

GENESIS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Genesis chapter 26 as we continue our study through the Word of God. In our last study we saw Isaac marry Rebekah, the death of Abraham and the birth of Jacob and Esau. This evening, as we begin our study in Genesis chapter 26, we will see God test the faith of Isaac. Now, how do we know if he passed the test? Simply, in his obedience to the Lord, for if he did not obey the Lord, then he did not trust the Lord. It is as Peter said in I Peter 1:6-7, **“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”** With that as our background, let’s begin reading in Genesis chapter 26, starting in verse 1 and let’s see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study His Word.

GENESIS 26

VERSES 1-5

1. Here we see a second famine in the Scriptures. The first involved Abraham back in Genesis chapter 20 and he did not do well with that test, he lied to Abimelech saying that Sarah was his sister and not his wife. Now his son Isaac is experiencing a famine and probably the son of Abimelech in Genesis chapter 20 is also involved, since this is some 90 years from the previous famine. It can be the same man, but I doubt it.

2. When trouble comes, instead of seeking the Lord, instead of praying and bringing this before the Lord, he goes to the world for help; he goes to Gerar and seeks Abimelech king of the Philistines. Folks, this not only happens when you are in physical need, but also many times when you have a famine of the soul and you run to the world to satisfy those needs instead of the Lord. Paul said in Philippians, **“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. . . . And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”** Philippians 4:13, 19. Do you believe it?

3. Gerar is almost halfway to Egypt and before Isaac goes any further the Lord steps in and tells him not to go to Egypt, don't go all the way into the world for help. You see, God wants Isaac to dwell in the land where He is at, but not to establish himself here in Gerar but be more of a guest; this was not to be his home. And the covenant that God made with Abraham He re-establishes with Isaac. (Genesis 17:7-8, 19). God is telling Isaac to keep the faith and walk accordingly. How did he do? Look at the next verse and you will see.

VERSE 6

1. The word “**dwelt**” in Hebrew is YASHAB, (yaw-shab’) and it speaks of settling down, to remain there, to set-up your home there and it is not the same word that is found in Genesis 26:2, where we see the Hebrew word GUWR, (goor) used and it means to sojourn as a guest. God told him to be a guest there and yet, he sunk his roots down in Gerar because the land was good, it met his physical needs. So far he is not trusting in the Lord and he is going to continue down that path. Isaac was not really a man of great faith and if it were not what we are told in Hebrews chapter 11, we might not even see him as a man of faith!

VERSES 7-9

1. A lack of faith causes people to do things to protect themselves or to gain something. Isaac learned well from his father Abraham, he followed in his footsteps and lied to the Philistines saying that Rebekah was his sister because he was afraid they would kill him and take her. Now wait a minute, didn’t the Lord just re-establish the covenant with Isaac? You bet He did but he may have believed the Lord but thought he needed to help God out, so he lied! As we saw with our study of Abraham, a half-truth is still a half-lie and the Bible tells us that the Devil is the father of lies. Thus, you don’t need me to tell you that a lie is wrong because God has already done that!

2. After a long time had passed by, Abimelech was looking out his window and he saw Isaac and Rebekah, and I like the way that the King James Version of the Bible puts it. It reads, “. . . **Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife.**” Obviously Abimelech saw that they were not brother and sister, they were married just by their behavior Abimelech knew that this was intimate! And thus, this pagan king rebukes this man of God. Again, it is truly sad when the world has to expose our sin. And folks, the king is going to nail him on this one. Listen to what the king says in response to Isaac’s excuses!

VERSES 10-11

1. Folks, these pagan kings could care less about morality and yet, Abimelech is concerned, why? Maybe because his father told him what he went through with Abraham and how the God of Abraham had closed up the wombs of the house of Abimelech. Now Abraham’s son is doing the same thing and he did not want another curse to be brought upon his household, on his family. In fact, Abimelech takes this very seriously as he says, “. . . **‘He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.’**”

Genesis 26:11.

2. Here’s the thing. We don’t need to lie, to cheat, to steal or whatever to accomplish the will of God in our lives. We walk by faith trusting in the Lord. Yes, God protected Isaac and Rebekah, but He actually said He would do that without their help, without their lies! Walk in integrity and God will take care the rest.

VERSES 12-14

1. As you read this you may come to the conclusion that Isaac was doing well, he prospered, God blessed Him, but I don't believe that is the correct way to look at this. Isaac was living as close to Egypt, as close to the world as he could without crossing the line and some Christians do that very thing. Then why did God bless him? I believe to get Isaac back to the land that God wanted him in – he dwelt in Gerar a long time but God did not want him there to stay, only to sojourn for a time. Thus, God will use these blessings and what they bring into his life to move Isaac!

