

# GENESIS 26:1-35

## DEJA-VU ALL OVER AGAIN, AND PLENTY OF NEW WELLS ALSO

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I'm sure most of us have experienced the phenomena known as déjà-vu. That is where you find yourself in a place or circumstance in which it seems that you have already been. If you are familiar with the baseball personality Yogi Berra, then you are familiar with the expression, "It's like dejavu all over again."

Today we will find Isaac in the same predicament in which his father found himself. There is a famine in the land and the logical thing to do is to go to Egypt where there is always plenty of food. Why not go there? Daddy did. At any rate that is where Isaac finds himself as we move into chapter 26.

**Gen 26:1** *There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar.*

**Gen 26:2** *Then the LORD appeared to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you.*

**Gen 26:3** *Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father.*

**Gen 26:4** *And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed;*

**Gen 26:5** *because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."*

It appears that as the famine began to make itself known, that Isaac began moving southward towards Egypt. As he got to Gerar, he most likely stopped to graze and water the herds.

Abimelech and Phicol are not proper names but proper titles. Hence these aren't necessarily the same two guys with whom Abraham dealt.

It was at this point that God stopped Isaac and talked to him about not going to Egypt.

Egypt is a type of the world. God didn't want Isaac going to the world for help. This is why God reminds him of His promise to his father and how that promise extends to him, Isaac.

We live in a day and time where there is all kinds of help for all situations. In a way that is good, in another way it isn't because it can lead to families, friends and the church abdicating their responsibilities. Instead of us helping, it is easy to point people to the government. That leads to people seeing the government as their provider. We wouldn't want that to happen would we?

God wants Isaac to know that He has promised these things and that He will see that they come to pass. The only catch, Isaac has to stay in the Promised Land where the famine is.

- Why do we so often run to the world for help?
- Look at how God responded to Isaac heading to Egypt. He was patient and blessed him – reiterating and then giving more specifics to the promise He had given Abraham.

We see in verse 6 that he did just that.

***Gen 26:6 So Isaac dwelt in Gerar.***

**Gen 26:7** *And the men of the place asked about his wife. And he said, "She is my sister"; for he was afraid to say, "She is my wife," because he thought, "lest the men of the place kill me for Rebekah, because she is beautiful to behold."*

**Gen 26:8** *Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked through a window, and saw, and there was Isaac, showing endearment to Rebekah his wife.*

**Gen 26:9** *Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, "Quite obviously she is your wife; so how could you say, 'She is my sister'?" Isaac said to him, "Because I said, 'Lest I die on account of her.' "*

**Gen 26:10** *And Abimelech said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the people might soon have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us."*

**Gen 26:11** *So Abimelech charged all his people, saying, "He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."*

**Gen 26:12** *Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him.*

Have you ever heard the expression, "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree?" In this instance it didn't. This is dejavu all over again as Yogi would say. Abraham did the same thing when during a famine he went to Egypt and then told everyone that his wife was his sister in order to protect himself.

Apparently both of them married beautiful women and both were insecure at the same time.

Eventually Abimelech happened to see Isaac showing endearment to Rebekah. The KJV says they were sporting. You get the picture. At that point the gig was up. Abimelech confronted Isaac and the truth came to the surface. Abimelech feared the God of Isaac even if Isaac didn't trust that God would protect him.

Did Isaac really think that God would bless him as He did his father and then let him get hurt in some way?

Do we think the same way? God didn't to bless him in the land of Canaan to leave him. When we know that God sends us somewhere specific that is when we should be the most confident.

- How could Isaac do such a thing coming off of such a spiritual experience as actually talking with God face to face?
- Fathers, look at how our actions can affect our children. In this case, Isaac wasn't even around when his father pulled the same stunt.
- Pay close attention to who actually exposed Isaac's sin. It wasn't God, but an unbeliever. What kind of example is this? We are supposed to be different, beyond reproach. If we disobey, there will usually be an unbeliever watching from a window somewhere.

Once Isaac was no longer living a lie, then God moved and blessed him.

