i. He has already proven that He is working in Isaac's life
 - ii. He has already shown Himself faithful
- C. Isaac Trusts The Word of Promise (25)
 - 1. He Builds An Altar
 - a. Just like Abraham did after God spoke to him in Gen. 13:14-18, when God promised him the land
 - b. The altar is for worship and for proclaiming that Yahweh is God alone
 - c. The altar is also a marker showing that God's promise to give the land to Isaac will be fulfilled
 - 2. He Pitched His Tent

- a. He determines that he will put down his residence here
 - b. He will not be going to Egypt or moving her and there anymore
 - c. God has given his promise and Isaac decides that no matter what happens, they are staying right there
 - 3. He Dug a Well
 - a. This would be the first order of business. Water is life in the Middle East
 - b. There is no mention of difficulty in finding water or any contention over the well's ownership
 - c. They dug a well and this is where they will stay
- II. God's Presence Is Evident To The World (26-29)
- A. Philistine Leaders Come To Isaac (26)
 - 1. Abimelech the Philistine king, his top adviser, and the commander of his army show up at Isaac's camp
 - a. What would be the first thing you would think?
 - b. Are they coming to take another well from me?
 - c. These are the top leaders of the Philistines, are they coming to declare war?
 - d. Are they coming to tell me to leave?
 - 2. They Definitely Represent the Whole Philistine Nation who have been pushing Isaac off His wells
 - B. Philistines Are Questioned By Isaac (27)
 - 1. Isaac Speaks Without Fear
 - a. Isaac speaks with a hint of sarcasm
 - b. Isaac sounds like a man who has trusted in God's words "do not be afraid"
 - c. He does not greet them with pleasantries due a royal visit
 - d. He demands that they explain the reason for their visit
 - 2. Isaac Sounds Like A Man Who Has Reached His Limit
 - a. He knows that God is with Him, so he is not afraid of what these men can do
 - b. He knows that God has promised him a multitude of descendents
 - c. He has decided he is not going anywhere – they are not going to move him and he is not going to be their servant
 - C. Philistines Recognize God's Presence With Isaac (28a & 29b)
 - 1. They see That God is With Him (28a)
 - a. It has been clear to them that God has blessed Isaac through the famine and the persecution
 - b. The more they Philistines push, the more God provides for Isaac
 - i. The nations experience famine and everywhere Isaac goes he finds water

- ii. They come to realize they cannot stand against God!
- 2. They Recognize Isaac's Standing (29b)
 - a. They recognize Isaac as "the blessed of the Lord"
 - b. The world sees the blessing of God's presence with His people
 - i. This is not just about material or financial blessings
 - ii. This is not talking about the absence of suffering in this life
 - Remember Isaac has had his share of failures and sufferings
 - 20 years he prayed for a child and went childless
 - iii. This is not talking about a life of ease
 - Notice that Isaac is not sitting back in his easy chair
 - Isaac has had to re-dig wells and start over when they move him
 - There is much work and toil that goes into all that but God blesses his labors
 - iv. The Philistines see that God's blessing and presence cannot be hindered with suffering, trial, or persecution.

D. Philistines Desire To Make a Covenant With Isaac (28b-29a)

- 1. They Seek For Terms Of Peace (28b)
- 2. They Lay Out The Terms Of The Covenant (29a)
 - a. The Philistines want Isaac to promise not to hurt them
 - i. Evidently they are afraid that Isaac will be vindictive about being pushed away from his wells
 - ii. They worry that God's blessing will make Isaac powerful and he will attack them
 - b. The Philistines ask for the same treatment they have given
 - i. "and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace:"
 - ii. Have the Philistines done nothing but good to Isaac?

III. God's Presence Is Constant With His People (30-33)

A. Isaac Makes The Covenant With The Philistines (30-31)

- 1. NOTE: This section looks a lot like Abraham's oath with Abimelech in (21:22-24)
- 2. Isaac makes a covenant feast (31a)
- 3. Isaac and Philistines exchange oaths (31b)
 - a. Isaac makes the covenant of peace

- b. Isaac promises to do only good to the Philistines
 - 4. Isaac send the Philistines away in peace (31c)
 - a. Now it is Isaac sending away the Philistines rather than Abimelech sending Isaac away as in (26:16)
- B. God Is With Isaac Even After Peace In The Land is Made (32-33)
 - 1. Isaac's Servants Dig a Well There (32)
 - a. On that same day, the well was dug
 - b. God's blessing isn't only a reality when times are tough
 - c. Now Isaac is at peace with all the people of the land, and yet God continues to pour out His provision and blessing to Him
 - 2. Isaac Calls The Place Beersheba (33)
 - a. Just like Abraham, he names the place Beersheba
 - b. The well of the oath – He commemorates the place of God's blessing and presence.