VERSES 15-23

1. It would seem that the Philistines did not want Abraham to return to this land and thus, they shut up the wells he dug, put dirt over them to cover the wells that he dug. Folks, you can't hinder or hide or take away the blessings of God, even though they tried! And now Abimelech sees God blessing Isaac and he wants Isaac to leave. He feared that if Isaac got any stronger, he would defeat them. So he moves a little bit farther away, but he is still in the area.

2. So Isaac re-digs the wells of his father and also digs new ones, and now the problems begin to show up. Whose water is it? Travis was telling me that he has relatives in Montana and water is a big problem on these ranches. You see, water flows down from the mountain into streams and wherever that stream goes, if it is on your property, it is yours. He even said that there was a gunfight over this water! Well, that is what is going on here. This first well that Isaac dug was called Esek or “contentions” because the herdsmen of Gerar were quarreling with them. Then he dug another well and once again they quarreled and Isaac called this well, Sitnah or “opposition.” By the time Isaac dug a third well there was no more contention and thus, he called the well Rehoboth or “roominess.”

3. God did not want Isaac living in a place filled with contentions and oppositions, but one that was roomy or open and God used that to led Isaac back to Beersheba or the “well of an oath!” Yes, Isaac stumbled, he fell but he did get back up and he went to the place God wanted him to be. How do I know that? Let’s read on and you will see.

VERSES 24-25

1. God once again confirms his covenant with Isaac and Isaac worships the Lord. Maybe some of the contentions, some of the oppositions in your life are there because you are not where God wants you to be. He wants you to be at Beersheba or “the well of the oath,” the place He has called you to dwell in, being in obedience to Him. And folks, as you surrender to His will for your life the response that should flow from your life is one of worship, the worship of God.

It is as we are told in I Chronicles 16:25-29, **“For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised; He is also to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are idols, But the Lord made the heavens. Honor and majesty are before Him; Strength and gladness are in His place. Give to the Lord, O families of the peoples, Give to the Lord glory and strength. Give to the Lord the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!”**

VERSES 26-31

1. Why did this pagan king make peace with Isaac? Because he saw the hand of God upon Isaac and he realized, in a sense, “Better red than dead!” or “If you can’t beat them, join them!” Williams makes this interesting note on these verses. He wrote: “It is when Isaac definitely separates himself from the men of Gerar that they come to him seeking blessing from God. . . . The Christian best helps the world when living in separation from it. . . .”

How often Christians try to be like the world and in doing so, they don’t help them. What is interesting to me here is because of this separation, Abimelech saw how God blessed Isaac and wanted to be under that protection and blessing. He realized the God of Isaac was powerful even though he did not turn to Him! Let others see the power of God working in and through your life as you walk with the Lord, as you are obedient to Him!

VERSES 32-33

1. As God continues to bless Isaac, his servants find another well and he calls it Shebah or “oath” and thus, the name of the city is called Beersheba or “the well of the oath.” It was a constant reminder of the covenant that God made with Abraham and Isaac, that God is faithful to fulfill His promise; we just need to walk by faith and trust in Him. That is where the blessings are found!

VERSES 34-35

1. Esau, the man of the world goes to the world and gets not only a wife, but two for himself. And he takes these two women, these pagan women and brings them before his parents and his parents were grieved over his decision. This truly showed the heart of Esau, his concern was for the worldly things or the things of this world, and the focus on his life is this unholy trinity: Me, Myself and I! That is going to play out for us in the next chapter in the life of Esau!

2. As we move into Genesis chapter 27, some 37 years have passed by since the events we read of in chapter 26. Isaac is 137 years old and he will live for another 43 years. Now, we might call this chapter, “As The World Turns” because it is as bad as a soap opera! Let’s read on and you will see what I mean.

GENESIS 27**VERSES 1-4**

1. Scene 1 of this soap opera opens up and the focus is on Isaac and Esau. Here Isaac is 137 years old, in poor health, his eyes are bad and his brother Ishmael died at 137, so he figured his time was short, it was drawing to a close! So Isaac calls for his oldest son, Esau and asks him to go and get some venison and cook it up and bring it in and he would give him the blessing! Now, the Lord told Rebekah and Isaac that the blessing was to go to Jacob, not Esau but Isaac was trying to circumvent God's will. You see, he loved Esau more than Jacob and thus, he let his palate govern his heart and thus, his actions are in opposition to God's will!