**Gen 26:12** *Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him.*

**Gen 26:13** *The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous;*

**Gen 26:14** *for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So the Philistines envied him.*

If you don't look at this from God's perspective then all you can see is what we see every day. We see some prospering while some don't. Ultimately God is behind everything.

Look at this progression. We are told that God blessed Isaac with a great harvest and continued to do so for years to come. This made him a wealthy man.

But Isaac is still in the land of the Philistines. Can God bless someone when they are not in His will? Apparently He can and sometimes does. But there is a reason for this blessing beyond just making Isaac wealthy. Look at the affect Isaac's wealth has on the Philistines.

As the story unfolds we will see things get worse before they get better.

**Gen 26:15** *Now the Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, and they had filled them with earth.*

**Gen 26:16** *And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we."*

**Gen 26:17** *Then Isaac departed from there and pitched his tent in the Valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.*

**Gen 26:18** *And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. He called them by the names which his father had called them.*

**Gen 26:19** *Also Isaac's servants dug in the valley, and found a well of running water there.*

**Gen 26:20** *But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours." So he called the name of the well Esek, because they quarreled with him.*

**Gen 26:21** *Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also. So he called its name Sitnah.*

**Gen 26:22** *And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, because he said, "For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."*

**Gen 26:23** *Then he went up from there to Beersheba.*

The Philistines were both angry at and afraid of Isaac. They began to run him out of town. Isaac responded by moving just down the road. Then they pushed him further out of town. Finally he gets some space and then moves to Beersheba, the home of Abraham.

What does it take to get us to move back into the will of God and the land of promise?

Look what happens when Isaac gets back to Canaan.

**Gen 26:24** *And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham's sake."*

**Gen 26:25** *So he built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well.*

Now there is peace AND prosperity. Now see the how that affected Abimelech.

**Gen 26:26** *Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and Phichol the commander of his army.*

**Gen 26:27** *And Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?"*

**Gen 26:28** *But they said, "We have certainly seen that the LORD is with you. So we said, 'Let there now be an oath between us, between you and us; and let us make a covenant with you,*

**Gen 26:29** *that you will do us no harm, since we have not touched you, and since we have done nothing to you but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the LORD.' "*

**Gen 26:30** *So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank.*

**Gen 26:31** *Then they arose early in the morning and swore an oath with one another; and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.*

**Gen 26:32** *It came to pass the same day that Isaac's servants came and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, "We have found water."*

**Gen 26:33** *So he called it Shebah. Therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day.*

**Gen 3:15** *And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."*

Finally in verse 22 he moved again and dug another well. They left him alone there. The well was named Rehoboth - spaciousness.

Now Isaac had some elbowroom to operate. God put space between Isaac and his enemies. There is also a time factor here. God is allowing the Philistines to see Isaac's prosperity and think this thing through.

Eventually they come and want to negotiate a peace treaty.

They want peace while Isaac wants to know why they want to play nice all of a sudden. Their response is that they allowed him to leave in peace. They didn't harm him when they felt could have.

Actually what we see here is that they were not only envious of Isaac but they were afraid of him also when they ran him out of town.

His humility and God's sustenance caused him to come out on top.

The result:

Abimelech recognized that Isaac was blessed of the Lord.

- Was this on account of Isaac's "obvious faith"?
- Do we have "obvious faith"?
- Do the lost that are around us give God credit for our success?
- Two reasons why they might not.
  1. secularism

2. They don't hear us attributing our success to God. We aren't "obvious."

Summation:

In this episode, Isaac's first sin was like that of his father. He doubted God's ability to care for him so he left seeking a better land. His second sin, like that of his father was lying about his wife. In this, he demonstrated a lower moral standard than the surrounding culture. That is never a good thing.

What is it taking God to get you home?

- When He sends us somewhere He didn't do it to leave us.
- Sometimes it gets worse before it gets better.
- Sometimes He has to put some space between our enemies and us.
- God wants us to be credible to those around us.
- We need to know that our decisions affect everyone around us. No man is an island.
  
- There is always an unbeliever watching from a window. Be on your best behavior!
- We need to be obvious in our faith.
- We need to give God the glory for our successes and relish in *HIS* success.