

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

GENESIS 23-26

According to the *American Association Of Retired People*, folks under the age of 35 say that 30 years old is the age of peak physical attractiveness. But people over age 65 say the best looking age is 46 years old.

Apparently, the older a person gets the older is their idea of the best-looking age. Of course, it could be the older you get the worse your vision; which is why you view older people as more physically attractive. But apparently, *older eyes* are fond of *older appearances*.

Well, Genesis tells us when Sarah was 65, Abraham saw her as a beauty queen. When she reached 90 his opinion hadn't changed. And it wasn't just his view. Egypt's pharaoh and the Philistine king agreed.

Author, Henry Morris, offers an explanation for Sarah's ageless beauty. Being post-menopausal, to birth and nurse a son, God had to rejuvenate her body, inside and out. A total restoration enhanced her beauty.

Whatever the cause, Sarah was attractive long past what most women consider their prime. To Abraham, Sarah was as pretty *the day he buried her, as the day he married her*. Which sadly, brings us to Genesis 23...

Verse 1, "**Sarah lived 127 years; these were the years of the life of Sarah.**" Only once in the Bible is a woman's age mentioned at the time of her death. It's here, Sarah was 127. "**So Sarah died in Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.**" Sarah was his lifelong companion and loving wife. Now she's gone. He "**mourns for Sarah.**" He "**weeps for her.**"

Here is the first mention of *mourning* and *weeping* in the Bible. Surely, there was weeping at *the fall*, and *the death of Abel*, and *the flood* - but that detail isn't included in those accounts. God waits for a *man of faith* to lose a *submissive wife*, to first mention grief.

Of course, if the Lord tarries, many of us will share the experience of losing a spouse. Here, God is saying it's normal, even healthy, to grieve over our sorrows.

"**Then Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, "I am a foreigner and a sojourner among you. Give me property for a burial place among you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight."** The land Abraham asks to buy he already owned. In Genesis 15 God marked out the boundaries of the land He

gave to Abraham. This burial plot in Hebron was certainly included. But Abraham called himself *“a foreigner and a sojourner among you.”*

God gave Abraham a tangible, earthly inheritance, but this world was not attractive to him. He longed for an eternal, heavenly habitation. That’s why he wants to bury Sarah, *“out of my sight.”* He knows she’s no longer with him. She’s moved on to an eternal home

Abraham’s was a grieving that honored Sarah’s life. But there is an obsessive, prolonged grieving that would’ve dishonored the eternal life she inherited. Abe honored Sarah’s memory, but *Sarah was more than a memory. You don’t lose someone if you know where they are.* Sarah is alive. Abraham will see her again.

“And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, “Hear us, my lord: You are a mighty prince among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places. None of us will withhold from you his burial place, that you may bury your dead. Then Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, the sons of Heth. And he spoke with them, saying, “If it is your wish that I bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and meet with Ephron the son of Zohar for me, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah which he has, which is at the end of his field. Let him give it to me at the full price, as property for a burial place among you.”

The word *“Machpelah”* means *“double doors.”* This was a cave with two doors - a *physical* and *spiritual* opening. Alexander McLaren wrote, *“Death is but a passage. It’s only a vestibule. The grave has a door on its inner side.”* Death’s door is also the door to eternity.

Verse 10, *“Now Ephron dwelt among the sons of Heth; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the presence of the sons of Heth, all who entered at the gate of his city, saying, “No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field and the cave that is in it; I give it to you in the presence of the sons of my people. I give it to you. Bury your dead!”* Understand, all Middle Eastern merchants were hagglers. Negotiating a price is a sport in that culture. Nobody paid retail. Ephron isn’t about to give anything away. *“Free”* is just the customary starting point. Abraham is expected to counteroffer...

“Then Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land; and he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, “If you will give it, please hear me. I will give you money for the field; take it from me and I will bury my dead there.” And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, *“My lord, listen to me; the land is worth 400 shekels of silver. What is that between you and me? So bury your dead.”* 400 shekels was probably Ephron’s high price. He’s coaxing Abraham to make an offer. But *“Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed out the silver for Ephron which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, 400 shekels of silver, currency*

of the merchants.” Ephron expected Abraham to haggle, but he surprises him and pays the *asking price*. Apparently, it was a *fair price* - and a price that honored Sarah.

Verse 17, “So the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, which were within all the surrounding borders, were deeded to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city. And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. So the field and the cave that is in it were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth as property for a burial place.” This was a family burial plot. Sarah, Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Leah and Jacob were all buried in this cave. Today it’s called, “[The Tomb Of The Patriarchs](#).”

