



The Book of Genesis

Lesson Number 41



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT=Goodspeed (1923), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE=International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV=Literat Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV=Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

----- GREEK LEXICON LEGEND -----

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, LEH = LEH Lexicon, GINGRICH = Gingrich Lexicon

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

ISAAC AND THE FAMINE IN CANAAN

Gen 26:1 ¹ And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar. ² And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of. ³ Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; ⁴ And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; ⁵ Because that Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws. ⁶ And Isaac dwelt in Gerar: ⁷ And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon. ⁸ And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife. ⁹ And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife: and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her. ¹⁰ And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us. ¹¹ And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death. ¹² Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him. ¹³ And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: ¹⁴ For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him. ¹⁵ For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth. ¹⁶ And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we. ¹⁷ And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. ¹⁸ And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them. ¹⁹ And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water. ²⁰ And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him. ²¹ And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah. ²² And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land. ²³ And he went up from thence to Beersheba." (Genesis 26:1-23)

Just as in the days of Abraham, a famine occurred in Canaan in the days of Isaac. Isaac is directly by God and a series of events follow – Given O. Blakely

INTRODUCTION

CONTENTS

- ▶ INTRODUCTION
- ▶ A FAMINE IN THE LAND (26:1a)
- ▶ ISAAC WENT UNTO ABIMELECH (26:1b)
- ▶ DO NOT GO DOWN TO EGYPT (26:2)
- ▶ SOJOURN HERE AND I WILL BE WITH THEE (26:3-4)
- ▶ BECAUSE ABRAHAM OBEYED MY VOICE (26:5)
- ▶ SHE IS MY SISTER (26:6-7)
- ▶ ABIMELECH CONCLUDES REBEKAH IS ISAAC'S WIFE (26:8-11)
- ▶ ISAAC SOWS AND REAPS AN HUNDREDFOLD (26:12)
- ▶ THE PHILISTINES ENVIED ISAAC (26:13-14)
- ▶ WHEN THE WELLS WERE STOPPED (26:15)
- ▶ GO FROM US (26:16)
- ▶ THE WELLS WERE DUG AGAIN (26:17-18)
- ▶ A WELL OF SPRINGING WATER (26:19)
- ▶ STRIVING FOR THE WELLS (26:20-21)
- ▶ A WELL WITHOUT STRIVING (26:22)
- ▶ HE WENT UP TO BEERSHEBA (26:23)
- ▶ CONCLUSION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Just as in the days of Abraham, a famine occurred in Canaan while Isaac was there. Isaac went to Abimelech rather than to Egypt, and was commanded by God not to go into Egypt for help. God promised to be with Isaac in the land of Gerar, and to bless him, When the men of that place asked Isaac about Rebekah, he said she was his sister. After a long time, Abimelech saw she was actually Isaac's wife. After rebuking Isaac for not saying Rebekah was his wife, Abimelech told his people whoever touched Rebekah would die. During the famine, Isaac sowed in the land, and reaped an hundredfold the same year. The Lord continued to bless Isaac, and he became a very great man with many

possessions. The Philistines envied him. All of the wells Abraham had dug had been filled with earth by the Philistines, but Isaac dug the wells again. Isaac then dug some additional wells, and the Philistines strove with him over them. As he continued to dig wells, the striving finally came to an end, and Isaac went to Beersheba.

WE ARE BEING INTRODUCED TO DIVINE DIRECTION AND PROMISE

In order to better acquaint us with the Lord Himself, **we are being introduced to Divine direction and promise.** Prior to Abraham, there were very few instances where these two things were specifically addressed.

Here are some examples of things God is said to have done PRIOR to Abraham.

- ➡ MAN TO DRESS AND KEEP THE GARDEN (GEN 2:15).
- ➡ BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY (GEN 1:28)
- ➡ NOT TO EAT OF THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL (GEN 2:17).
- ➡ IMPOSED PAIN ASSOCIATED WITH CHILDBIRTH, AND SUBJECTION OF WIFE TO HUSBAND (GEN 3:16).
- ➡ IMPOSED WORK ASSOCIATED WITH PROVIDING FOR LIFE (GEN 3:17-19)
- ➡ MAN BANNED FROM THE GARDEN (GEN 3:22-24).
- ➡ WALKED WITH AND TOOK ENOCH (GEN 5:21-24)
- ➡ BUILD AN ARK (GEN 6:14-16))
- ➡ ENTER THE ARK WITH FAMILY, WITH PAIRS OF EVERY LIVING CREATURE (GEN 6:19-20).
- ➡ STOCK THE ARK WITH ADEQUATE FOOD FOR ALL LIVING WITHIN IT (GEN 6:21).
- ➡ COME OUT OF THE ARK, BRINGING ALL OF THE LIVING CREATURES (GEN 8:17).

- ➡ BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY (GEN 9:1,7).
- ➡ INSTITUTION OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT (GEN 9:8).
- ➡ ISLES OF THE GENTILES DIVIDED (GEN 10:5,32).
- ➡ CONFOUNDED AND SCATTERED THE PEOPLE AT SHINAR (GEN 11:1-8).

These are things God is said to have done AFTER abraham

- ➡ CALLED ABRAHAM (GEN 12:1-3).
- ➡ TOLD ABRAHAM HOW HE WOULD BLESS HIM (GEN 12:2-3).
- ➡ APPEARED TO ABRAHAM, PROMISING TO GIVE THE LAND OF CANAAN TO HIS SEED (GEN 12:7).
- ➡ THE LORD PLAGUED PHARAOH SARAH, ABRAM'S WIFE (GEN 12:17).
- ➡ GOD REVEALED THE EXTENT OF THE LAND HE WAS GOING TO GIVE HIM AND HIS SEED, COMMANDING HIM TO WALK THROUGH THE LAND (GEN 13:14-17).
- ➡ GOD REVEALED TO ABRAM THROUGH MELCHIZEDEK THAT HE HAD DELIVERED HIS ENEMIES INTO HIS HAND (GEN 14:19-20).



- ➡ GOD REVEALED TO ABRAM THAT HE WAS HIS

SHIELD AND GREAT REWARD (GEN 15:1).

- ➡ GOD REVEALS TO ABRAM THAT HE WOULD BEGET THE PROMISED SEED (GEN 14:4).
- ➡ GOD REVEALS THE MULTITUDE OF SEED THAT WOULD COME FROM HIM (GEN 15:4).
- ➡ GOD TELLS ABRAM HE IS THE ONE WHOP BROUGHT HIM OUT OF UR (GEN 15:7).
- ➡ GOD REVEALS THAT HIS SEED WOULD BE AFFLICTED BY A FOREIGN NATION FOR 400 YEARS, BUT WOULD AFTERWARD COME OUT WITH GREAT SUBSTANCE (GEN 15:13-14,16).
- ➡ GOD REVEALS TO ABRAM THAT HE WOULD GO TO HIS FATHERS IN PEACE, AND BE BURIED IN A GOOD OLD AGE (GEN 15:15).
- ➡ GOD REVEALS THE BORDERS OF THE LAND HE PROMISED ABRAM (GEN 15:18-21).
- ➡ THROUGH AN ANGEL GOD REVEALS TO HAGAR THAT HE WOULD MULTIPLY HER SEED (GEN 16:10).

17:19).

- ➡ THE LORD PROMISES TO BLESS AND MULTIPLY ISHMAEL, BUT THAT HE COULD NOT BE ABRAHAM'S HEIR (GEN 17:20-21).
- ➡ THE LORD APPEARED TO ABRAHAM, TELLING HIM SARAH WOULD GIVE BIRTH TO HIS SEED THE NEXT YEAR (GEN 18:1-14).
- ➡ THE LORD DETERMINES TO DESTROY SODOM AND GOMORRAH BECAUSE OF THEIR GREAT SIN (GEN 18:20-21).
- ➡ THE LORD TELL'S ABRAHAM HE WILL NOT DESTROY SODOM AND GOMORRAH IF TEN RIGHTEOUS MEN CAN BE FOUND THERE (GEN 18:23-32).
- ➡ THE LORD DESTROYS SODOM, GOMORRAH, AND THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN (GEN 19:1-25,28-29).
- ➡ THE LORD TURNS LOT'S WIFE INTO A PILLAR SALT (GEN 19:26-27).

HEALED ABIMELECH, HIS WIFE, AND HIS MAIDSERVANTS (GEN 20:17).

- ➡ THE LORD HAD CLOSED UP ALL THE WOMBS OF ABIMELECH'S HOUSE (GEN 20:17).
- ➡ THE LORD "VISITED" SARAH, AND SHE GAVE BIRTH TO ISAAC (GEN 21:1-3).
- ➡ GOD INFORMS ABRAHAM THAT HE MUST HEARKEN TO THE VOICE OF SARAH, CASTING OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON (GEN 21:12-13).
- ➡ GOD HEARS THE VOICE OF YOUNG ISHMAEL, AND DELIVERS HAGAR, OPENING HER EYES TO A WELL OF WATER (GEN 21:17-18).
- ➡ GOD WAS WITH ISHMAEL, AND THUS HE GREW UP (GEN 21:20).
- ➡ GOD TESTED ABRAHAM BY COMMANDED HIM TO OFFER ISAAC AS A BURNT OFFERING (GEN 22:1-10).
- ➡ THE ANGEL OF THE LORD HALTS ABRAHAM, AND A SUBSTITUTE OFFERING WAS MADE (GEN 22:11-13).
- ➡ THE ANGEL OF THE LORD RENEWS GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM (GEN 22:16-18).
- ➡ IN OLD AGE, IT WAS REVEALED THAT THE LORD HAD BLESSED HIM IN ALL THINGS (GEN 24:1).

THE LORD APPEARS TO ABRAHAM CHANGING HIS NAME, AND PROMISING HE WOULD HAVE A MULTITUDE OF SEED (GEN 17:1-8).

