



Isaac's Life

Genesis 26

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Begin with prayer

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Dear God,

Thank You for Isaac's example of patience, obedience, and trust in Your faithfulness. As we study Your Word, help us trust Your timing, walk in obedience, and rest in Your promises through every season. Shape our hearts to reflect Your peace and follow You faithfully.

Amen.



More About Isaac's Life



Genesis 26

The Lord called men like Abraham, Jacob, and David, who were assertive and men of action. But God also called Isaac, whose great message for us is about patience.

While their twin boys grew up, Isaac and Rebekah had their own journey with God. During one season, Israel was experiencing a famine, just like the one Isaac's father Abraham experienced when he and Lot took off for Egypt.

But God told Isaac specifically **not to go to Egypt**. Why did God tell him that? Because **if he hadn't**, it would have been **"like father, like son."** **There was no generation gap of sin. It just flows right from one generation to the other.** Generally, the son makes very much the same mistakes that the father did, unless God intervenes. And so God did. **He gave Isaac definite instructions on how to survive the famine, and He confirmed the covenant He had made with his father, Abraham.**

God says to Isaac, **"Don't leave this land; don't go down to Egypt. I want to confirm with you the covenant which I made with Abraham."**

And He repeated the three-fold promise about:

1. **The land** - "for to you and your descendants I give all these lands,"
2. **The nation** - "I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven,"
3. **The blessing** - "and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" (see Genesis 26:3-5).

God did this because Abraham **obeyed His voice and kept His commandments**. **When God told Abraham something, he believed God and acted upon it. He demonstrated his faith by action. Faith is something that you step out on.** Abraham **believed God**, and God **counted** it to him for righteousness. God is now **telling Isaac** that He **wants him to be that same kind of man**.



Like Father, Like Son

Abraham and Isaac both lived in the southern part of the land of Israel. Isaac obeyed God and didn't go to Egypt, but he did move his family south to Gerar.