Genesis 24, “Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, “Please, put your hand under my thigh,” He’s taking an oath. “And I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac.”

Abraham would’ve benefitted if Isaac had married a local girl. An alliance would strengthen his stature in the community, *but more important to Abraham is that his son marry a believer*. He can’t bear the thought of Isaac being wedded to an idolatrous Canaanite.

“And the servant said to him, “Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you came?” But Abraham said to him, “Beware that you do not take my son back there. The LORD God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, ‘To your descendants I give this land,’ He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be released from this oath; only do not take my son back there.” Abraham won’t risk Isaac getting entangled in the affairs of Haran, and missing out on God’s promises. His servant is commissioned to find Isaac a wife who’s willing to walk by faith, and pledge herself to a man she’s never met, or even seen.

“So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter. Then the servant took ten of his master’s camels and departed, for all his master’s goods were in his hand.” These are the riches Abraham’s servant will use to entice a bride, and pay her bridal price.

Realize, Genesis 24 is an intriguing chapter. Not only a romance, it has allegorical meaning. In Scripture at times NT writers treat OT stories as symbolic. The story becomes larger than life! It illustrates a spiritual lesson. And there's no more vivid example than here.

Chapter 24 comes on the heels of Genesis 22, where Abraham offers Isaac as a sacrifice. The story is figurative of God the Father sacrificing His only son on that same spot, 2000 years later. On Mount Moriah, the Father God will sacrifice His only Son, Jesus, on the cross. But the allegory doesn't end with Chapter 22...

Here, Abraham sends a servant to find a bride for his son. His name in 15:2 is "Eliezer" or "Comforter." *This is the NT...* After Jesus' sacrifice, the Holy Spirit, *our Comforter*, is sent by the Father to find a bride for His Son. Today, the Spirit searches for folks with faith to follow, and take vows to a Man they've never seen.

And how does He entice us? The way Eliezer wooed Isaac's bride. The Master's goods are in His hands, or as Paul writes in Ephesians 1, God gives us all spiritual blessings in Christ. Chapter 24 is a wonderful allegory.

Verse 10, "And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor. And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water." What Eliezer does next is ask for supernatural help.

"Then he said, "O LORD God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink' - let her be the one You have appointed for Your servant Isaac. And by this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master."

Trust me, for a woman to volunteer to water ten camels would take nothing less than a miracle. A camel drinks five gallons at a time. *This gal will have to bale fifty gallons of water.* My wife loves me, but if she had to draw fifty gallons of water... *I might still be single.*

Be careful when you concoct a plan, and ask God to bless it. God is obligated to do **His will** - not play by **your plan**. Here though God cooperates with Eliezer...

Verse 15, "And it happened, before he had finished speaking, that behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her pitcher on her shoulder. Now the young woman was very beautiful to behold, a virgin; no man had known her. And she went down to the well, filled her pitcher, and came up." Remember John 4, the first Gentile convert to follow Jesus was

a woman Jesus met by a well in Samaria... “And the servant ran to meet her and said, “Please let me drink a little water from your pitcher.” So she said, “Drink, my lord.” Then she quickly let her pitcher down to her hand, and gave him a drink. And when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, “I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking.”

And at this point Eliezer got pretty excited. He’s found the right girl! “Then she quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran back to the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. And the man, wondering at her, remained silent so as to know whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.” There’s only one step left... She has to accept his proposal... The same is true for us! The Spirit can find us, and woo us - but we have to agree to follow!

“So it was, when the camels had finished drinking, that the man took a golden nose ring weighing half a shekel, and two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten shekels of gold...” *He gives her jewelry!* A shekel of gold weighed a third of an ounce. “And said, “Whose daughter are you? Tell me, please, is there room in your father's house for us to lodge?” So she said to him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel, Milcah's son, whom she bore to Nahor. Moreover she said to him, “We have both straw and feed enough, and room to lodge.”

Then the man bowed down his head and worshiped the LORD. And he said, “Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His mercy and His truth toward my master. As for me, being on the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren.” Abraham had hoped to find a bride for his son from his own people. So when Rebekah identifies Nahor, *who was Abraham’s brother*, as her granddad, Eliezer knows God has directed his steps. There’re no accidents with the Lord. As the Jewish rabbis use to say, “Coincidence is not a kosher word.”