- ➡ GOD REVEALED HAGAR WAS TO NAME HER SON ISHMAEL, AND THAT HE WOULD BE A WILD AND CONTENTIOUS MAN (GEN 16:11-12).
- ➡ THE LORD APPEARS TO ABRAHAM CHANGING HIS NAME, AND PROMISING HE WOULD HAVE A MULTITUDE OF SEED (GEN 17:1-8).
- ➡ THE LORD GAVE ABRAHAM THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION (GEN 17:10-14).
- ➡ THE LORD TELLS ABRAHAM THAT SARAH WOULD BARE THE PROMISED SEED, AND BECOME A MOTHER OF NATIONS. HE CHANGED HER NAME AT THAT TIME (GEN 17:15-19).
- ➡ THE LORD DICTATED THAT "ISAAC" WOULD BE THE NAME OF THE PROMISED CHILD (GEN

- ➡ GOD APPEARS TO ABIMELECH IN A DREAM, TELLING HIM HE KIS A DEAD MAN, BECAUSE HE HAD TAKEN ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE (GEN 20:3).
- ➡ GOD TELLS ABIMELECH HE HAD WITHHELD HIM FROM SINNING AGAINST HIM, NOT ALLOWING HIM TO TOUCH SARAH (GEN 20:5).
- ➡ GOD TELLS ABIMELECH TO RESTORE SARAH TO ABRAHAM, AND THAT ABRAHAM WOULD PRAY FOR HIM SO THAT HE MIGHT LIVE (GEN 20:7).
- ➡ ABRAHAM CONFESSES THAT GOD CAUSED HIM TO LEAVE HIS FATHER'S HOUSE (GEN 20:13).
- ➡ UPON HEARING ABRAHAM'S PRAYER, GOD

- ➡ ABRAHAM TELLS HIS SERVANT GOD WILL SEND HIS ANGEL AND CAUSE HIM TO TAKE A WIFE FOR HIS SON ISAAC FROM AMONG HIS BRETHREN (GEN 24:7,40).
- ➡ IN HIS MISSION TO FIND A WIFE FOR ISAAC, ABRAHAM'S SERVANT ACKNOWLEDGES THAT THE LORD HAD LED HIM TO THE HOUSE OF ABRAHAM'S BRETHREN (GEN 24:27).
- ➡ ABRAHAM'S SERVANT CONFESSES TO THE FATHER AND BROTHER OF REBEKAH THAT THE LORD HAD BLESSED ABRAHAM, TO MAKE HIM GREAT, GIVING HIM FLOCKS, HERDS, SILVER, GOLD, MENSERVANTS, MAIDSERVANTS, CAMELS, AND ASSES (GEN 24:35).
- ➡ THE LORD "APPOINTED" THE WOMAN TO BE ISAAC'S WIFE (GEN 24:44).
- ➡ AFTER ABRAHAM'S DEATH, GOD BLESSED ISAAC (GEN 25:11).

- ➡ THE LORD ENABLED BARREN REBEKAH TO HAVE A CHILD (GEN 25:21-22).
- ➡ THE LORD REVEALS TO REBEKAH THAT TWO NATIONS WERE IN HER WOMB IN THE FORM OF TWINS, AND THAT THE ELDER WOULD SERVE THE YOUNGER (GEN 25:23).
- ➡ THE LORD APPEARS TO ISAAC, INSTRUCTING HIM NOT TO GO DOWN TO EGYPT DURING THE FAMINE IN CANAAN (GEN 26:2).
- ➡ THE LORD DIRECTS ISAAC TO SOJOURN IN THE LAND, PROMISING THAT HE WOULD GIVE ALL OF THOSE COUNTRIES TO HIS SEED (GEN 26:3).
- ➡ THE LORD PROMISES TO MULTIPLY ISAAC'S SEED AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN, BECAUSE ABRAHAM HAD OBEYED HIS VOICE (GEN 26:4-5).
- ➡ THE LORD BLESSED ISAAC WITH A HUNDREDFOLD INCREASE DURING THE TIME OF FAMINE (GEN 26:12).
- ➡ ISAAC PERCEIVES THAT THE LORD HAD MADE ROOM FOR THEM IN THE LAND (GEN 26:22).

I have provided you with fifty-six statements that confirm the Lord's direction, His intervention, and His unwavering promises. **Fifteen of those were before Abraham, covering a period of about 2,000 years. Forty one then were from Abraham through Isaac – a period estimated to be about 260 years – 13% of the time during which the previous involvements of God are mentioned.**

It is clear that the entire record up

If we fail to see this manner of Divine working, we will not be able to grasp the significance of Jesus Christ, the ultimate "Seed" – both of the woman, and of Abraham. Our view of salvation will be limited or advanced by the degree of our understanding of the "wonderful works of God"

to this point is really an account of the Lord's dealings with men. All of this working centers in Divine purpose – a purpose that dictated both the creation and involvement with humanity.

When men veered from His purpose, God imposed His will upon them – whether it was the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden, the flood, the dispersion at Shinar, or the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. If men interfered with what He was doing, the Lord would judge then – as with Pharaoh, Ishmael, and Abimelech.

This matter of the working of God was accentuated in:

- ➡ Peter's address on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-35).
- ➡ Peter's address in the Temple (Acts 3:13-26).
- ➡ The prayer of the early disciples

(Acts 4:24-33).

- ➡ Stephen's defense before the Sanhedrin (Acts 7:1-53).
- ➡ Paul's exhortation at Antioch of Pisida (Acts 13:16-47).
- ➡ Paul's address to the Athenian philosophers (Acts 17:22-31).
- ➡ It can be seen in doctrine of Paul (Eph 1:3-2:22; Col 1:9-29), etc.

If we fail to see this manner of Divine working, we will not be able to grasp the significance of Jesus Christ, the ultimate "Seed" – both of the woman, and of Abraham. Our view of salvation will be limited or advanced by the degree of our understanding of the "wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:1). If it is difficult for us to see the absolute and unquestionable sovereignty of God, the foundation for faith, hope, and assurance will not be present within us.

A FAMINE IN THE LAND

Gen 26:1a **"And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham."**

A FAMINE IN THE LAND

"And there was a famine in the land . . ." Other versions read, "a time of great need in the land," ^{BBE} "A famine came over the land," ^{CJB} and "A severe

famine now struck the land," ^{NLT} and "Now a severe famine overshadowed the land."

This was the land of promise, and yet a second famine ravaged the land. Abraham had dwelt in the land, and now Isaac was dwelling in it – yet there was a famine in the land.

This Was Under Divine Administration

The Lord moved men to inform us of His administration over all things. Famines or any other hardship, cannot take place without being administered by the God of heaven. On one occasion, God *"called for a famine"* (2 Kgs 8:1; Psa 105:16; Hag 1:11). God told Israel if they did not hearken to His

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voice He would *"break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass: and your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits"* (Lev 26:19-20). This is why He could deliver His people from famine, as is affirmed in Scripture (Job 5:20; Psa 33:19; 37:19).

Thus it is written:

- *"Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?"* (Amos 3:6)
- *"Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins." (Psa 66:11)*
- *"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil (calamity ^{NKJV}): I the LORD do all these things." (Isa 45:7)*

convenient, or free from difficulty. The fact that many stumble at difficulty confirms that this is not generally known.

Particularly for those in Christ, trial and testing are required. We therefore read:

- *"That no man should be moved by these afflictions: **for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.**" (1 Thess 3:3)*
- *"For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. **For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.**" (1 Pet 2:20-21)*
- *"But the God of all grace, who hath*

- When Abraham first arrived (Gen 12:10).
- When Isaac was in the land (Gen 26:1).
- When Jacob was in the land (Gen 42:5; 47:4; Psa 105:16).
- During the days of David (2 Sam 21:1).
- During the days of Elijah (1 Kgs 17:1-24; 18:2).
- During the days of Elisha (2 Kgs 6:25-7:4; 8:1).
- During the reign of Zedekiah, as a result of Jerusalem being besieged (2 Kgs 25:2-3).
- During the time of Jeremiah the prophet (Jer 52:6).
- During the days of the Judges (Ruth 1:1).
- In Jerusalem during the days of the apostles (Acts 11:29).

Sometimes famines are sent as punishments, as in Leviticus 26:19-10). But this is not always the case. Sometimes they are sent as trials, as in our text – to test the faith of those who live by it.

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Sometimes famines are sent as punishments, as in Leviticus 26:19-10). But this is not always the case. **Sometimes they are sent as trials, as in our text – to test the faith of those who live by it.** That appears to be at the root of our text, although the famine could very well have been a judgment against those who were then occupying Canaan.

Convenience Is Not Guaranteed

By its very nature, the life that is lived by faith is not guaranteed to be

*called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, **after that ye have suffered a while**, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."* (1 Pet 5:10)

BESIDE THE FIRST FAMINE

" . . . beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham." Other versions read, *"other than the former famine that was in the days of Abraham."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

This is now the second famine that took place in Canaan after Abraham began sojourning there. Here is a listing of the famines that took place in Canaan after Abraham's initial arrival there.

SPIRITUAL FAMINE

There is another kind of famine that God sends upon the earth – and it is by far the most serious type. It is His response to the disinterest of men in His Word and great salvation. Amos spoke of it in no uncertain terms.

*"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that **I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:** And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst"* (Amos 8:12-13).

This was the Lord's response to corrupt religion among the Jews. Although they had maintained a shell of religion, they had neglected their poor (Amos 8:4). They were anxious for the appointed feasts and Sabbaths to pass so they could get down to doing what

they desired (Amos 8:5). They indulged in buying the poor at a cheap price, and selling the refuse of the wheat as though it was a bargain (Amos 8:6).

Because of this grievous abuse, and the neglect of service toward God, the Lord would send a famine of hearing the Word of the Lord. **He would not allow it to be generally spoken anymore.** It would become so sparse that those who sought the Word would seek it fervently, yet be unable to find it. Those who were normally robust and strong would faint for lack of living water. This is not a famine that Satan would send, although he very well may be employed to implement it. It is one God would send, and He would do it in response to the people's neglect of what He had given them.

It seems to me that we are living during such a famine. The scarcity of the Word of God is alarming, and it is difficult to explain this circumstance with the wisdom of men. There has been a rise of emphases that center in humanity rather than in God. Exploitation is common in Christendom. The people who sorely need the Word and desire it are being neglected in favor of tickling itching ears. Many who have had some semblance of strength are growing spiritually faint because they cannot find the Word of God. Even the Bibles have been corrupted by mixing the text with human wisdom and interpretations.

This is a judgment from God, brought on by men trifling with the

things of God, neglecting and even corrupting His Word, and upstaging the Gospel of Christ with what men prefer to call *"good news."* All of this is happening while the promised land is being occupied. O, God devises means for the elect to be nourished, just as He said He would: *"Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in His mercy; To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine"* (Psa 33:18-19).