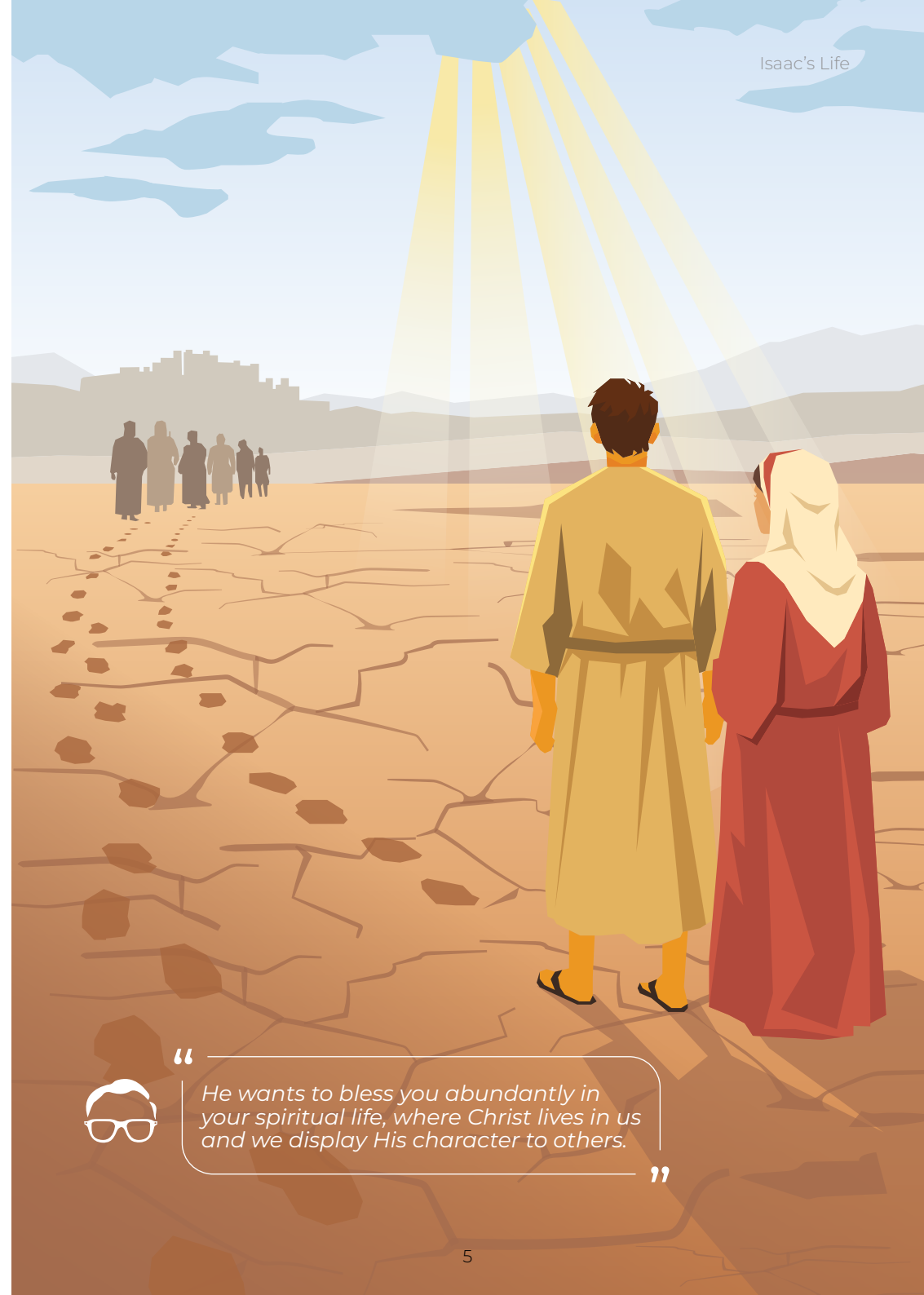
It didn't take long before the men in Gerar were eyeing beautiful Rebekah. **Isaac is afraid they will kill him to take her, so he repeats the sin of his father and says, "She is my sister."** The difference between Abraham's and Isaac's sins is that **Abraham told half a lie and Isaac told a whole lie. But their secret is found out.** After they had been there a while, the king of the Philistines, Abimelech, **saw Isaac showing affection to Rebekah. He knew right away that they were married and not siblings.**

"Why did you put us at this horrible risk?" Abimelech demanded. **"We could have taken her by accident."** Then Abimelech **put a protective ban around Isaac and Rebekah and forbade anyone from touching them.** Abimelech became a good friend of Isaac's. **Isaac had the respect of the community just as his father Abraham had earned.**

The Lord Blessed Isaac

Isaac thrived in Gerar because God blessed him. His crops were bountiful, and so was his reputation. He was enjoying an earthly blessing. **God made good on His promise of blessing as they walked in fellowship with Him. God promises us not that blessing, but spiritual blessings in Christ (Ephesians 1: 1-14).** That is our portion today, depending on our walk with God. If you will permit Him, **He wants to bless you abundantly in your spiritual life, where Christ lives in us and we display His character to others.**

Isaac's field brought forth a hundredfold. His life is as outstanding as his father's. And it's appropriate that we link their lives together. Isaac's birth and his life is interwoven with Abraham's experiences.



“He wants to bless you abundantly in your spiritual life, where Christ lives in us and we display His character to others.”

Although Isaac was important when he was offered there upon the altar, again it was Abraham and Isaac together.

Their experiences together are offered as examples to us. This also presents a wonderful picture of the intimacy between the Lord Jesus Christ and the Father. Jesus said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). And in the high priestly prayer of Jesus, He said, “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do” (John 17:4). Also, He said, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working” (John 5:17). Therefore, it is very appropriate that the story of Isaac and the story of Abraham be told together.

Isaac And His Wells

Now Isaac stands on his own two feet up against the Philistines and it doesn't go too well. The Philistines are jealous of Isaac's prosperity, so they start to sabotage his efforts. Abraham had dug many wells in this land to water his herds, but the Philistines were filling them in. (This conflict with them continued to escalate into David's time.)

