

Feb 4, 2007

**THE WOMAN AND THE WELLS**  
**GENESIS 26.7-33**

**1. FAMINE, DESCENT, AND PROMISE (1-6)**

[Recap] - Isaac begins his mission in famine, just like his father had experienced earlier (cf. 12.10ff.). Indication of the beginning of a new age; the world left after Adam's sin is one of death.

Famine drives him out of the land. Told not to go into Egypt but to dwell in Gerar. These Philistines were "brothers" because of the covenant that Abimelech I made with Abraham (cf. 21.22ff.).

Promise of blessing: a present privilege and vocation as well as a future hope.

Isaac's seed will inherit "all these lands;" i.e., not just the land of Canaan but all the lands outside of Canaan as well.

His seed will be as numerous as the stars in heaven. There will be many of them and they will rule the created order just as God ordained the stars to do in Genesis 1.

In Isaac's seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed. All the nations, that is, will live life as God intended from the beginning.

**2. QUARREL CONCERNING THE SISTER-BRIDE (7-11)**

**Protection for the bride (7):** Attack on the bride by Pharaoh in 12.10ff.; attack on the bride and her seed by Abimelech I (ch. 20). Both times Abraham seeks to protect his bride by telling the kings that she is his sister. Isaac uses same battle plan.

The deception of Abraham and Isaac is *lex taliones*, the law of retribution, "eye for eye," "tooth for tooth," "deception for deception." The serpent used deception on the woman in the Garden to cause her to sin, now, it is only just that he should be deceived for his defeat.

Self-preservation involved. Isaac had a mission; a mission that included and could not be completed without Rebekah.

Husbands: Would you rather deceive others in order to stay alive to protect your wife, or go tell everyone the situation, die, and allow your wife to be ravaged by other men? Hopefully, you would do everything you could to protect your wife.

Isaac knew that telling them he was his brother would preserve his life and protect his wife. If any person wanted access to Rebekah, they were supposed to come through him, the brother. (Dealt with in sermons on chs. 12 & 20.)

Rebekah was forbidden fruit for these other men. The accent on her being "beautiful to behold" connects her to the fruit in the Garden (3.6). Isaac was her guardian brother-husband-priest who was to keep out the serpent.

**Isaac 'isaacing' with Rebekah (8):** Translated "showing endearment" in the NKJ, "sporting" in the AV, and "caressing" in the NAS. It is the verb form of the name "Isaac." Isaac was 'isaacing' his wife. ESV translates this as "laughing with" Rebekah.

The emphasis seems to be on the fact that Isaac was being true to his name. He was living with Rebekah as the seed was supposed to live. Their oneness in the name "Isaac" is being revealed. (Remember, the woman takes on the name of the man in her creation.)

**Accusing the righteous (9-10):** Questioned by Abimelech and note: "What have **you** done to us? One of the people might soon have lain with your wife, and **you** would have brought guilt on us." In other words, "One of our people might have raped your wife and **YOU** would have brought guilt on us." Who would have been the one(s) bringing guilt? Isaac or the ones committing the sin?

This is what the unrighteous do: they blame the righteous for the problems that befall them even though they are the ones acting wickedly and bringing it upon themselves. Jesus was killed for this reason.

**Consequence for touching the forbidden fruit (11):** Echoes of Garden; cp. 2.17 w/ Abimelech's statement: "He who touches this man or his wife *shall surely be put to death.*" They are set apart by Abimelech's word and made forbidden fruit.

**3. BLESSING AND REJECTION AMONG THE NATIONS (12-16)**

**Developing a new Garden (12-14a):** Isaac is a husband(man), so he begins developing or tending the garden.

As YHWH promised him, he was blessed. This blessing translated into a hundredfold crop. He would be the one who is prepared to feed the nations. (Remember, God blesses him so that all the nations of the earth will be blessed.)

v. 13: Isaac is simply called “the man.” This is not the word normally translated “Adam.” It is the Hebrew word that is used first to describe the relationship of the man to his wife. It emphasizes, in many respects, the marriage.

As I have mentioned in the past, there is a particular connection between the wife and the Garden throughout Scripture, beginning in Genesis 2. This is made explicit in Song of Solomon. Note our words “husband/husbandman” and relationship of wife/garden.

God’s blessing causes him literally “to begin to become great, and he continued to be great until he became very great.” He became wealthy, continued growing in wealth, and he became very wealthy.

**The anti-Garden people (14b-15):** “the Philistines envied him.” That is, they hated Isaac for being prosperous and would go to the extent of destroying what he had in order to keep him from having it.

Hebrew word for “envy” is not always understood negatively. It is translated “jealous” in other places. God declares his name to be “Jealous” in several places in Scripture (cf. Ex 20.5; 34.14; *et al.*)

Righteous jealousy = protecting what rightfully belongs to you. E.g., God’s bride, his people, rightfully belong to him and His jealousy is provoked because of unfaithfulness. That is righteous.

Perverting jealousy, or what we would call envy, is despising someone else having something even though it lawfully belongs to them. Envy leads to destruction, as is made evident by the Philistines stopping up the wells which Abraham had dug. Direct attack on the covenant. Killing the wells with “dust” (cf. Gen 3).

**Driven from the land (16):** This is an inverted Garden scene like there was with Pharaoh and Abraham in ch. 12. The righteous are being driven from the Garden and the unrighteous are remaining in it. Exodus scene.

#### 4. QUARREL CONCERNING WELLS (17-22)

##### *The Exodus of Isaac (17)*

**Reclaiming the covenant (18):** References are being made to the earlier covenant with Abraham and Abimelech as well as parallels to the attack on the bride.

(1) Wells dug during the days of Abraham and stopped up after his death. Isaac digs them again and gives them the names Abraham first gave them. Isaac is calling the Philistines to repentance, to turn back and acknowledge the “names” of these wells; i.e., honor the covenant.

(2) This section concerning these wells parallels the quarrel concerning Rebekah earlier ... and for good reason. Wells and women are connected. I have explained this more in the past, so I will be brief. Cf. Prov 5.15ff.

**Quarreling of “brothers” (19-21):** Cp. incident of Abraham and Lot (ch. 13). Quarreling herdsmen. Separation of “brothers.”

“Esek,” = “contention.” “Sitnah” = “enmity” or “accusation.” Wells become memorials; means of remembrance.

**Broad places and fruitfulness (22):** Rehoboth = “broad places.” They will be made fruitful through flowing water.

#### 5. PROMISE, FEASTING, AND WELLS (23-33)

**Renewing the covenant at Beersheba (23-24):** worship established in the land by Abe and place of former covenant.

**A (re)new(ed) holy mountain (25):** altar is a memorial to God’s word at this place. Pitches his tent = est. his priesthood. Water flowing // to water from God’s mountain in the original Garden.

**The Gentiles seek him (26-29):** They are repenting and submitting to the seed.

**A feast provided by the seed (30):** Isaac feeds them with the blessings of YHWH.

**Peace (31):** Reconciliation to the seed; wholeness in relationship; no more enmity.

**Living water (32-33):** well from earlier; water has gone out and given life to the nations.

(1) Our responsibility is to call people to the feast and feed them.