If it were not for this gracious provision, men would despair of life. Even so, there is a famine of the hearing of the Word of God, and we will not gloss it. It is serious beyond measure.

ISAAC WENT TO ABIMELECH

"^{1b} And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar."

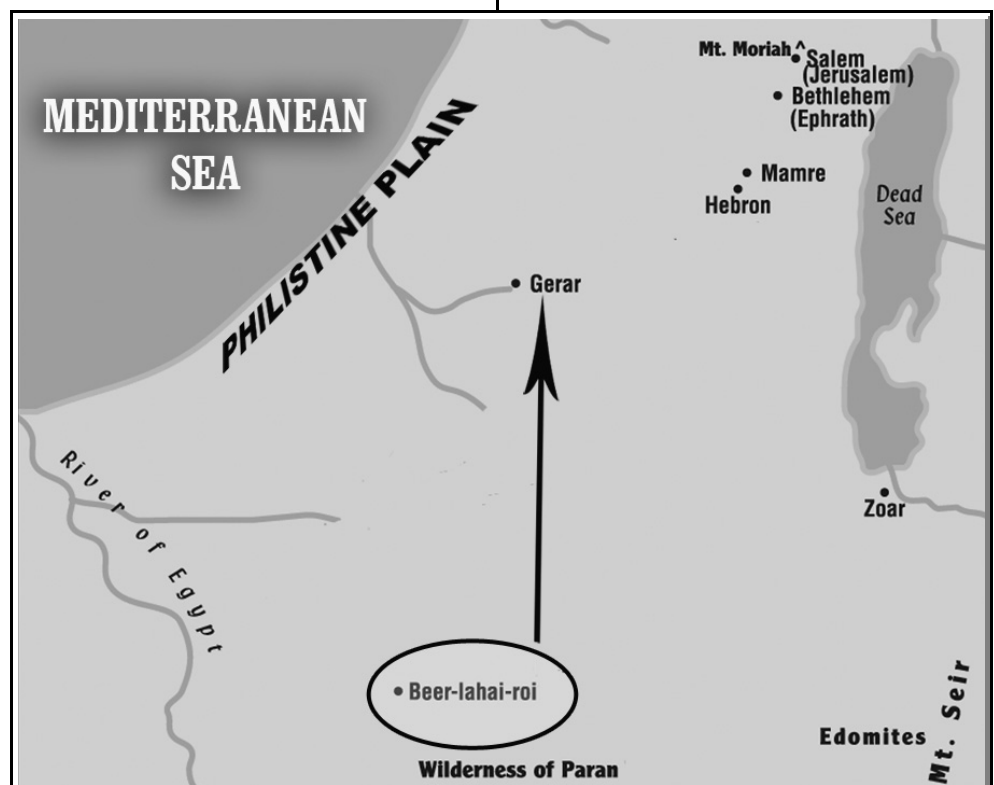
Was this the same Abimelech that had dealings with Abraham (Gen 20:1-18)? It was shortly after that confrontation, that Isaac was born. Abraham was one hundred years old at that time. At forty years of age, Isaac was married (Gen 25:20), and he was sixty years old when Jacob and Esau were born (Gen 25:26). Now Esau is a grown man. Later in this chapter, when Esau is forty years old, he will take two Hittite wives (Gen 26:34). Include in your considerations that Abraham has died at the age of one hundred and seventy-five (Gen 25:7). That means the experience of Abraham with Abimelech took place 75-80 years prior to our text. It seems unlikely that this would be the same Abimelech – although that is not impossible. It is not necessary for us to make a final determination of this matter, nor is it expeditious for us to do so. I will simply deal with the text as it is.

It is obvious from this text that the famine was, at the least, not as

grievous in Gerar as it was where Isaac was located in Canaan. The land of Gerar bordered on the Mediterranean sea, which may account for that

possibility, the soil being more fertile..

Journeying from *"the well Lahairoi,"* where he had been dwelling



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(Gen 25:11), Isaac journeyed due north to Gerar. He took Rebekah with him, as the text will confirm.

ADAPTING TO THE CIRCUMSTANCE

I cannot help but notice how Isaac adapted to the circumstance. There was a famine in the land, and without any apparent fear or unrest, he sought means through which he might survive. He did not challenge God, or doubt the promises that had been delivered to

Abraham. It is obvious from his action that he intended to remain as an occupant of Canaan, even though the circumstances seemed to suggest this was not the wise thing to do.

Believers Are In A Similar Circumstance

Those in Christ are often in similar circumstances. They are required to adapt to their situation, using wisdom, driven by faith, and without any perceived disobedience to the Lord.

When they are in a place where spiritual nourishment is being ministered, and advancement in the faith is being realized, care must be taken not to choose to relocate where these advantages are not found.

If the circumstances appear impossible, like those experienced by Isaac, believers must choose to do what is least disruptive, and is closest to spiritual advantage and benefit.

GO NOT DOWN INTO EGYPT

"² And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of."

THE LORD APPEARED UNTO HIM

"And the LORD appeared unto him . . ."

To this point in the book of Genesis, there have been four specific references to the Lord **appearing** to someone.

➔ *"And the LORD **appeared** unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him." (Gen 12:7)*

the tent door in the heat of the day" (Gen 18:1)

➔ *"And the LORD **appeared** unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of" (Gen 26:2).*

It is written that the Lord, after Lot had separated from him, *"said unto Abraham,"* but no reference is made to an appearance (Gen 13:14).

Keep in mind that at this time there had been about 1,800 years of human history. **If there is any doubt about the impact of sin upon the human race, it is confirmed by the rarity of Divine appearances to men.** Men

Adam and the Living God. This being the fourth recorded appearance of the Lord to a man, the first three appearances were to Abraham.

As used here, the word *"appeared"* means "TO SEE, LOOK AT, INSPECT, PERCEIVE, CONSIDER." STRONG'S An *"appearance"* of the Lord is, so far as I can understand, an occasion where the physical senses were made aware of the presence of the Lord. That suggests that the *"appearance"* was a kind of accommodation to human frailty. Such appearances were always abbreviated in length, and extremely limited in scope. The Lord did not appear in all of His glory. Sometimes, as in the plain of Mamre with Abraham, the appearance of the Lord was accomplished through angels (Gen 18). At any rate, before such occasions terminated, there was no question concerning who had visited the one who saw the appearance.

Suffice it to say, in these appearances, the Lord made clear to the intended person the One with whom he was dealing, and who it was that was revealing a matter, or making a promise.

DO NOT GO DOWN INTO EGYPT

" . . . and said, Go not down into Egypt . . ."

When Abraham encountered a famine in the land of promise, he went down to Egypt, and the Lord was with him and even prospered him while there (Gen 12:10-13:2). Now, however, He

Keep in mind that at this time there had been about 1,800 years of human history. If there is any doubt about the impact of sin upon the human race, it is confirmed by the rarity of Divine appearances to men.

➔ *"And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD **appeared** to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Gen 17:1)*

➔ *"And the LORD **appeared** unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in*

assume there was some kind of appearance of the Lord to Adam when He brought the animals to him, brought his wife to him, and commissioned them both. Some assume that for some time Adam walked with God. However, there is no reference to any such appearances or fellowship between

speaks differently to Isaac, forbidding him to “go down into Egypt.”

Coming from a certain kind of theological background, I find this Divine directive very interesting. I was taught that much of what we do is established by “precedence.” The word “precedent” means: “A. SOMETHING DONE OR SAID THAT MAY SERVE AS AN EXAMPLE OR RULE TO AUTHORIZE OR JUSTIFY A SUBSEQUENT ACT OF THE SAME OR AN ANALOGOUS KIND. B. THE CONVENTION ESTABLISHED BY SUCH A PRECEDENT OR BY LONG PRACTICE.”^{MERRIAM-WEBSTER} Thus men reasoned, that certain practices were incumbent upon men because they were practiced in the past. These precedents required no Divine authorization or command. The fact that they were done in the past was sufficient to establish they were binding on believers now.

I acknowledge that there is an element of truth to this observation when dealing with certain principles – like being separated from the world, listening to the Lord, etc. However, this

is a rule that cannot be applied with consistency. The fact that early believers met in the Temple (Acts 2:46; 5:20,42), or that Paul taught in a neutral place like the school, of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9-10), by no means suggests that these were things that were to be found in succeeding generations.

In this text, God directs Isaac to react to the famine he is experiencing differently than his father Abraham did – and without any hint that he had disapproved of Abraham going down into Egypt. God was going to do something different with Isaac, which is certainly His prerogative. That is another reason for living by faith.

Some are of the opinion that this word was delivered to Isaac before he went to Abimelech, and that is what constrained him to go to Gerar rather than Egypt. That this is possible, will not deny. However, I see no constraining evidence that it was

probable. I will later provide another possibility.

DWELL IN THE LAND

“ . . . dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of.” Other versions read, “live in the land of which I will tell you,”^{NKJV} “stay in the land of which I will tell you,”^{NASB} “settle in the land that I will show you,”^{NRSV} “keep in the land of which I will give you knowledge,”^{BBE} “abide in the land which I will show unto thee,”^{GENEVA} “stay where I tell you,”^{GWN} and “continue to camp wherever in this land I tell you.”^{NAB}

As with Abraham, Isaac will be directed as he lives within the circumference of God’s revelation. This is a Divine manner mandating that a person live by faith, and not by sight. It is the way the Lord directs our steps – not by mapping out a long-term strategy. It requires waiting on the Lord. “Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD” (Psa 27:14).

SOJOURN HERE, AND I WILL BE WITH THEE

“³ Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father; ⁴ And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”

SOJOURN IN THIS LAND

“Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee . . .” Other versions read, “sojourn in it,”^{DOUAY} “Remain for the present in that country,”^{NJB} “Live here as a foreigner in this land,”^{NLT} “stay here in this land,”^{LIVING} “Live here,”^{GNB} and “Dwell temporarily in this land.”^{AMPLIFIED}

“This land” refers to Canaan, and the area in which he was presently living in particular – Gerar, as specified in verse six: “And Isaac dwelt in Gerar.” As can be seen in the map that is

shown below, Isaac was within the borders of Canaan at the time of our



text, not far from the future locations of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Hebron was not far away, and Beersheba was to the southeast. Isaac was in the land of promise, even though it was being occupied by other nations. He was to remain within the borders of Canaan, and not to leave the land.