Abimelech told Isaac, “You're causing difficulty for us, and it would be better if you left.” The water was causing conflict among the shepherds. Isaac's men would dig a well, and they would take it away from him. He'd move up, dig another one, and they would take that away from him. He would just keep moving up.

Isaac was quite a patient man of peace! At one point, he called a well, “the Lord has made room for us” for them both to be fruitful in the land.



“

Isaac was quite a patient man of peace!

”

God Visits With Isaac

Finally, Isaac moves further south to Beersheba, and it was there that the Lord appeared to him to comfort him. (God appears to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Isaac's son, Jacob.) His decision to move out of Philistine territory must have pleased God.

“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.’” (Genesis 26:24)

And on that spot, Isaac built an altar and called on God's name. His servants also dug a well. (You can always put a well down next to Isaac. And you can put an altar down next to Abraham. As we'll see later on, you can put a tent down next to Jacob.)



Isaac's Faith In God Impressed His Neighbors

Soon they had an official visit from their old friend Abimelech of Gerar, accompanied by his advisor and the commander of his army, who **testified to God's blessing on Isaac** and gave God glory (v. 28-29). Isaac asked, "Why are you here, since you sent me away?"

They were afraid that Isaac might attack them, so they proposed a treaty. They said, "Let there now be an oath between us, between you and us; and let us make a covenant with you, 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" (Genesis 26:28-29).

So Isaac and Abimelech **made a treaty of mutual non-aggression** and sealed it with a meal, **"a feast" that Isaac prepared for his treaty partners.** Eating together was often a sacred rite in the ancient Near East that sealed an agreement.

Although Isaac seems weak like a pacifist, in his dealings with the men of Gerar, his life and honorable faith in God impressed his neighbors. **Isaac's strength presented in a different way than expected.**

Esau Deliberately Sinned Against God and His Parents

We then learn that **Esau, his son (now 40), married two Canaanite girls from the Hittite tribe.** Of course, this tribe was under God's curse. But **Esau didn't care about the special calling** God had on his family, and instead **wanted to establish himself as a great man of the world.** This decision grieved Isaac and Rebekah.



God's Eternal Truths

Relevant to us from Genesis 26

1

Sin has a generational impact, but God provides the breakthrough. Isaac repeated Abraham's sin by lying out of fear and claiming his wife Rebekah was his sister. Sin flows naturally from one generation to the next unless **God intervenes = Christ's paying the penalty for our sins** gives us the breakthrough from the generation of sin, and this truth gives us the freedom to live in the newness of life. *(1 Peter 1:18-19; 2 Corinthians 5:17)*

2

Fellowship with God leads to spiritual blessings. As Isaac walked in fellowship with God, God fulfilled His promises and blessed him abundantly. For believers today, **the eternal truth is that God desires to pour out abundant spiritual blessings in Christ upon us, which is the Christ-like character we will live out in our daily walk with Him, enjoying His fellowship.** *(Ephesians 1:1-14)*

3

Patience and peace-making are powerful witnesses to the world. When the Philistines grew jealous and maliciously filled in Isaac's wells, Isaac did not retaliate. **He showed great patience and peace by simply moving on and digging new wells to avoid conflict.** This non-aggressive strength and honorable faith ultimately impressed his enemies, leading them to acknowledge that Isaac was blessed by the Lord and to seek a peace treaty with him. *(Romans 12:17-21; 1 Peter 2:23)*



Reflection Questions

Question 1

What negative family patterns or "generations of sin" (such as Isaac repeating his father's exact lie out of fear) do I need God's intervention to break in my own life?

Question 2

What are you doing to enjoy the spiritual blessings in Christ, living out of Christ's righteousness, holiness, and experiencing the fruit of the Spirit?

Question 3

When faced with jealousy, hostility, or unfairness, like the Philistines maliciously filling in Isaac's wells, do I instinctively retaliate, or do I choose the path of peace and patiently move on?



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