

We have witnessed the death of Abraham and the death of the relationship between the twin brothers, Jacob and Esau. Isaac has returned to Beer Lahai Roi where he lived before.

(see Maps)

Chapter 26 is the only chapter that is dedicated to Isaac and Rebekah other than the last 2 verses. It's strange because not much is said about them other than what we may glean from two events: **a famine and a covenant.**

Genesis 26:1-35 NKJV There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in **Gerar**.

The famine is again plaguing the area and Isaac decide to pack up the family and all he had and head to Gerar. **(see Maps)**. He went to see the King, presumably to ask for permission to settle there during the famine and possibly, to ask for help.

We learn right away that all the help Isaac needs comes from the LORD!

(2) Then the LORD **appeared** to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. **(3)** Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; 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;** **(5)** because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

The timing of the LORD is perfect. With mankind, not so. Abraham's descendants were going to be slaves in Egypt but not now. There was still much work to do to prepare this family for what lay ahead. Sometimes the situation requires a visitation of the LORD. So, like his father before him, Isaac comes face-to-face with his LORD God Almighty. This is Isaac's first encounter! The LORD is adamant that Isaac stays in the land! The promises regarding the land are re-iterated especially the promise of one of his seed that will **bless** "all the nations of the

earth"! It says that these promises and blessings are "because Abraham obeyed" God's voice and kept His commandments. But we have read that Abraham wasn't always obedient so how is this contradiction resolved? Simple: Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him as righteousness. God, from that moment on, saw this man through the lens of His Son, the Promised Seed. His Son's obedience was Abraham's obedience. Sounds strange but we are seen the same way! In Christ, we are complete, we are righteous, we are sanctified, and we are justified. So, the hidden truth is that while Abraham is said to have been obedient, God judged him according to the obedience and faithfulness of His Son!

(6) So Isaac dwelt in Gerar. (7) And the men of the place asked about his wife. And he said, "She *is* my sister"; for he was afraid to say, "*She is my wife,*" *because he thought,* "lest the men of the place kill me for Rebekah, because she *is* beautiful to behold." (8) Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked through a window, and saw, and there was Isaac, showing endearment to Rebekah his wife. (9) Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, "Quite obviously she *is* your wife; so how could you say, 'She *is* my sister'?" Isaac said to him, "Because I said, 'Lest I die on account of her.'" (10) And Abimelech said, "What *is* this you have done to us? One of the people might soon have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us." (11) So Abimelech charged all *his* people, saying, "He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."

So, having the assurances of blessing and prosperity, Isaac resides in Gerar. Now, for some crazy reason, he repeats the same nonsense his father did years before. Rebekah is called his sister because he was afraid that the Philistines would kill **him** if she were known as his wife. Abimelech sees them acting very affectionately towards each other and knows that she is not Isaac's sister! He blames Isaac and charges his entire people to not approach them or touch them else they would be put to death.

Once again, a pagan king (not the same one as Abraham tried to scam), showed more moral strength than this man of God. But then again, I believe that it was God's hand upon this man to

move in favor of Isaac and Rebekah!

(12) Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him. (13) The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; (14) for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. **So the Philistines envied him.** (15) Now the Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, and they had filled them with earth. (16) And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we."

The LORD prospers Isaac so much that the Philistines begin to envy Isaac. Their envy turned to fear, and Abimelech asks Isaac to leave Gerar. The Philistines were also making Isaac's life a bit uncomfortable by filling in the wells that Abraham dug.

(17) 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. (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 (***strife***), because they quarreled with him. (21) Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that *one* also. So he called its name Sitnah (***opposition***). (22) And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name **Rehoboth** (*wide avenue*), because he said, "**For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.**"

(see Map)

Isaac leaves Gerar and heads to the neighboring valley. Once again re re-digs the wells that belonged to his father. But the use of the wells was short-lived because the Philistines kept claiming them for their own. Isaac kept moving until he dug a well that the Philistines of Gerar did not claim. This was about 20 miles or so south of Gerar. Isaac gives God the glory for giving him such a wonderful place where there was enough

room to be very fruitful.

(23) 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.