I WILL BLESS THEE

“ . . . and will bless thee . . . ”

The promised blessing was contingent upon Isaac remaining in the land, and subject to Divine direction. Under these circumstances God would bless Isaac, giving him the advantage, supplying his need, and causing him to increase. Solomon observed, “The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it” (Prov 10:22).

Many Miss the Blessing

Many miss the blessing of the Lord because they wander from the place where God placed them. Like Ephesus, they leave their “first love” (Rdev 2:4). Like Demas, they forsake the work of the Lord in preference for “this present world” (2 Tim 4:10). These days there is not much being said about steadfastness, diligence, obedience, being unmoveable, being

holy, abounding in the work of the Lord, growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, fighting the good fight of faith, etc. (1 Cor 15:58; 2 Pet 1:5; 1 Pet 1:14; 1 Pet 1:15-16; 1 Pet 3:18; 1 Tim 6:12).

I WILL GIVE ALL THESE COUNTRIES

" . . . for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries..."
Other versions read, *"all these lands,"*
NKJV *"territory"* GNB and *"all this land."*
SEPTUAGINT

There are three perspectives here, and they are represented in the different versions of Scripture.

➔ **COUNTRIES.** KJV/DARBY/DOUAYGENEVA/NJB/RWB
Here the emphasis is on the inhabitants of the land.

➔ **LANDS.** NKJV/NASB/NIV/NRSV/NLT/YLT/AMPLIFIED
This is the real estate that is occupied by the various peoples. The nations that would be displaced were told to Abraham (Gen 15:19-21).

➔ **LAND.** SEPTUAGINT/ABP/BRENTON/CEV
This is the whole of Canaan (*"the land of Canaan"* [Gen 16:3]), the borders of which were specified to Abraham (Gen 15:18).

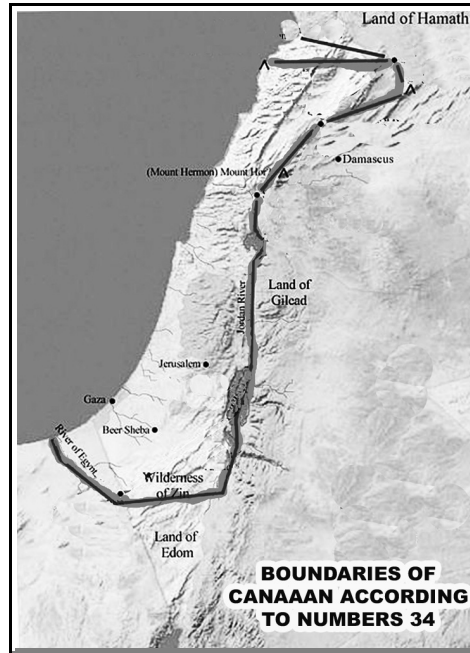
The same promise that was made to Abraham was also given to Isaac.

➔ *"For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever . . . Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee."* (Gen 13:15,17).

➔ *"And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it."* (Gen 15:7)

➔ *"And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."* (Gen 17:8)
I WILL PERFORM THE OATH WHICH I SWARE TO THY FATHER ABRAHAM

" . . . and I will perform the oath which I swear unto Abraham thy father



. . ." Other versions read, *"I will establish the oath,"* NASB *"fulfill the oath,"* NRSV *"confirm the oath,"* CSB *"keep the oath,"* GWN *"in fulfillment of the oath,"* NAB *"I will fulfill the solemn promise,"* NET *"just as I solemnly promised,"* NLT *"I will keep my promise,"* GNB *"I will cause to rise My oath."* LITV

The word *"perform"* has the following lexical meaning: **QUWM** {KOOM}. MEANING: 1) TO RISE, ARISE, STAND, RISE UP, STAND UP . . . COME ON THE SCENE . . . TO STAND . . . TO BE ESTABLISHED, BE CONFIRMED . . . ENDURE . . . TO BE VALID . . . TO BE PROVEN . . . TO BE FULFILLED . . . RATIFY, ESTABLISH, IMPOSE . . . TO CAUSE TO ARISE. . . STRONG'S

There are several fundamental concepts made known in this expression.

➔ **WHAT GOD PROMISES, HE CAUSES TO COME TO PASS.** This means that God's promises are **not** based upon prescience, or seeing ahead what will happen. The fulfillment of the purposes of God have not been mixed with the accomplishments and intentions of men.

➔ **DIVINE TIMING IS INVOLVED.** The word *"performs"* means what has been promised comes on the scene, or is intentionally brought to pass. This involves timing, referred to as *"the*

fulness of the time" (Gal 4:4), *"the time is fulfilled"* (Mk 1:15), and *"the fulness of times"* (Eph 1:10). The *"times,"* Jesus affirmed the Father *"hath in His own power"* (Acts 1:7).

➔ **ASSURANCE THAT GOD WILL DO WHAT HE HAS SAID IS MANDATORY.** This was epitomized in Abraham, of whom it is said, *"And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform"* (Rom 4:21). This is an inspired glimpse of faith. As it is written, *"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God"* (Rom 4:20).

➔ **THE FULFILLMENT OF WHAT GOD HAS PROMISED WILL ENDURE.** This is precisely why God revealed Himself to Isaac. He was assuring Him that what He had promised Abraham concerning his *"seed"* would, in fact take place. As great as Abraham was, the promise God made to him was not limited to him. It included Isaac also.

God Wants Men to Know He Is Faithful

This is why God made oaths. It was not because it was necessary, as it often is with men (Gen 21:23-24; 24:3; 25:33; 50:5). It is rather to teach men that He is *"the faithful God"* (Deut 7:9). He *"is faithful"* (Isa 49:7; 1 Cor 1:9; 10:13; 2 Thess 3:3; Heb 10:23; 1 John 1:9). God *"abideth faithful"* (2 Tim 2:13), and is described as *"a faithful Creator"* (1 Pet 4:19).

Of course, if there is a generation that is fundamentally unacquainted with what the Lord has promised and done, knowing that God is faithful is difficult, to say the least. That is, faith cannot rise above a flicker where the person is incapable of being as Sarah, of whom it is written: *"Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised"* (Heb 11:11).

For a generation to exist in our time that has not, after a staggering

amount of revelation, been brought to this conclusion is startling. It confirms that such a generation is under the control of the wicked one, regardless of their religious profession.

The Effectiveness of Faith

Neither Abraham nor Isaac inherited the land, even though they lived in it. Yet, they knew the promise was true, and they held to it with the tenacity of faith. Later, when writing to believers in Christ, the Spirit testified, *"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God"* (Heb 11:8-10). When addressing the Sanhedrin, Stephen said of Abraham and the land of promise, *"And He gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet He promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child"* (Acts 7:5).

According to appearance, up to that time, the promise to Abraham appeared to have been in vain. Yet, when this word came to Isaac, he did not doubt it, or recall that his father never inherited the land, concluding that he would not do so either. How would those who wonder why God does this or that respond to such a circumstance? God promised to give Abraham the land (Gen 12:7; 13:15,17; 15:7; 17:8; 24:7).

So far as the record is concerned, there has never been a human circumstance that proved too challenging for faith. In all of the trials through which those with faith have passed, it has been fully substantiated that *"whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith"* (1 John 5:4).

Two Differing Views

There are at least two different views of the circumstance before us:–

i.e. God promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob THEY would inherit the land of Canaan. Yet, while they were in this world, they did not receive so much as a piece of land their foot could cover.

➔ One view is that they inherited the land in the persons of their progeny – as when Joshua led Israel in the conquest of the land (Josh 11:15-23). Yet, all of the inhabitants of the

certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put

INHERITING THE INHERITANCE



land were not driven out. They did gather tribute from the Canaanites, yet did not drive them out completely (Josh 17:13). Even during the reign of Solomon, it is written that he reigned over the Philistines (1 Kgs 4:21), and over other "kings" in the land. However, during Solomon's reign, there was no war in the land (1 Kgs 4:24-25). The seed of Abraham received all of the land, but did not occupy it. Hence, there must be more to the Abrahamic promise than meets the eye.

➔ Another view, and the one I prefer, takes into consideration that the world to come will be administered by glorified man. As it is written, *"For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a*

under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Heb 2:5-9).

In the latter view, the pledge of man ruling the world to come is guaranteed by the effectual reign of the glorified *"Man Christ Jesus."* He is the *"First"* of the new generation of men (Rom 8:29) who are destined *"inherit the earth"* (Psa 37:9,11,22; Matt 5:5).

When the saints *"take the Kingdom"* (Dan 7:18,22,27) in *"the regeneration"* (Matt 19:28), Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob shall inherit their inheritance. Jesus alluded to this when He said to His Jewish critics, *"There*

shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out" (Luke 13:28). All of this postulates that the glorified earth will bear some resemblance to the former earth, just as our glorified bodies will bear some resemblance to our personal identity here. Frankly, there are some difficulties with this view. However, it seems to me that the outline of truth can be seen in it.

and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

Again, the same promise vouchsafed to Abraham is also given to Isaac.

➤ *"And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." (Gen 13:16)*

is not conditioned upon human response. The following are among such promises.

- The Seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15).
- God would raise up a Prophet to whom the people would hearken (Deut 18:15,18).
- A virgin would conceive and bring forth a Son (Isa 7:14).
- A forerunner would come preparing the way of the Lord (Isa 40:3-5).
- God would raise up a righteous branch (Jer 23:5).

The nature of promises of this kind demand Divine initiation and management. It is not possible for them to be fulfilled simply by turning over the responsibility of them to men.

The Principle of Reigning

While it is certainly true that the saints now *"reign in life"* by Jesus Christ (Rom 5:17), **the reign is only partial**. Like Israel, we do not presently occupy all of the land, and all of our enemies have not yet been expelled. Spiritual princes like Paul can experience beatings and shipwrecks, and even martyrdom. However, in the world to come, there will be no enemies present, and the whole of our inheritance will be realized.

The secret to overcoming the world is living by faith, with a view to the future. Presently, our bodies are the land from which the enemy is to be driven. We are to govern them, and force them to pay tribute, so to speak, bringing them into subjection (1 Cor 9:27). For *"the elect,"* the day will come when they will play a significant role in the total and final banishment of the wicked. They will judge both men and angels according to the appointment of the Lord (1 Cor 6:2-3).

