

Day 23 - MONDAY: November 14th

Genesis 26

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. Then the LORD appeared to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. 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. 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; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." So Isaac dwelt in Gerar. 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." 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. 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.'" 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." So Abimelech charged all his people, saying, "He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death." Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him. The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So the Philistines envied him. 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. And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we." Then Isaac departed from there and pitched his tent in the Valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. 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. Also Isaac's servants dug in the valley, and found a well of running water there. But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours." So he called

the name of the well Esek, because they quarreled with him. Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also. So he called its name Sitnah. And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, because he said, "For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." Then he went up from there to Beersheba. 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." 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. Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and Phichol the commander of his army. And Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?" 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, 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.' " So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. 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. 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." So he called it Shebah. Therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day. 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. And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah.

Daily Deep Dive:

We'll start today with some of the UCG Bible Reading plan:

"As in the days of Abraham, the land of Canaan experienced another drought and famine—and, having the example of his father before him, Isaac journeyed south with the probable intent of going into Egypt where food would be more likely available, that country being sustained by the annual inundation of the Nile. His journey took him to the southern Philistine city of Gerar, whose king bore the hereditary title Abimelech (meaning "Father King" or "My Father Is King"). That several kings bore the title of Abimelech is amply proven by archaeological discoveries.

Verse 2 records that God told Isaac, “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you.” This implies that God generally directed Isaac’s movements, for if God had merely wanted Isaac to remain in Canaan, He would have simply said, “Live in the land,” omitting “of which I shall tell you.” The latter phrase implies continued guidance. This is interesting because we are told that Abraham, although going into Canaan, went “not knowing where he was going” (Hebrews 11:8), and that God had said, “Get out of your country...to a land that I will show you” (Genesis 12:1), implying that although Abraham knew he was heading toward Canaan, he did not know whether he would remain there or if God would lead him elsewhere. Isaac’s movement toward Egypt was stopped by God’s directly intervening to guide his movements within Canaan. For the moment, God gave no further direction than to remain in the land of Canaan (verse 3).” [END”

Verse 4 – We see God extend this Covenant promise that was made to Abraham down to Isaac: “in your Seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.”

Verse 5 – Begins with “because”, but this word contains the deep meaning that “As a consequence of” Abraham’s obedience and keeping My commandments/statutes/laws, it’s for that reason, that I’m extending the blessings of this covenant now to you (Isaac).

Our blessings (& cursings for that matter) are not always because of what we ourselves have done. I have received many blessings in my life due to the choices of my (& my wife’s) parents & grandparents, etc... Some will look at blessings in their lives as proof that God is happy with their choices, but this can be faulty as one who strays away from God could conclude falsely that God is pleased with them due to their “blessed” lives, but they may still be reaping blessings from parents/grandparents who obeyed faithfully. (Compare Exodus 20:4-5). We see again in verse 24 that the blessings are “for Abraham’s sake”.

Notice also that long before Mt. Sinai and the laws that were given to Moses at that time, notice that there are already commandments, statutes and laws of God that Abraham was obedient to. While in previous weeks, we looked at how the Sabbath and clean food laws were already clearly established, here in this verse is the first place we see the word used for “commandments” (mitsvah). This is of course the same word that will later be used for the 10 Commandments of God.

This is also the first place in the Bible the Hebrew words for statutes (*chuqqah*) and laws (*torah*) are used also. These words describe distinctions in the way God's instructions are viewed rather than their validity or importance. Each of these were to be honored, respected and followed. The word commandment (*mitsvah*)

An article on ucg.org entitled "God's Laws, Statutes and Judgements" states the following for the word law and statutes.

"The Hebrew word translated "law" is *torah*. When used with the definite article (*the law*), it refers either to law in general or to some specific aspect of law. It often refers to the entire body of law that God gave to the people of Israel.

Torah also carries the broader meaning of "teachings," especially when used without the definite article. Sometimes, when used so broadly, the word even appears to imply the entire body of revealed instruction contained in the Old Testament scriptures.

The word "statutes" refers to a specific type of laws. As the English translation of the Hebrew words *choq* or *chuqqah*, the word "statute" refers to an authoritative enactment, decree or ordinance.

Biblical statutes may set appointed times, such as sacred festivals, define important customs and even establish the manner or procedure by which certain vital matters are to be handled. Because they reveal God's thinking and reflect His priorities, they are crucially instructive as divine guidelines for righteous behavior." [END]

Verse 7 – Again from the UCG reading program:

"Notice also that in both Genesis 12 and 26 we have the repeated pattern of God commanding his servant (Abraham or Isaac, respectively) to go to a land that He would show him, followed immediately by a giving or reaffirming of what has come to be called the Abrahamic Covenant. Genesis contains several examples of this kind of couplet—as you read through the book, you should keep your eyes open for them. One of the couplets is Abraham and Isaac's denial of their wives, in each case to a king titled Abimelech (Abraham also did so to Pharaoh, Genesis

12). These couplets have led some to suggest that the book of Genesis was stitched together from several different and contradictory traditions—in this case, one tradition having Abraham denying his wife, and another tradition having Isaac denying his wife. The truth is that there are no contradicting traditions. Abraham and Isaac both did the same things, the son imitating the father, perhaps for the same reasons.”

Though the incidents with Abraham occurred before Isaac was born, Isaac probably heard about them, perhaps viewing such an approach as acceptable.”
[END]

Verse 34 – At the age of 40, same age that Isaac had married, Esau gets married two Hittite women. Remember the great care Abraham took to ensure that Isaac married someone from their own family. Hittite’s were descendants of Heth of the line of Ham, through Canaan (Gen 10:15). We’ve already spent a lot of time detailing how this family line of Ham departed from obedience to God quickly and through time continued to not be faithful to God.

Josephus records this about the father’s of these two Hittite women: “were great lords among the Canaanites: thereby taking upon himself the authority, and pretending to have dominion over his own marriages, without so much as asking the advice of his father; for had Isaac been the arbitrator, he had not given him leave to marry thus, for he was not pleased with contracting any alliance with the people of that country; but not caring to be uneasy to his son by commanding him to put away these wives, he resolved to be silent.”

Adam Clarke’s commentary says “It is very likely that the wives taken by Esau were daughters of chiefs among the Hittites, and by this union he sought to increase and strengthen his secular power and influence.”

Verse 35 – We are told that Esau and his wives “were a grief of mind” to Isaac and Rebekah. We aren’t told why, but we can assume that marrying women from a culture of pagan idol worship and not cultures built on obeying the True God would lead to problems. John Gill’s commentary states: “he took for wives were very disagreeable on all accounts, partly because of their religion, being idolaters, and partly by reason of their temper and behaviour, being proud, haughty, and disobedient; as all the three Targums intimate.”