For some unknown reasons, Isaac heads north to Beersheba. Perhaps it was because he was born there. Perhaps it felt like "home" because of the ties to his father and mother. Whatever the reason, **the LORD appears to him again!** Based on what He tells Isaac, I suspect there was some fear looming in the heart of Isaac. He comforts him with the truth of His presence: "I am with you".

It's important to know this without a shadow of doubt! The LORD said something very similar 7 different times. I'll give you 1:

Deuteronomy 31:6 NKJV Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He *is* the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."

(26) Then **Abimelech** came to him from Gerar with **Ahuzzath**, one of his friends, and **Phichol** the commander of his army. (27) And Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?" (28) But they said, "We have certainly seen that the LORD is with you. So we said, 'Let there now be an oath between us, between you and us; and let us make a covenant with you, (29) **that you will do us no harm, since we have not touched you, and since we have done nothing to you but good and have sent you away in peace. You *are* now the blessed of the LORD.**' " (30) So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. (31) Then they arose early in the morning and swore an oath with one another; and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace. (32) It came to pass the same day that Isaac's servants came and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, "We have found water." (33) So he called it

Shebah. Therefore the name of the city *is* Beersheba to this day

Isaac's success and wealth are scaring his neighbors. However, their acts of stopping up the wells so that Isaac could not properly tend his many flocks and herds did not stop the blessings from coming! I suspect that Isaac had no thoughts of conquest at all. He was content with what the LORD had blessed him. The Philistines feared this man, so they wanted to make a covenant of peace with him. Their own assessment of their past behavior wasn't totally true. Yes, they didn't touch him, but they didn't send him away in peace! Isaac left because of the harassment over the wells he dug. But a treaty was signed.

As if it were a sign of God's acceptance, a new well was discovered. Isaac calls it 'Sheba' and the writer says, 'the name of the city *is* Beersheba to this day'. It appears that Isaac thought that this was the same well that belonged to Abraham when he too made a covenant with the Philistines.

(34) When Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the **Hittite**, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. (35) And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah.

Esau hasn't gotten over the situation with his birthright. Perhaps after his hunger was satisfied, he started to have doubts about what he had done. Or this could have simply been a case of not caring what his parents thought because surely if they had been consulted, they would have tried to persuade him to marry "within the family".

One thing is certain, their daughters-in-law caused a bitterness to grow in their spirits (grief = bitterness (as in moror) and (mind = Ruach (as in Spirit).

So, what have we learned about this quiet couple? Rebekah we actually don't know much about other than she was a shepherdess. We don't know when she died or how old she was. She was buried with Isaac in the family cave.

Isaac isn't a fighter. When confronted, he simply moved on even though his neighbors thought that he could be much trouble. He appears to be a godly man but we know he resorted to the same lie that his father used when he moved near the Philistines. But, as we will see in the next chapter, there's a blind spot when it came to Esau.

Genesis 27:1-46 NKJV Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son." And he answered him, "Here I am." (2) Then he said, "Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death. (3) Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. (4) And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring *it* to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die."

Isaac is about 137 years old now. He's blind and fears that his final days are upon him. Therefore, his blessing needs to be given to the first-born. It is hard to believe that Isaac was not aware of Esau selling his birth-right to his brother. Isaac always favored Esau and allowed that to influence his decision to bless him instead of Jacob. What should have been a family right-of-passage became secretive and just between father and son.

(5) Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring *it*. (6) So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, "Indeed I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying, (7) 'Bring me game and make savory food for me, that I may eat it **and bless you in the presence of the LORD before my death.**' (8) Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you. (9) Go now to the flock and bring me from there two choice kids of the goats, and I will make savory food from them for your father, such as he loves. (10) Then you shall take *it* to your father, that he may eat *it*, and that he may bless you before his death."

Now Rebekah gets in line for 'deceiver of the year'! Just as Isaac felt justified in his choice of Esau, Rebekah also feels justified in hers: after all the LORD told her that the older (and perhaps the stronger) will serve the younger! So, she concocts a plan to deceive her husband who is blind and a bit feeble.