Verse 28, “So the young woman ran and told her mother's household these things. Now Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban, and Laban ran out to the man by the well. So it came to pass, when he saw the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and when he heard the words of his sister Rebekah, saying, “Thus the man spoke to me,” that he went to the man. And there he stood by the camels at the well.” They knew he was sincere when *he put a ring on it!* Ladies, don’t believe that guy until you see a ring!

And he said, “Come in, O blessed of the LORD! Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house, and a place for the camels.” Then the man came to the house. And he unloaded the camels, and provided straw and feed for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. Food was set before him to eat, but he said, “I will not eat until I have told about my errand.” And he said, “Speak on.” So he said, “I am Abraham's servant...” And Eliezer goes on to tell his

story. He starts with *God's blessing on Abraham, the miraculous birth of Isaac, his mission to find a wife for his master's son, the sign he proposed, and the way God had confirmed His will.*

Which brings us to verse 49, "Now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me. And if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left." Will you or won't you give Rebekah to be married to Isaac?

God guided Eliezer and arranged this meeting, *but now a decision has to be made!* That's what the Holy Spirit says to us. God providentially leads, and crosses our paths with others. He provides opportunities, but then it's up to us to choose if we'll follow Him or not.

"Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The thing comes from the LORD; we cannot speak to you either bad or good." *How can we argue with God?* They admit, God was at work. "Here is Rebekah before you; take her and go, and let her be your master's son's wife, as the LORD has spoken." And it came to pass, when Abraham's servant heard their words, that he worshiped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth." And likewise, all the angels rejoice when one sinner responds to the Holy Spirit's invitation to follow Jesus.

"Then the servant brought out jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother. And he and the men who were with him ate and drank and stayed all night. Then they arose in the morning, and he said, "Send me away to my master." But her brother and her mother said, "Let the young woman stay with us a few days, at least ten; after that she may go." This sounds like the man who wanted to follow Jesus, but first said he needed to bury his father. Jesus said, "No, the offer to follow Me is for now, not tomorrow." "Today is the day of salvation."

"And he said to them, "Do not hinder me, since the LORD has prospered my way; send me away so that I may go to my master." So they said, "We will call the young woman and ask her personally." Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go." She shows no hesitation at all. "So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. And they blessed Rebekah and said to her: "Our sister, may you become the mother of thousands of ten thousands; and may your descendants possess the gates of those who hate them." *An interesting blessing!*

Verse 61, "Then Rebekah and her maids arose, and they rode on the camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and departed." And notice she followed *the Comforter*. This is the next step for a person who pledges their loyalty to Jesus. A Christian learns *to trust in - to follow - to ride with* the Holy Spirit.

“Now Isaac came from the way of Beer Lahai Roi, for he dwelt in the South.” Here’s the first time we see Isaac since Genesis 22 when he’s offered a sacrifice. Now he’s coming for his bride. And after Jesus’ resurrection and ascension, the earth won’t see Him again, until the rapture when He returns for His bride.

“And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening; and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels were coming.” Notice, Isaac finds his spouse not by searching for her. The Comforter brings her to him. She shows up, while he’s meditating... And if you’re single here’s a lesson: you don’t have to comb the singles’ groups to find a spouse. Chill out and trust God. Let the Spirit bring your spouse to you! It’s *the Holy Spirit Dating App*... I encourage you to sign up.

“Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel; for she had said to the servant, “Who is this man walking in the field to meet us?” And the servant said, “It is my master.” So she took a veil and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.”

Chapter 25, “Abraham again took a wife, and her name was Keturah.” Once Abraham buried Sarah, he moved on. Again he shows his faith and remarries!

“And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.” He had six sons after the age of 100. Once he had Isaac, the old boy got on a roll. Verse 3 lists several grandsons born from Keturah.

Verse 5 is crucial. “And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac.” His only son, Isaac, was still his heir. None of his other offspring diminished Isaac’s inheritance. “But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had (1 Chronicles 1:32 lists Keturah as a concubine. She may’ve started a surrogate to Sarah and when Sarah died Abraham made her his wife.); and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east.”

Verse 7, “This is the sum of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: 175 years. Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people.” Here’s an inference to the afterlife - Abraham didn’t just *drift into oblivion*, or *hover over the living*, or *cease to exist*.

“He was gathered to his people.” The souls of OT believers had a place where they gathered after they left this world. The Bible names it after Abraham. In Luke 16 it’s called, “Abraham’s bosom.” Today though, Abraham’s bosom is empty. For once Jesus earned our salvation on the cross, we now go straight to heaven.

Verse 9, “And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah,

which is before Mamre, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth. There Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife.” And apparently, more was buried than Abraham that day. It seems Isaac and Ishmael *buried the hatchet*. They were reconciled at least long enough to bury their dad.