I WILL MAKE THY SEED TO MULTIPLY

"And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries;

➤ *"And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be." (Gen 15:5)*

➤ *"And I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly." (Gen 17:2)*

➤ *"That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies" (Gen 22:17)*

In an exercise of Divine Sovereignty God will, with both Abraham and Isaac, cause this multiplication to take place: *"I will make" (Gen 12:1; 13:16; 17:6; 26:4).*

There are some matters that are unconditional, and the multiplication of the seed of Abraham and Isaac are among them. **The reason for the unconditionality is that they are directly related to the coming of the Messiah.** Anything connected with that purpose

The nature of promises of this kind demand Divine initiation and management. It is not possible for them to be fulfilled simply by turning over the responsibility of them to men. Too much depends on the fulfillment of such promises for man to manage them. For one thing, they span generations. For another thing they were often attended by impossible circumstances—i.e. Abraham being impotent, Sarah being barren, and Rebekah being barren.

The record of these things is provided in order that we might better know God. Some of the essential aspects of God include the following.

- **God is faithful** – true to His word. (1 Cor 1:9; 10:13)
- **God is able to do what He has promised** (Isa 46:11; Rom 4:21).
- **God is fundamentally good** (2 Chron 7:3; Psa 34:8; 73:1; Nah 1:7; Lk 18:19).
- **There are no impossibilities with God** (Matt 19:26; Lk 1:37).
- **God has power over nature, the devil, and time itself** (Mk 4:39; Rev 12:9; Acts 1:7).
- **God manages His purpose** (Rom 9:11,17; Eph 1:11; 3:10-11; 2 Tim

1:9; 1 John 2:8)

➔ God is kindly disposed toward those who trust in Him (Psa 34:22; Nah

1:7; John 1:12; Rom 3:22).

These are all matters that must be firmly grasped by those in Christ. There

can be no doubt concerning their reality, or their applicability to all who have been made accepted in the Beloved.

BECAUSE ABRAHAM OBEYED MY VOICE

⁵ *Because that Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, my commandments, My statutes, and My laws."*

BECAUSE

"Because that . . ." Other versions read, "All this is because," CJB "in return for," NJB "inasmuch," TNK and "For Abraham." AMPLIFIED

Elsewhere God affirms, *"and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord GOD"* (Ezek 14:23). For example, He raised of Pharaoh for a **cause** – (Ex 9:16). Jesus said there was a **"cause"** for Him coming into the world – that He *"should bear witness to the truth"* John 18:37). There was a **"cause"** why God gave men over to be governed *"vile affections"* – **because** they *"changed the truth of God into a lie"* (Rom 1:25). There is a **"cause"** why God sends strong delusion, so that men may believe a lie and be damned – **because** they did not receive the love of the truth (2 Thess 2:10-11). There is a **"cause"** for Jesus being the Mediator of the New Testament [Covenant] – **because** our conscience must be purged from dead works (Heb 9:14-15).

The lexical meaning of the Hebrew word used here is: **קִנְיָן** {AY'-KEB} **MEANING:** CONSEQUENCE, GAIN, REWARD. . . END . . . AS A CONSEQUENCE, BECAUSE, CONSEQUENTLY . . ." The English meaning for the word *"because"* is: *"FOR THE REASON."* MERRIAM-WEBSTER The word is a conjunction that joins two thoughts together. In this text, *"because"* joins together the commitment made to Isaac with the faithfulness of Abraham. **Here is one of the early examples of one person being blessed because of another person** – certainly an introduction to what takes

place in salvation through Jesus Christ.

ABRAHAM OBEYED MY VOICE

"... Abraham obeyed My voice ..." Other versions read, *"obeyed Me," NASB "heeded what I said," CJB "hearkened to My voice," JPS "Abraham's obedience," NJB "Obeyed My words," ERV "did what I told him to do," ISV "listened to My voice," LITV and "obeyed My summons." MESSAGE*

The text does refer to God's *"voice."* The Hebrew word from which this is translated means: 1) VOICE, SOUND, NOISE 1A) VOICE 1B) SOUND (OF INSTRUMENT. **God spoke to Abraham, so that the patriarch heard the voice and responded appropriately to it.**

It was *"the voice of the Lord"* that Adam and Eve, after they had sinned, heard *"walking in the Garden in the cool*

their language, as He puts His mind and purpose before he people.

When God expresses Himself to men, it is imperative that they listen attentively, and respond obediently. Jesus said to those with impure hearts, *"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"* (Luke 6:46).

Abraham was in the category of people who heard the voice of the Lord, and obeyed it without delay or compunctions. **Now God tells Isaac he is being blessed because of Abraham's obedience to the voice of the Lord.** When the Lord told him to leave Ur, **he did** (Heb 11:8). When the Lord told him to walk through the land, **he did** (Gen 13:17). When he told him to hearken to the voice of Sarah and cast out the bondwoman and her son, **he did** (Gen

When God expresses Himself to men, it is imperative that they listen attentively, and respond obediently.

of the day" (Gen 3:8). Israel obeying the law of God was referred to as *"hearkening,"* or giving heed to, *"the voice of the Lord"* (Ex 15:26; Deut 6:20; 13:18). When Israel walked about in the desert for forty years, it was because they *"obeyed not the voice of the Lord"* (Josh 5:6). The Psalmist cried out, *"The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty"* (Psa 29:4). Fifty times the Scriptures refer to *"the voice of the Lord."* **It is always within the context of His dealings with men.** It has to do with Him making known Himself and His will to men – in

1:10). When He told him to circumcise his entire household, **he did** (Gen 17:11-13).

ABRAHAM KEPT MY CHARGE

" . . . Abraham . . . kept My charge . . ." Other versions read, "kept My requirements," NIV "My words," BBE "My mandate," CSB "My precepts," DOUAY "Mine ordinance," GENEVA "completed the duties," GWN "My injunctions," SEPTUAGINT "My orders," ABP and "kept My instructions." ISV

One such charge was, *"walk*

before Me, and be thou perfect." (Gen 17:1). Another was to keep the covenant of circumcision: *"And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep My covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised"* (Gen 17:9-10).

ABRAHAM KEPT GOD'S COMMANDMENTS

" . . . Abraham . . . kept . . . My commandments . . ."

God commanded Abraham to call the son Sarah would bear to him *"Isaac,"* and he did (Gen 17:19; 21:3). Abraham was commanded to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering, and would have carried it out to the finest detail if

the angel of the Lord had not stopped him (Gen 22).

ABRAHAM KEPT GOD'S STATUTES

" . . . Abraham . . . kept . . . My statutes . . ."

A *"statute"* is an appointed custom or manner. As he was directed, Abraham instituted circumcision (Gen 17:26-27), and commanded his children after him to walk in the ways of the Lord (Gen 18:19). He also was mindful of maintaining a pure seed when he sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac (Gen 24).

ABRAHAM KEPT GOD'S LAWS

" . . . Abraham . . . kept . . . My laws."

So far as the record is concerned,

there were no moral laws spelled out to Abraham – such as the Law of Moses. However, we know by revelation that *"the work of the law"* is, by nature, written into the hearts of men: *"For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another)"* (Rom 2:14-15).

There is a certain intuitive knowledge of right and wrong that God has put in men. I gather that our text means that Abraham lived in comportment with that knowledge, not indulging in immoral practices. Thus he is said to have kept God's *"laws."*

SHE IS MY SISTER

"⁶ And Isaac dwelt in Gerar: ⁷ And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon."

ISAAC DWELT IN GERAR

"And Isaac dwelt in Gerar . . ."

perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father" (Gen 26:3). Abraham had also *"sojourned in Gerar"* (Gen 20:2), which, at the time, was Philistine territory. Yet, it was within the boundaries of the land of Canaan, which had been promised to Abraham and his seed.

SHE IS MY SISTER

that of Abraham (Gen 20:1-2). To the casual reader, it may appear that Isaac simply duplicated what his father did, not having learned from his experience. While Isaac's response to the inquiry about Rebekah was not admirable, it ought not to be viewed as though as much information was available to him as is to us.

Consider some facts about Abraham saying Sarah was his sister – something many assume Isaac knew, although there is no evidence of it.

➡ GENESIS 12:13-19: Abraham went down into Egypt during a famine in Canaan, and there he told Pharaoh that Sarah was his sister. This occurred around 1892 BC.

➡ GENESIS 20:2-15: Abraham confronts Abimelech king of Gerar, and tells him that Satan is his sister. This occurred around 1868, **twenty-four years** after the first occurrence.

➡ GENESIS 26:7: Isaac tells the men of Gerar that Rebekah is his sister. This took place about 1782 BC, **eighty-**

It is not likely that Isaac had considered the action, of his father eighty-six years earlier. It is even questionable that he even knew about the incident, which occurred more than a year before he was born.

Isaac did precisely what the Lord said to do. God told him, *"Go not down into Egypt"* (Gen 26:2), and he did not. He also said, *"Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will*

"And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah . . ."

This is an experience identical to

While this does not sanctify what Isaac did, it does provide a just reason for us to not be harsh in our judgment of him.

six years after the second time Abraham said Sarah was his sister.

It is not likely that Isaac had considered the action, of his father eighty-six years earlier. It is even questionable that he even knew about the incident, which occurred more than a year before he was born. Couple that with the facts that there is no record of God revealing this matter to Isaac, there was no inspired writing from God, nor had there been an exposition of marital propriety to either Abraham or Isaac. Also, to this point, there had been no revelation of eternity, the day of judgment, or of the necessity of seeking the face of the Lord continually. **While this does not sanctify what Isaac did, it does provide a just reason for us to not be harsh in our judgment of him.** Our respect for the Lord should so move us.

Notwithstanding, there are some profitable things confirmed by this incident.

➔ **MAN CANNOT DIRECT HIS OWN WAYS.** It is ever true, *"O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"* (Jer 10:23).

➔ **MAN IS NATURALLY PRONE TO FORGET WHAT THE LORD HAS SAID.** When man fell, that fall impacted upon all of his progeny. Men became dead toward God, death commenced a reign, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, and men were made sinners (Rom 5:16-19). While God does not excuse it, this accounts for why Isaac did this even after God had said to him, *"I will be with thee, and will bless thee"* (Gen 26:3). Notwithstanding this fact, of himself

man does not have the natural ability to correlate Divine promises with human circumstances.

