

Lesson: There is Room for the Promise (Gen 25:19-26:35)

The narrative continues after the death of Abraham with some scenes from Isaac’s life. The Genesis narrative is not as extensive in detail about Isaac’s life as it was about Abraham and Jacob’s. But Isaac serves his purpose as a carrier of the promise. One of the keys to studying Isaac is recognizing the narrative connection to Abraham. Their lives mirror each other. God proves his faithfulness to his promises in caring for Isaac and his family as he lays the foundation for the fulfillment of his promises to the whole world.

Biblical Takeaways

1. ***The two nations (Gen 25:19-28)***

- a. Like Sarah, Rebekah was having difficulties getting pregnant. Isaac prayed on her behalf and she conceived.
- b. Rebekah felt a war in her womb. She conceived twins and they were seemingly fighting each other. God spoke to her to explain that from these *twins* two different nations would emerge. In other words, nation would not be defined by family origin but by promise. The elder son would traditionally receive the biggest inheritance but God chose the younger. Such is the case throughout Scripture like Moses and David who were not firstborn.
- c. Esau was red and hairy while Jacob was not. The meaning of Esau’s name is uncertain in Heb but Jacob means heel grabber or trickster because he grabbed his brother’s heel at birth. This name, initially, may have been playful but it will be prophetic. Isaac loved Esau because of his hunting skill and Rebekah loved Jacob. Beware of favoritism, it only breeds division and confusion.

2. ***Never sell your Birthright (Gen 25:29-34)***: Esau did not care for his birthright, the right of the firstborn to receive more was practiced in ancient cultures. So, when he found himself famished after a day of hunting, he sold it to his brother for a bowl of food. Never sell a valuable eternal gift for a cheap temporary one.

3. ***Faithfulness in a famine (Gen 26:1-5)***: God challenged Isaac in the face of a famine in the land of Canaan to remain there. He was tempted to leave and go to Egypt, as Abraham had done, but God told him he would keep him during the famine. The obedience of Abraham prepared the way for God’s promises to be fulfilled in Isaac; he only needed to stay where the promises could flourish.

4. ***Like father like son (Gen 26:6-16)***

- a. Like Abraham, Isaac dealt with Abimelech (may not be the same one) and lied about his wife as his sister (20:2-3). God did not have to speak in revelation this time. Abimelech made sure she was protected.
- b. Like Abraham, Isaac settled in Gerar. During the famine year, he sowed seed and reaped hundredfold. He became wealthier than he already was and was sent away by Abimelech because he was “too powerful.” The envy of others has little tolerance for God’s blessings in our lives.

5. ***God is the Well (Gen 26:17-33)***

- a. Isaac tried to dig the same wells his father had once dug since they were stopped up by the Philistines of Gerar. And where Isaac tried to dig, he found fresh water. Fresh water was at a

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premium in these desert places and most water was contaminated. When he found a well with water, the Philistines would come and take it. One well was he called Esek (contention), the other Sitnah (enmity). But he kept digging because God made him a promise and proved himself faithful. He eventually dug a well he called Rehoboth (Room/Space). Since God was his well, he would always find enough space for a well. He traveled from Gerar to Beersheba and there God met him as he had met him earlier. And God assured him of his blessing on him and his offspring. God will give us words of assurance during times of fear. God’s assurance demanded worship, there Isaac built God an altar and they built another well there.

- b. Abimelech could not ignore the blessings of the Lord on Isaac so he came and made an oath and a covenant with him. God will make enemies recognize the truth of what he is doing in our lives. While they celebrated the covenant they made together, they found out the well where Isaac worshipped had water, too. There is never a place where God is where there will not be refreshing water. They called the well Shibah (oath). This did not just signify the oath of Abimelech but God’s oath.
6. ***Esau’s rebellious nature (26:34-35)***: Esau’s disdain for his birthright was evident in his choice of wives. He married women of whom his mother and father disapproved.