(11) And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Look, Esau my brother *is* a hairy man, and I *am* a smooth-skinned man. (12) Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing." (13) But his mother said to him, "Let your curse *be* on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get *them* for me."

Jacob is obviously sold on the idea but wants to make sure that the deception will work! His mother makes a very bold statement about bring a curse upon herself for this escapade.

(14) And he went and got *them* and brought *them* to his mother, and his mother made savory food, such as his father loved. (15) Then Rebekah took the choice clothes of her elder son Esau, which *were* with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. (16) And she put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. (17) Then she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

Rebekah had Esau's "Sunday's best" with her. I suspect she kept them from Esau because they were the clothes that symbolized his position in the family, much like the 'coat of many colors' did for Joseph.

Jacob, now having hairy skins on his arms and neck, take the stew to his father.

(18) So he went to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who *are* you, my son?" (19) Jacob said to his father, "I *am* Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me." (20) But Isaac said to his son, "How *is it* that you have found *it* so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because the LORD your God brought *it* to me." (21) Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you *are* really my son Esau or not." (22) So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "**The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.**" (23) And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. (24) Then he said, "Are you really my son Esau?" He said, "I *am*." (25) He said, "Bring *it* near to me, and I will eat of my son's game, so that my soul may bless you." So he

brought *it* near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank.

Jacob comes and when questioned by his father, he lies thru his teeth! It's amazing how persistent lies affect someone's judgment!

(26) Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near now and kiss me, my son." (27) And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him and said: "Surely, the smell of my son *Is* like the smell of a field Which the LORD has blessed. (28) Therefore may God give you Of the dew of heaven, Of the fatness of the earth, And plenty of grain and wine. (29) Let peoples serve you, And nations bow down to you. Be master over your **brethren**, And let your **mother's sons** bow down to you. Cursed *be* everyone who curses you, And blessed *be* those who bless you!"

Isaac is still unsure but proceeds with the blessing that was for Esau. The blessing was tailor made for the one chosen by God. Isaac just didn't know it. BTW: "Mother's sons" isn't for other children of Rebekah but rather for her grandchildren. Isaac, through the Holy Spirit also repeats the blessing given to Abraham:

Genesis 12:3 NKJV I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

We will finish up this tale of deception next week. First of all, we cannot not pin this all on Jacob! In actuality, all 4 members of this family are guilty. They are guilty of lying, cheating, deceiving each other. But, worst, they are guilty of **pride**. **They all think they know better than God!**

1. Isaac respects Esau more than Jacob. He's a hunter and a man's-man. He was the first born and regardless of what Jacob did, or even what Rebekah told him about God's plan, he knew that he just had to bless his son. So, instead of a family celebration over the blessing of the first-born, Isaac plans to do it in secret with just Esau present.
2. Esau is certainly willing to go along with the deception as long as he gets what he deserves. After all, Jacob withheld life-

- saving food from him until he gave up his birth-right.
3. Rebekah, overhearing the conversation with Isaac and Esau, builds an elaborate scheme to fool the blind Isaac into blessing Jacob. She's even willing to take on a curse if that what it takes. I suppose she's thinking that the LORD is obligated to show her mercy since it was His will that Jacob be the recipient of the birth-right and blessing.
 4. Jacob willingly goes along for the ride. He's more worried about the schemes of Rebekah **succeeding** than he is about the lying and deceptions he would do.

So, Isaac wants what he thinks he wants; Esau wants what he thinks he deserves; Rebekah doesn't trust God enough to stay out of it and Jacob idea of success is "putting one over on the old man without getting caught".

And all of this is so unnecessary!!! All of this and more next week didn't change God's plan of the older serving the younger. But it must have caused pain, bitterness, anger, distrust and as we will see next week, it caused the family to separate more than they needed to. Had they just been obedient to God's plan and left it all up to Him, they would have saved themselves much grief.

I could easily excuse all of this as a matter of their fallen natures and flesh. But could any of **us** really stand face to face with God and tell Him that it's all Adam and Eve's fault? Oh, you could try....but it won't work. There's only one way. Look Him in the eye and say, "I trust in the completed work of Jesus the Christ, the Son of Man, the Son of God".

Let's continue this discussion next week!