It is not our responsibility to either excuse Isaac or sit in judgment upon him for his action – particularly in view of the fact that God did not reprimand him, either directly or editorially. Suffice it to say, as time moved along, men saw these matters with more and more clarity.

SHE WAS FAIR TO LOOK UPON

"... because she was fair to look upon." Other versions read, *"beautiful to behold,"* ^{NKJV} *"beautiful,"* ^{NASB} and *"attractive in appearance."* ^{NRSV}

At the time of this text, Rebekah had been married to Isaac for 35-40 years. Isaac was forty when they were married (Gen 25:20), and sixty years of age when Jacob and Esau were born (Gen 25:26). That accounts for thirty known years, plus the unknown years since Jacob and Esau were born. Jacob and Esau were grown men at this time. Still, Rebekah had retained her beauty, and was perceived as a desirable woman.

ABIMELECH CONCLUDES REBEKAH IS ISAAC'S WIFE

"⁸ And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife. ⁹ And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife: and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her. ¹⁰ And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us. ¹¹ And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."

WHEN HE HAD BEEN THERE LONG TIME

"⁸ And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time . . ." Other versions read, "had lived there a long time," ^{CJB} *"when very many days were passed, and he abode there,"* ^{DOUAY} *"some time later,"* ^{NLT} *"When some time had passed,"* ^{TNK} *"when the days have been prolonged to him there,"* ^{YLT} *"After he had been there awhile,"* ^{ISV} and *"quite a long time."* ^{MESSAGE}

The length of time Isaac had been in Gerar is not specified – simply that it was *"a long time."* I assume this was several years.

ISAAC WAS SPORTING WITH REBEKAH

, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting

with Rebekah his wife . . ." Other versions read, " Other versions tread, "Sowing endearment," ^{NKJV} *"caressing,"* ^{NASB} *"fondling,"* ^{NRSV} *"playing with,"* ^{BBE} *"dallying with,"* ^{DARBY} *"laughing with,"* ^{ESV} *"making love,"* ^{LIVING} *"hugging and kissing,"* ^{CEV} *"enjoying one another,"* ^{ESV} and *"making fun."* ^{INTERLINEAR}

You will not find much academic help in the word *"sporting."* The lexical definition of the words is **"A PRIMITIVE ROOT; TO LAUGH OUTRIGHT (IN MERRIMENT OR SCORN); BY IMPLICATION, TO SPORT: — LAUGH, MOCK, PLAY, MAKE SPORT,"** ^{STRONG'S}

With characteristic modesty the Spirit moves Moses to report this event. There is no way to satisfactorily identify precisely what is meant by *"sporting,"* nor is there any need to do so. It is only

human curiosity that compels men to continue searching where evidence is unusually sparse.

We know from the response of Abimelech that something was involved that was inappropriate for people who were not married. That, of course, confirms to us that these Philistines had some sense of moral propriety, which itself is a rather arresting consideration.

SHE IS THY WIFE

" . . . And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife: and how saidst thou, She is my sister? . . . "

There is no doubt in the mind of Abimelech, Rebekah is Isaac's wife. He therefore demands *"how saidst thou, She is my sister?"* Mind you, this is a *"long time"* after Isaac began to dwell in that area. Unlike Abraham's experience in Gerar, there had been no move to take Rebekah as a wife, whether of Abimelech of some other Philistine. **I can only conclude that God, in His Sovereignty, was protecting Rebekah, and did not allow anyone else to desire her** – similar to what He did when Abimelech of Abraham's time had taken Sarah to be a wife (Gen 20:6).

BECAUSE

"And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her . . . " Other versions read, *"Because I said, 'Lest I die on account of her,'"* ^{NKJV} *"Because I thought I might lose my life on account of her,"* ^{NIV} *"For fear that I might be put to death because of her,"* ^{BBE} *"Because I thought I might be killed on her account,"* ^{NJB} and *"I thought someone would kill me to get her from me."* ^{LIVING}

Admittedly, this is not the way a person living in the glory of the Son of God would think. **However, it proved to be the way in which those with lesser revelation tended to think.** This certainly did not make that manner of reasoning right. **It did confirm that a change in the nature of man was sorely required.**

Now, Isaac will learn that he had, in fact, misassessed the situation. As I

have already suggested, this was more owing to Divine restraint than to the moral rectitude of Abimelech.

WHAT HAST THOU DONE UNTO US?

"And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us . . . " Other versions read, *"One of the people might soon have lain with your wife,"* ^{NKJV} *"might well have slept with your wife,"* ^{NIV} *"might well have had connection with your wife,"* ^{BBE} *"might have easily gone to bed with your wife,"* ^{GWN} and *"It*

It is remarkable that Abimelech had this kind of knowledge – **the sin of one can impact upon many.** Of course, this is what happened when Adam sinned. Because he sinned, *"death passed upon all men,"* *"death reigned,"* *"judgment came upon all men unto condemnation,"* and *"many were made sinners"* (Rom 5:12-19).

Because of the sin of Achan, a significant number of soldiers died in a humiliating defeat, as well as all of his family (Josh 7:2-26).

Because of the covetousness of

At once the Spirit shows us that there was not a sense of moral rectitude among the Philistines. If they thought a woman was not married, they would have compunctions about using her for their own pleasure.

would have taken very little for one of the men to lie with your wife," ^{NAB} and *"Someone might carelessly have raped her."* ^{LIVING}

At once the Spirit shows us that there was not a sense of moral rectitude among the Philistines. If they thought a woman was not married, they would have compunctions about using her for their own pleasure. All men indeed, *"have sinned and come short of the glory of God"* (Rom 3:23). That condition existed before it was revealed – and this occasion confirms that this was precisely the case.

BROUGHT GUILT UPON US

" . . . "and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us." Other versions read, *"brought guilt upon us,"* ^{NKJV} *"and the sin would have been ours,"* ^{BBE} *"brought a trespass on us,"* ^{DARBY} *"made us guilty of great sin,"* ^{NLT} *"we would be doomed,"* ^{LIVING} *"brought upon us a sin of ignorance,"* ^{BRENTON} and *"made our whole nation guilty!"* ^{CEV}

Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, all of his seed had leprosy (2 Kgs 5:20-27)

ABIMELECH CHARGED ALL THE PEOPLE

" . . . And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."

I gather that God moved Abimelech to issue this edict, in order that Isaac and Rebekah would be protected.

➡ **HE DID THE SAME WITH AHASUERUS** and the Jews, protecting them from any abuse. *"And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them."* (Esther 8:17).

➡ **HE DID THE SAME WITH NEBUCHADNEZZAR**

AND SHADRACH, MESHACH, AND ABEDNEGO.
"Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a

dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort."
(Dan 3:29)

➔ HE DID THE SAME WITH DARIUS AND DANIEL.
"I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men

tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end" (Dan 6:26).

ISAAC SOWS AND REAPS AN HUNDREDFOLD

"¹² Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him."

Dwelling in the land as God had commanded him, Isaac is not idle.

THEN ISAAC SOWED IN THAT LAND

"Then Isaac sowed in that land ..." Other versions read, "Isaac planted crops in that land," ^{NIV} "sowed seed in that land," ^{NRSV} and "planted fields in that place." ^{ERV}

At this time, Isaac still did not own any of the land in Canaan. He was a stranger and a sojourner there – and yet he planted crops because he was dwelling there. Perhaps the agreement that Abimelech had made with Abraham now applied to Isaac as well: "And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee: **dwelt where it pleaseth thee**" (Gen 20:15). He was not living in the land as an owner, but as a tenant, so to speak. Ordinarily, this would be rented property. However, in this case,

as with Abraham, it might have been land Abimelech gave to him for as long as he was there – yet the king retained ownership of it.

The same kind of thing would take some time later when Jacob would come down into Egypt with seventy souls. **The land of Goshen would be given to them** (Gen 45:10; 47:6). The land remained under the ownership of Egypt, but Israel was allowed to dwell in it as strangers and pilgrims.

AN HUNDREDFOLD THE SAME YEAR

"... and received in the same year an hundredfold ..." Other versions read, "reaped that year a hundred times as much as he had sowed," ^{CJB} "harvested a hundred times more grain than he planted." ^{NLT}

The extent of the effects of the famine upon that area is not known. However, even if there was no famine, or after-effects of the famine, the yield Isaac realized was extraordinary. I assume that this was so extraordinary

that the blessing of the Lord is the only thing that could properly account for it.

THE LORD BLESSED HIM

"... and the LORD blessed him."

This is part of the sentence commenced above. **The statement accounts for harvest Isaac realized, as well as the benefits that followed.**

Solomon well wrote, "The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it." (Prov 10:22). His blessing comes by His commandment. As it is written, "I will **command** My blessing upon you" (Lev 25:21). And again, "The Lord shall **command** the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all thou settest thine hand to do" (Deut 28:8). And again, "for there the LORD **commanded** the blessing, even life for evermore" (Psa 133:3).

When the Lord blesses a person, He causes goodness and benefit to be focused upon the people of His choice, regardless of their surroundings.

THE PHILISTINES ENVIED ISAAC

"¹³ And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: ¹⁴ For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him."

Now, the manner of the blessing of the Lord will be delineated. God caused what is now reported to

happen. There was human endeavor, but it did not cause these conditions.

THE MAN WAXED GREAT

"And the man waxed great ..." Other versions read, "began to prosper," ^{NKJV} "became rich," ^{NASB} "his wealth became very great," ^{BBE} "was enriched," ^{DOUAY} "waxed mighty," ^{GENEVA} "continued to be successful," ^{GWN} "was

exalted," ^{SEPTUAGINT} "became richer and richer," ^{NAB} and "was soon a man of great wealth." ^{LIVING}

THE MAN GREW

"... and went forward, and grew until he became very great ..." Other versions read, "continued prospering," ^{NKJV} "continued to grow richer," ^{NASB} "his wealth continued to grow until he

became very wealthy," ^{NIV} "prospered more and more," ^{NRSV} "gained more and more," ^{RSV} "kept getting richer until he was very wealthy," ^{CSB} "went on prospering and increasing," ^{DOUAY} "gathered more and more wealth," ^{ERV} "got richer and richer by the day," ^{MESSAGE} and "gained more and more until he became very wealthy and distinguished." ^{AMPLIFIED}

This is something that God caused. Yet, with all of Isaac's wealth, not one minuscule portion of it was linked with eternity, an eternal inheritance, or a single thing beyond time and this present world.