“And it came to pass, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac dwelt at Beer Lahai Roi.” This was the place where God appeared to Hagar, “Well of the Living One Who Sees.”

It’s interesting, Abraham was always building altars, whereas Isaac majored in digging wells. He left behind sources of water where others could be nourished.

Abraham worshipped, while Isaac watered. Abraham praised God. Isaac quenched the thirst of others. And both were called “*men of faith.*” Real faith requires both **an upward worship, and an outward witness.**

Verse 12, “Now this is the genealogy of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maidservant, bore to Abraham.” Verse 13-16 lists Ishmael’s descendants - in all, twelve Arab nations.

Verse 17, “These were the years of the life of Ishmael: 137 years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people. (They dwelt from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt as you go toward Assyria.) He died in the presence of all his brethren.” Ishmael’s tribes covered the Arabian desert.

Verse 19, “This is the genealogy of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham begot Isaac. Isaac was 40 years old when he took Rebekah as wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian. Now Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived.” Notice, God gave Rebekah a child once her husband, Isaac, pleaded with God for her! Husbands are the priest of their family. We should be praying for our wife and kids.

Men like being king, but what about being priest? We’re good at ordering our family around. But do we drop to our knees and *lift our family up?* In the past I’ve shared this verse with infertile couples, and challenged the husband to plead with God for his wife, and more than once God has answered the husbands’ prayers.

Husband, if your wife is going through any kind of barrenness, *even a spiritual or emotional barrenness*, you can serve your wife, by interceding for her in prayer. Your first ministry is to be priest in your home!

Yet verse 22 tells us Rebekah’s pregnancy was not easy. “But the children struggled

together within her.” She had twins boys: Esau and Jacob. And they didn’t get along. Even in-utero they were at each other throat.

“And she said, “If all is well, why am I like this?” Rebekah had some prenatal complications, and she calls her doctor. She asks God for a diagnosis, “So she went to inquire of the LORD. And the LORD said to her: “Two nations are in your womb, two peoples shall be separated from your body; one people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger.” According to ancient custom the firstborn son had all the rights. It’s called [The Law of Primogeniture](#).

But God often defies human power structures and social conventions. God will flip these boys’ destinies. The older son, Esau, will serve the younger, Jacob.

And this was prophetic of the history of two nations. Esau, father of the Edomites, will be dominated for most of their history by Jacob’s descendants, the Jews.

“So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau.” Rebekah’s firstborn was “*Esau*.” The name means “hairy.” The little guy looked like a bear cub who was born in a reddish fur coat.

“Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau’s heel; so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.” Jacob was born second, yet tried to overtake his big brother in the womb. He came out clutching onto Esau’s heel.

The name “*Jacob*” means “*heelcatcher*.” It became synonymous with “*scoundrel, or crook, or con-artist*.” The name became descriptive of Jacob’s character.

Verse 27, “So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents.” Esau was a rugged man - a man’s man. Yet, as Arnold Schwarzenegger might say, “*Jacob was a girly man*.” He was cultured and domesticated. Esau liked to hunt. Jacob liked to sew and cross-stitch.

Here’s what happened, “Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.” Isaac loved to eat venison, so he warmed up to *wild man, Esau*. But *mild man, Jacob*, ended up a momma’s boy.

“Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. And Esau said to Jacob, “Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary.” Therefore his name was called Edom.” The word means “*red*”... Esau was famished, and he loved the reddish stew Jacob had simmering in the crock pot.

“But Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright as of this day.” And this birthright, Isaac’s inheritance, was more than a toolbox or a few shares of stock. This birthright included the eternal, unilateral covenant God promised Abraham - and passed on to Isaac - the

sod, seed, and salvation - special nation status til the end of the age.

And Esau traded it for a bowl of chunky lentil soup. This was Esau's downfall. He was *physically-oriented*, rather than *spiritually-oriented*. Esau would rather feed his belly, than feed his soul on God's blessings.

"And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" He was so hungry he thought he was going to die. "Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright." Here's insight into Esau's soul. He was a superficial, hollow man. He sacrifices spiritual blessings untold for a bowl of warmed-up stew.

Yet Jacob doesn't fare much better in this episode. He is a heel-catcher - deceptive and manipulative - he cons his brother out of his birthright. It's the biggest swindle of all-time. Jacob, and his heirs, become God's chosen in exchange for a measly bowl of chili.