VERSES 5-10

1. Scene 2 covers Genesis 27:5-17 and the focus is Rebekah and Jacob. In Genesis 25:23 the Lord told Rebekah about the sons who were to be born, “. . . **‘Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger.’**” Now she is worried that Esau would get the blessing instead of Jacob, so she plans a deception to fool her husband into blessing Jacob. Did God need help? No! Was Esau going to get the blessing? No! But Rebekah acts in the flesh and folks; the end does not justify the means.

2. What a dysfunctional family. No one trusted each other. Isaac sends Esau out secretly so he can bless him. Rebekah doesn't trust her husband or God so she comes up with this plan to deceive. Folks, this is the family of faith, but not in their actions here! Why are they so dysfunctional? Because they are not walking with the Lord, they are living in disobedience to him and that is the result in the family! And please understand I am not saying that you will never have problems in your family if you are walking with God, but it will not be dysfunctional!

VERSES 11-17

1. Notice what Jacob is concerned about here, getting caught! He is not concerned that this is wrong. And his mom steps in and tells him not to worry, if he gets caught then let her be cursed and not him. And we will see as we close tonight, she was cursed by her actions!

2. Esau was a hairy, outdoors kind of guy. So Rebekah places goat hair on Jacob's hands and his neck, talk about being hairy! And she has Jacob put on Esau's clothes so that he smells like him, the smell of the outdoors. Rebekah cooks up a meal to taste like venison and now Jacob is all set to deceive his father so that God can bless him. I know, that sounds strange, but that is what is going on here. You see, when a person is in sin, it doesn't seem wrong to them!

VERSES 18-29

1. As scene 3 opens up the focus is Jacob and Isaac. Notice what “dirty rotten scoundrel” or Jacob, which his name means, does here. He lies first of all by telling his dad that he is Esau. He then brings God into the picture saying that he got that deer so fast because God had blessed him. Isaac is still not sure this is Esau so he asks him again and Jacob reaffirms that he is Esau. And then the fourth lie is the façade of his appearance; he dressed like Esau, smelled like Esau so much so that he did fool his dad! Thus, Isaac believes that this is Esau and he blesses him!

2. Now Jacob not only deceived his brother to get the birthright, the double portion of the blessing but also he tricks his father to get the blessing as the spiritual head of the family and the covenant that God had promised to Abraham and Isaac and now Jacob. Isaac blesses Jacob as he prayed for prosperity in crops, v. 28. Prosperity over the nations, v. 29. And for those that blessed him they will be blessed and those that would curse him would be cursed, v. 29.

3. Now, was Jacob blessed because of the words of that prayer, what Isaac said? No, not at all, he was not blessed because of these words. Jacob was blessed because God said that He would bless the younger over the older brother! It is as Boice said, “The point is that the sovereign will of God is done, in spite of our or any other person’s opposition to it.” Yes, and in spite of the deception, the lies, to obtain it in the first place, God gave him the blessing!

VERSES 30-38

1. As scene 4 opens up, it will cover verses 30-40, it will deal with Esau and Isaac.

Picture what is going on here. As Jacob gets the blessing and leaves his father's tent, here comes Esau and he enters the tent with the hot venison for his father and he is ready for this blessing. And Isaac, not being able to see too well, wanted to know who entered the tent and the response is, "Esau! Don't you remember dad, you sent me out to get the venison and now you are going to bless me?"

2. Busted! And it says, "**Isaac trembled exceedingly.**" Morris tells us this verse can be translated, "Isaac trembled most excessively with great trembling." And The Amplified Bible says, "**Then Isaac trembled and shook violently.**" Why was Isaac so upset?

Folks, it was not because he was fooled, although that probably bothered him. I believe it was because he saw that he could not circumvent the will of God no matter how hard he tried. How do I know that for sure? Because Isaac tells us in verse 33, "**indeed he shall be blessed.**" He is speaking of Jacob! Isaac was trying to bless Esau even though he knew that was not God's will. But eventually Isaac is broken and he surrenders to the will of God and we would never get that here in Genesis but we are told in that section of Hebrews called The Hall of Faith. In Hebrews 11:20 we are told, "**By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.**" And in Genesis chapter 28 we see Isaac bless Jacob by faith.

3. Now, before you are too hard on him, is there something in your life that you are doing that you know is not the will of God for you? If there is then don't wait until you shake violently because you are not getting what you want, but surrender to the will of God, repent and get right with Him and then walk accordingly, walk as He would have you walk!