With revelatory greatness God announces, "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts" (Hag 2:8). Again it is written of God, "But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth" (Deut 8:18).

Here was a stranger, sojourning in the land of Gerar, who was not a property owner. And yet, he kept

getting richer and richer, and obtaining more and more possessions. God made this happen – or it would not have taken place. He was blessing Isaac.

HE HAD POSSESSIONS

" . . . For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants . . ."

➡ **FLOCKS.** Flocks are groups of domesticated animals that are generally brought into a fold: sheep (Song 4:2), goats (Song 6:5).

➡ **HERDS.** These are groups of larger animals: oxen (Gen 32:5), asses (Gen 32:5), cattle (Gen 47:18, swine (Matt 8:31), horses (Ex 9:3), camels (Ex 3:9)

➡ **SERVANTS.** These included males ("manservants" – Deut 12:12; Neh 7:67) and females ("maidservants" – Deut 12:12; Neh 7:67), "bondservants" (Lev 25:39), and "hired servants" (Lev 25:40). Abraham had 318 "trained servants" (Gen 14:14). Perhaps Isaac had even more.

THE PHILISTINES ENVIED HIM

" . . . and the Philistines envied him." Other versions read, "were full of envy," ^{BBE} and "became jealous of him." ^{GWN}

"Envy" involves resentment at the success of another. Jealousy is also involved. Covetousness and grudging is also part of envy.

The envy was caused by the fact that they were not prospering as Isaac was. It was their homeland, and yet a sojourner was doing better in it than themselves. Unbeknown to them, this was all caused by the God of Isaac. The Lord was at work in their presence, but they were not aware of it.

It takes a humble and trustworthy person to endure the envy of others. For those servants of God who will respond properly, and should they be positioned by God for unusual purposes, He can cause them to so prosper that the wicked will be envious. This is good to remember we go about serving the Lord as good and faithful stewards.

WHEN THE WELLS WERE STOPPED

" ¹⁵ For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth."

This is an elaboration of how the envy of the Philistines was made known. It also provides a reason why the Lord so singularly blessed Isaac. It unveiled the hearts of the Philistines.

FOR

"For . . ." Other versions read, "now," ^{ASV} "and," ^{DARBY} "In so much," ^{GENEVA} "So," ^{GWN} and "They got back at him." ^{MESSAGE}

When they first saw Isaac prospering so rapidly and extensively, the Philistines retaliated in a certain way. This only provoked the Lord to

bless Isaac more and more, totally frustrating their efforts.

ALL THE WELLS HIS FATHER'S SERVANTS DIGGER

" . . . all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father . . ."

There were a number of wells that Abraham's servants had dug in that area. These were no doubt used to refresh his flocks and herds. One well was dug when Abraham and Abimelech made a covenant with each other (Gen 21:25,30). We have no other account of well-digging. There would have been no point for mentioning it at all, except for the fact of the envious Philistines who had given vent to their envy.

THE PHILISTINES HAD STOPPED THEM

When they first saw Isaac prospering so rapidly and extensively, the Philistines retaliated in a certain way. This only provoked the Lord to bless Isaac more and more, totally frustrating their efforts.

" . . . the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth." Other versions read, "stopped up by filling them with earth," ^{NASB} and "the Philistines had closed and filled with earth." ^{AMPLIFIED}

To show their contempt for Isaac,

and as an expression of their unwarranted envy, the Philistines clogged up the wells that had been dug by Abraham's servants, throwing earth into them. Thus the wells were reduced to the same state in which they existed prior to being dug – underground sources of water that were not

accessible. This was no doubt designed to provoke Isaac to leave the area. However, God had commanded Isaac to stay in that land, and, being obedient, he would not leave. God had already promised Isaac He was going to give him all these countries, and Isaac had believed Him.

GO FROM US!

" ¹⁶ And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we."

GO FROM US

"And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us . . ." Other versions read, "Go away from us," ^{NKJV} "Move away from us," ^{NIV} "You must go away from us," ^{CJB} "Depart from us," ^{DOUAY} "Get thee from us" ^{GENEVA} "Leave us and go elsewhere," ^{NET} "Abimelech ordered Isaac to leave the country, Go somewhere else." ^{NLT}

Abimelech sees this as an irreconcilable situation. To him, there is no solution but for Isaac to leave.

THOU ART MIGHTIER THAN WE

" . . . for thou art much mightier than we." Other versions read, "you are too powerful for us," ^{NASB} "you are stronger than we are," ^{BBE} "you are much too powerful for us," ^{CSB} and "you have become far too numerous for us." ^{NAB}

A few centuries later, when Israel would be in Egypt as God had told

Abraham, Pharaoh reasoned the same way: *"And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of **the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land**"* (Ex 1:9-10). While Pharaoh resorted to a more violent strategy, his analysis was precisely like that of Abimelech: there were simply too many of the people of Abraham's offspring.

THE WELLS WERE DUG AGAIN

" ¹⁷ And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. ¹⁸ And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them."

ISAAC DEPARTED THENCE

"And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there . . ."

Isaac left the immediate area, and went to *"the valley of Gerar,"* which is distinguished from the city of Gerar, and, according to historians, some distance from it. ^{JARCHI}

The thing to note here is the



peaceable nature of Isaac. **As soon as he saw his presence caused contention, he removed himself.** He was certainly not contentious, which, as will later be confirmed, made him quite different than the Philistines.

ISAAC DUGGED AGAIN THE WELLS

And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham . . ."

Once relocated, Isaac went to work uncovering the wells the Philistines had clogged with dirt. These were required resources, needed for his numerous flocks and herds, as well as his household with its many servants. At the first, he will not dig new wells, but will recover the ones that had originally been dug by his father,

Abraham.

The stupidity of the Philistines is seen in their work – stopping up the wells that Abraham dug. These were good wells, and brought forth good water that they could have used. Yet, because of their lack of respect for Abraham, they would not use the water he had made available.

A Similar Situation

The saints of God face a similar situation. Actually, the good things we have received from God could bring profit to anyone desiring and using them. But they cannot see it. **What the world is doing does not require this refreshment, so they refuse to use it.** Of even greater magnitude, the professing church does not need water from the wells of God for what they are doing. They have chosen to not only refuse to drink the water themselves, but have went about to stop it from flowing altogether. They have set themselves in opposition to those who live by this water.

HE NAMED THEM THEIR ORIGINAL NAMES

“ . . . and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them.”

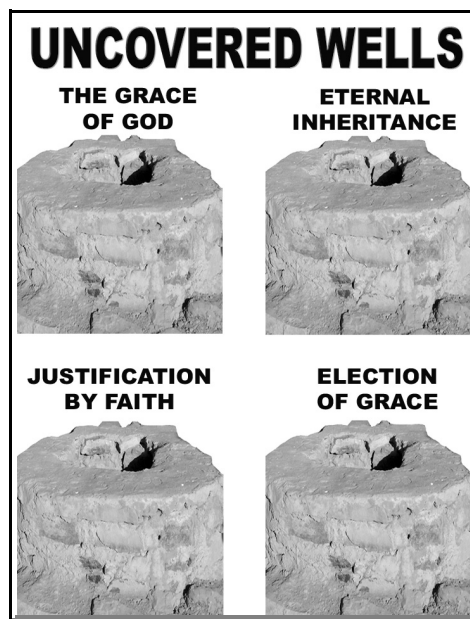
We do not know the names that had originally been given to these wells. However, Isaac did know them, and restored the names of the wells, and the wells themselves.

A MOST PRECISE TYPE

There are some very precious fundamental doctrines that can be likened unto refreshing wells. When water flows freely from them, there tends to be better spiritual health among the churches. When they are clogged, all manner of doctrinal and practical corruption begins to surface.

When the church became institutionalized with the rise of Catholicism, these wells were stopped up by the rubbish of religion tradition. During this time, there was an emphasis placed on the institution and its hierarchy. The truth was largely withheld from the people, and a religion of empty routine was adopted. As a consequence, there was, within the church, a prevailing ignorance of these doctrines. For purposes of illustration I have chosen four of these wells: The grace of God, eternal inheritance, justification by faith, and the election of grace.

There is clear teaching on all of these – teaching that once flowed freely within the churches. A sampling of texts on these subjects is provided below, all addressed to believers.



➡ **THE GRACE OF GOD.** Acts 15:11; 20:24; Rom 5:15; 1 Cor 15:10; Eph 2:5,8; 3:3-7; 1 Tim 1:14; Tit 2:11; Heb 2:9

➡ **ETERNAL INHERITANCE.** Heb 9:15; Rom 6:23; 2 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 2:10; Heb 5:9; 9:12; Rev 3:21;

22:5

➡ **JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.** Rom 3:20-5:1; 3:20,28; 4:25; 5:1,16,18; Gal 2:16; 3:11,24

➡ **THE ELECTION OF GRACE.** Acts 13:48; Rom 8:29-33; 9:11; 11:5,7,128; Eph 1:4-5,11; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; Tit 1:1; 1 Pet 1:2; 2:9; 5:13; 2 Pet 1:10.

During the Reformation Movement (16th Century), and for an extended period, some of these wells were uncovered, and the theological rubble that had been thrown into them was discarded. Because of the volume of theological rubbish that had been adopted, the waters were not as pure and voluminous as was possible.

Then, with the rise of rationalism, and the vaunting of the mind of man, a new kind of religious thinking began to surface. Men began to obscure the involvement of God Himself in redemption, and the indispensability of a living and reigning Christ. The ability of man was overstated, and therefore an unavoidable emphasis was placed on the here and the now. As a result, the wells were again clogged, for all of those wells placed the accentuation on God and Christ.

We are now in a juncture of human history when some few men are re-digging these wells – unclogging them so their waters can refresh the saints. Like the wells Isaac uncovered were in the promised land, so these wells are in the places God has ordained for the saints to occupy. However, equally true, this very land, so far as this world is concerned, is occupied by spiritual Philistines.