And remember, Jacob didn't have to be conniving! In verse 23, God promised Rebekah, **"the older will serve the younger."** God's will from the beginning was for Jacob to inherit the birthright. He and Rebekah's sin was to take matters into their own hands, rather than trust God to work it out. It's through faith that we inherit God's promise. Jacob was guilty of what the Bible calls **"walking in the flesh."** *He tried to do God's will his way.*

And this always causes pain. Jacob creates a deep-seated hatred in his brother. It rips apart this family.

Yet even though Jacob was a swindler, God saw in him a desire for spiritual things. Jacob wanted God's blessing, while Esau didn't care and relied on himself. Jacob believed God. Esau believed in himself.

And this was the deciding difference. This is why God later says in Malachi 1, **"Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."** It wasn't because Jacob was more honest or moral than Esau. To the contrary, if ever there was a person who needed grace it was Jacob.

Once a lady asked Spurgeon, **"I cannot understand why God should say that He hated Esau."** The pastor replied, **"Madam, that is not the difficulty. My trouble is trying to understand how God could love Jacob."**

Chapter 26, **"There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar. Then the LORD appeared to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you**

and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.”

This is a strategic passage. Islam teaches that the covenant between God and Abraham was passed to Ishmael. God’s promised land belongs to the Arabs. But God confirms the covenant with Abraham to his son, Isaac, not Ishmael - and later to Jacob, not Esau.

Verse 6, “So Isaac dwelt in Gerar. And the men of the place (the Philistines) 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.” *And where have we heard this before?* This is the lie Abraham and Sarah told when they traveled to pagan nations. Now Isaac follows in their footsteps.

Parents, *the apple never falls far from the tree.* Kids are prone to repeat their parent’s mistakes. Isaac marries a pretty girl like his dad, but he also succumbs to fear like his dad, and treats his wife just as selfishly.

“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.” They were smooching. “Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, “Quite obviously she is your wife; so how could you say, ‘She is my sister’?” *You don’t kiss a sis like that!*

“And Isaac said to him, “Because I said, ‘Lest I die on account of her.’” And Abimelech said, “What is this you have done to us? One of the people might soon have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us.” Isaac is rebuked by a pagan king. “So Abimelech charged all his people, saying, “He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.” An executive order shields Isaac and Rebekah.

Verse 12, “Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him.” God’s blessing wasn’t because it was deserved. It’s all about grace. God blesses us when we trust Him, not because we’re worthy.. “The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants.” God poured it on. “So the Philistines envied him.”

“Now the Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug

in the days of Abraham his father, and they had filled them with earth.

And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we." Then Isaac departed from there and pitched his tent in the Valley of Gerar, and dwelt there." Isaac didn't move far, just outside the city into the valley. "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." Recall the signature traits of both men: **Abraham built altars. Isaac dug wells.**

Abraham dug wells that the Philistines covered over, and now Isaac goes back and unplugs the same wells, *which provide for us an interesting spiritual lesson...*

Satan is a Philistine. He wants nothing more than to plug up sources of spiritual refreshment. He'll bury the joys of prayer, or worship, or Bible study under mounds of tradition or neglect. And often it takes a new generation, an Isaac, to re-dig that well, and rediscover and re-emphasize the significance of what was lost.

Verse 19, "Also Isaac's servants dug in the valley, and found a well of running water there. But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours." So he called the name of the well Esek, because they quarreled with him." The word "Esek" means "quarrel." "Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also. So he called its name Sitnah." or "hostility." 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." "*Rehoboth*" means "spaciousness." Isaac finally finds some peace.

And his life is an example to us. Our world is full of obstacles and conflicts. Yet when one door shuts, look for another door to open. **Just dig another well.** Keep digging wells, and eventually you'll find your Rehoboth.

Verse 23, "Then he went up from there to Beersheba. (In southern Israel) "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." Again, God is transferring the covenant to Isaac. "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."

And like the Philistines did with Abraham in Genesis 21, in the next few verses King Abimelech recognizes God's blessing on Isaac, and seeks to forge an alliance. Isaac agrees, and his servants re-dig another well. *You can visit that well in Beersheba even today.*

Verse 34, “When Esau was 40 years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah.” Proof that even at 40 years old *you can break your parents’ heart!*

Here’s another example of Esau’s lack of desire for spiritual things. He married two wives which was never God’s ideal. And both women were Canaanites, or idol-worshippers. He married wives with no love for God.

What a tortured family! A mom and son with a passion for the things of God, but no faith. A dad and son who listened to their belly, rather than God. *Bad stuff happens when you try to do God’s will, your way.*