4. Now it seems like Esau is really broken here, broken over this, but he wasn't. Yes, lots of emotion because he was going to miss out on the material things, but he didn't care for the spiritual. How do I know that? Listen to what Paul said in Hebrews 12:16-17 regarding Esau. We are told, **“lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.”** The example that Paul shows us is that of Esau who sold his birthright for a morsel of food, to satisfy his body appetite and many Christians do the same by selling their birthright of intimacy with God for the temporary, satisfying their body appetite, what pleases them instead of the Lord! Now Esau didn't get this birthright back nor did he get the blessing back even though he cried out to God, why? Because his cry was based on what he lost and he was not willing to repent. Esau wanted the blessing of God but he didn't want the God of the blessings! It doesn't work like that!

5. Also, Esau rightly recognizes that Jacob is a dirty rotten scoundrel for what he had done. Esau was going to serve Jacob, not Esau himself but his descendants just as God had said. And Esau cries out to his father to give him some kind of blessing and we will see this in the next few verses.

VERSES 39-40

1. Barnhouse feels that in regards to this blessing of Esau, it should read, “your dwelling shall be *from* the fatness of the earth.” You see, “from” and not “of” and it is indicating that the descendants of Esau would be desert-dwellers. I tend to lean that way; history seems to verify that fact.

2. Now it says that Esau would be under the leadership or servitude of Jacob but not forever, that one day Esau would break that yoke that was around their neck. During the reign of Joram, king of Judah we are told in II Kings 8:20-22, “**In his days Edom revolted against Judah's authority, and made a king over themselves. So Joram went to Zair, and all his chariots with him. Then he rose by night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots; and the troops fled to their tents. Thus Edom has been in revolt against Judah's authority to this day. And Libnah revolted at that time.**” Thus, that yoke was broken!

VERSES 41-46

1. Scene 5 is focused upon Esau's anger, Rebekah's instructions and Jacob fleeing! Here we see that Esau is so mad that he wants to kill his brother Jacob. Obviously this is not a fruit of the Spirit but the works of the flesh. Esau was not a spiritual man, not at all!

Esau feels that by killing Jacob he will be comforted! The reality is, there is no rest, no peace for the wicked! The only solution for a peace of the soul is to turn to the Prince of peace, Jesus Christ and give Him your hurt, your pain, your anger. But before you can receive the peace **OF** God, you must **MAKE** peace with God and that is only accomplished through Jesus Christ. It is then and only then that you can experience the peace **OF** God in your life as Paul tells us in Philippians 4:6-7, "**Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**"

2. Rebekah hears what Esau is going to do and calls for Jacob and tells him to get out of town, to go to her brother Laban's house, his uncle and stay there for a few days until things cool down. Once Esau has forgotten all about this she will send for him and he can return home. Sounds good but that is not how it played out.

3. Now, did Rebekah and Jacob win out? No, not at all, they in fact were going to lose. You see, this was the will of God for Jacob all along and they did not have to plot and scheme and deceive to get God's will done. But now, in their fleshly actions, a few days away for Jacob is going to last 20 years and for Rebekah, she will die and never see her son again on this side of eternity!

You see, although Rebekah planned the deception, Jacob was also guilty for going along with it. And he truly is going to reap what he has sown. C. H. Mackintosh had this to say regarding what Jacob gained from this:

. . . whoever observes Jacob's life, after he had surreptitiously [secretly] obtained his father's blessing, will perceive that he enjoyed very little worldly felicity [happiness]. His brother sought to murder him, to avoid which he was forced to flee from his father's house; his uncle Laban deceived him. . . . He was obliged to leave him in a clandestine [secret] manner. . . . He experienced the baseness of his son Reuben . . . the treachery and cruelty of Simeon and Levi towards the Shechemites; then he had to feel the loss of his beloved wife . . . the supposed untimely end of Joseph; and to complete it all, he was forced by famine to go into Egypt, and there died in a strange land. . . .

- C. H. Mackintosh

4. And to set the scene for next time, Rebekah tells Isaac that if Jacob marries a wife from the land of Canaan, a pagan woman, it will kill her. She does not want Jacob to follow in the footsteps of Esau who married two women from the land of Canaan and it grieved Isaac and Rebekah greatly. Thus, she is setting Isaac up to send Jacob away with a blessing to get a wife, while Rebekah is just trying to keep Esau from killing Jacob. “As sand through the hour glass, so go the days of our lives!” I told you a soap opera and yet, this is very true! How much better to walk after the Lord, to follow after Him, to be directed by His Spirit than to walk in the flesh and try to manipulate God’s will in your life. You see, God’s will is going to be accomplished and God does not need you lying and cheating and stealing and-so-on to accomplish it! It is as Solomon said, “**Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.**” Proverbs 3:5-6. May we learn the lesson.