The modern church is to the saints what the Philistines were to Isaac. It tends to hide the truth.

A WELL OF SPRINGING WATER

“¹⁹ And Isaac's servants digged in | the valley, and found there a well of | springing water.”

Just as in the days of Abraham, a famine occurred in Canaan in the days of Isaac. Isaac is directly by God and a series of events follow – Given O. Blakely

THEY DUG IN THE VALLEY

Even with the wells Abraham had dug being uncovered, more water was needed, and thus the servants of Isaac began to dig in the valley – where they themselves were located. They knew that under the surface, where it could not be seen, there was an abundance of water. Thus, they commenced to dig.

THEY FOUND A WELL OF SPRINGING WATER

This is water that is flowing like a river beneath the surface. When men dig down to that flowing river, and provide a proper channel for the flowing water, it comes to the surface like a refreshing spring, bringing cool water to the people. These are not stagnant pools of water, but moving waters that are always cool and refreshing.

These underground sources of water are what was opened up in the flood of Noah's time – *"the fountains of the great deep"* (Gen 7:11). Scriptures refer to springs of this sort as *"running water"* (Leviticus 14:5,6) and *"living waters"* (Zechariah 14:8). The glories of the world to come are said to include this kind of refreshment: *"And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I*

The secret to maintaining life in Christ is to tap into what is eternal and in the realm of the unseen. That "living water" can sustain the soul only as it is brought to the surface, where weary souls can drink it in abundance.

will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." (Rev 21:6).

Because of its massive underground source, water from such wells is, by its very nature, abundant and long-lasting.

A Type

The maintenance of spiritual life comes from a source like this. Isaiah referred to *"wells of salvation"* (Isa 12:3). These were wells made available to men from which a vast and immeasurable supply of spiritual water flows. That source is to spiritual life what a vast underground river is to mortal life.

The secret to maintaining life in Christ is to tap into what is eternal and in the realm of the unseen. That *"living water"* can sustain the soul only as it is

brought to the surface, where weary souls can drink it in abundance. It is *"the water of life"* (Rev 21:6; 22:1,17). Jesus referred to it as *"living water"* (John 4:10,11; 7:38).

You Can Be A Well

If you are in Christ Jesus, you yourself can become a well. Having been anchored in Jesus, the refreshing water of life can flow through you. Jesus referred to this marvelous privilege when He walked among men. Hear His words, together with apostolic explanation: *"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)"* (John 7:38-39). **God be praised, He IS glorified now!**

STRIVING FOR THE WELLS

"²⁰ And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him. ²¹ And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah."

As long as the Philistines were present, Isaac would experience trouble. Although the land was promised to him, foreign and hostile people presently occupied it, and they would be contentious. It was their nature to be so.

THE HERDMEN OF GERAR

"And the herdmen of Gerar did

strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him . . ."

The herdmen of Gerar were too lazy to dig their own well. However, when someone else dug one, they claimed it for their own, because they saw the land as belonging to them, and Isaac was a stranger in their land.

Isaac named the well *"Esek,"* which means *"DISPUTE,"* or *"CONTENTION."* STRONG'S However, being fundamentally peaceful, he did not fight over the well. He did what believers are admonished to do, *"Let him seek peace and pursue*

it" (1 Pet 3:11).

THEY DIGGED ANOTHER WELL

"And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah."

Not content with the well Isaac had relinquished to them, the Philistines also contended for *"another well"* that he now dug. He named that well, *"Sitnah,"* which means *"STRIFE."* STRONGS

Will this discourage Isaac? Will it move him to leave the land, even though the Lord has commanded him to remain there? The faithfulness of this man will again rise to the surface.

A WELL WITHOUT STRIVING

²² And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

HE REMOVED FROM THENCE

"And he removed from thence. . ."
Other versions read, *"he moved from there,"* ^{NKJV} and *"he moved on from there."* ^{NIV}

perhaps it was too inconvenient for them. Of course, behind the scenes the Lord was governing the situation, as Isaac will later acknowledge.

This time Isaac named the well "Reoboth," which means: "WIDE PLACES OR STREETS," ^{STRONGS} – a kind of synonym for freedom, or being able to move about freely without contention. Of course, had Isaac ceased to dig, he would have been forced to fight to use the other

given us room," ^{DOUAY} *"The LORD has now given us ample room,"* ^{NAB} *"At last the LORD has created enough space for us,"* ^{NLT} *"now hath Jehovah given enlargement to us."* ^{YLT}

It is important to note what Isaac did NOT say. He did **not** say, "At last the Philistines are not bothering us," or, "At last our efforts paid off," or "The Lord helps those who help themselves." **Rather, he acknowledges that the Lord was working all along.** He was making room for Isaac, guiding him to the place where he could survive without needless contention.

By making room for Isaac, He was providing a place where they would not have to contend with the Philistines, and where there would be no clogging of the well.

A Type

As the people of God continue to seek means to sustain spiritual life, there will eventually come a time when God will make room, or pleasant spiritual surroundings, in which to live. For us, these are surroundings are holy brethren, and an environment in which the truth can flow more freely. So far as the world is concerned, we will never be free from its opposition as long as we are here. But when it comes to drinking the water of life and sustaining the soul – well, that is another matter. **Many of you have tasted this freedom, and know very well how blessed it is to dwell together in unity with those of like precious faith** (Psa 133).

WE SHALL BE FRUITFUL IN THE LAND

" . . . and we shall be fruitful in the land."

By "fruitful," Isaac meant that whatever they did would prosper, as stated in the first Psalm: *"And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper"*

This was not owing to any deficiency in the faith of Abraham and Isaac. Rather, it was because the fulness of the time had not yet come to divulge what God had purposed from the foundation of the world. However, everything was pointed in that direction.

Since the Lord, after he had located in Gerar, had said to him, *"Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee"* (Gen 26:3), I gather that Isaac did not leave the land of Gerar altogether – although he will do so later as apparently directed. This time, it appears that he simply moved beyond the area where the "herdmen of Gerar" were located. Once again, he is avoid contention and seeking peace.

HE DUGGED ANOTHER WELL

" . . . and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth . . ."

Notice that Isaac did not cease digging wells. He did not stop seeking for water because of the difficulties associated with his efforts.

Once again, his efforts were rewarded and he found water. This time, however, apparently being out of the convenient reach of the herdman of Gerar, they did not strive for the well

wells he had dug, or to leave the land altogether, even though God had told him to stay.

Something To Be Seen

In our day, hearty spiritual effort is not at all common. Some people, in an effort to find spiritual nourishment, give up too easily. **When they face resistance, they withdraw from any aggressive effort to obtain a means through which they can survive.** The religious landscape is cluttered with such people. They have either learned to live with contention, or to live without spiritual nourishment in an emaciated state.

The proper manner is to seek until you find; ask until you get the answer; knock until the door is opened (Matt 7:7-8).

THE LORD HATH MADE ROOM FOR US

" . . . and he said, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." Other versions read, *"Now hath the Lord*

(Psa 1:3).

For Isaac this was largely limited to his life upon the earth, for that was the framework within which all of the

promises given to Abraham and himself were couched. This was not owing to any deficiency in the faith of Abraham and Isaac. Rather, it was because the fulness of the time had not yet come to

divulge what God had purposed from the foundation of the world. However, everything was pointed in that direction. Preparations were being made for the coming of Christ and eternal salvation.

HE WENT UP TO BEERSHEBA

"²³ And he went up from thence to Beersheba." Other versions read, "and he went from there to Beersheeba." NKJV



This does not mean that Isaac went immediately to Beersheba. As we have noted before, the Lord reports history from its peaks, or points of change and, advance. When it is significant, He reports the valleys, or points of decline, also. Such was the case when during the following occasions. These times were always followed by Divine judgment – that is the reason for reporting them.

The Valleys

- When Adam and Eve sinned (Gen 3:1-24).
- When Cain killed Abel (Gen 4:1-16).
- The world at the time of the flood (Gen 6:5-7).

- The [project of Shinar (Gen 11:1-9).
- The condition of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 13:13; 18:20-21).
- The casting out of Hagar and Ishmael (Gen 21:12-13).
- Israel's refusal to enter into Canaan (Num 13:31-14:10).
- Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Israel, and the Babylonian captivity (2 Kgs 24-25).
- Jerusalem's rejection of Christ (Matt 23:34-39).
- The of Babylon the Great (Rev 17:1-6).

The Mountains

- The saving of Noah (Gen 6:18; 8:18).
- The calling of Abraham (Gen 12:1-3).
- The sustaining of Abraham during a famine (Gen 12:10-13:1).
- Abraham blessed by Melchizedek (Gen 14:18-20).
- The birth of Isaac (Gen 21:1-8).
- God makes a covenant with Abraham (Gen 15:18; 17:2-21).
- The giving of the covenant of circumcision (Gen 17:10-14).

- The birth of Jacob and Esau (Gen 25:23-27).
- The passing of the birthright to Jacob (Gen 25:31-35).
- The sustaining of Isaac during a famine and his enrichment (Gen 23:26:1-13).
- Isaac locating in Beersheba (Gen 26:23).
- Joseph's exaltation (Gen 41:39-41:57).
- Israel's deliverance from Egypt (Ex 12).
- The rebuilding of Jerusalem (Ezra 6:14-15; Neh 1:1-6:15).
- The birth and ministry of John the Baptist (Luke 1; Matt 3:1-3).
- The birth, ministry, and death of Christ (Matt-John).
- The ascension of Christ (Acts 1:9-11).
- The day of Pentecost (Act 2).
- The world to come (Rev 21-22).

These are the kind historical texts that are designed to shape our thinking, introducing us to both the nature and purpose of God.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 9/21/12. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The forty-second lesson will cover verses 23 through 35 of chapter twenty-six: "THE LORD APPEARS TO ISAAC." The Lord appears to Isaac assuring him that He would be with him as he was with his father, Abraham. Isaac built an altar there, called on the name of the Lord, and his servants dug a well. Abimelech comes to Isaac and asks him to covenant not to do them harm. An agreement was made, and Isaac sent them away after serving a feast. His servants reported that they had found water. It is then reported that Esau married two Hittite women, which were a grief of mind to both Isaac and Rebekah. The meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

Just as in the days of Abraham, a famine occurred in Canaan in the days of Isaac. Isaac is directly by God and a series of events follow – Given O. Blakely