

Sent: Wednesday, February 20, 2019 2:39 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Genesis 26

Genesis 26 captures the essence of Isaac's life! Dr. Constable writes that "in the short span of one chapter, the writer shows how the whole of the life of Isaac was a rehearsal (maybe more like a replay!) of what happened in the life of Abraham"! Everything Isaac did and experienced, we already had seen, it seems, in the life of Abraham! Only a lot more in the story of Abraham! Both Isaac and Abraham were confronted, very early on, with a famine in the land of Canaan where God had called them; and both took matters into their own hands to deal with it--and both without first consulting God! Abraham headed to Egypt, of course, and Isaac was headed that in that direction when God told him clearly not to go there! Both "sojourned" in Gerar and both dealt with Abimelech, the king of Gerar! Both had beautiful wives and lied about them (calling them "sisters"--and risking everything, including their safety, and God's plan!) in order (they mistakenly thought), to save their own necks! Thankfully, God intervened in both cases, exposing their cowardice (and basic sin nature); and both were reprimanded for their despicable conduct by pagan rulers (sadly!)--all of which God used to "get things back on track" (in accordance with God's plan!

God appeared to both of them to dispel their fears and reaffirm His amazing promises (and grace!) for them and their descendants, and both responded by building altars and "calling upon the name of the Lord"!

Both experienced great blessings and riches in this lives--and both (basically their servants) became particularly adept (unlike the servants of Abimelech) at digging, and finding, "wells of water"--which were so vitally important in that desert environment, and which allowed them (and their aggregation) to remain in the land where God had called them! But the "well digging" part of it was not without conflict! Which, as it turned out, ultimately led Abimelech, in both cases, to seek "mutual non-aggressive pacts," in order to keep the peace (and, more importantly, allow them to remain in the "promised land")!

Best of all, Abimelech (which may have been the title rather than the name of the pagan king), in both cases, recognized, was impressed with, and finally publicly acknowledged, how God (their God!), "had been with them" (and how he couldn't fight and prevail against such an awesome power)!

"Shepherd's Notes" titles this passage "Living a Life of Promise in a Hostile World," which seems to click! When we read the account, in context with what we learned earlier about Abraham, we're inclined to want to call it, "Like Father, Like Son"! Or, maybe, "Some Things Never Change!" (Particularly noting the basic sin nature of even the so-called "great saints" who made it into the Hebrews 11 "hall of faith"! All of which ties in to our memory verse from Jeremiah 17:9--"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick; who can understand it?")

Well, personally, I would title the chapter, "Well, Well, Well"! Because, well, I was particularly taken by the whole concept of wells and the metaphorical connection with Scripture concerning "wells of water"! I love it when, in Genesis 26:32, it says that "on the same day" (after the peace deal was struck) Isaac's servants "came in" to tell Isaac that they had dug another well--and found water! "We have found water!" they proclaimed! (Remember, back in the 70's, I think it was--

during the so-called "Jesus Movement"--when people put bumper stickers on their cars saying "I found it!" And others: "Honk, if you know Jesus"! Pretty neat!)

Well, they're a couple of other verses in the Bible that really fit in with our lesson! Take, e.g., Jeremiah 2:13, where the prophet Jeremiah prophesies how the descendants of Abraham and Isaac would handle "well digging," in a spiritual sense: "For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water!" And, of course, Jesus talking with the Samaritan woman at the well, in John 4:14-15, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst. For the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life." Wow! That puts the plan of God for Abraham and Isaac and all the promises for redemption and eternal life into a time perspective!

There were other lessons too from last nite's study! Did you catch the connection between what we studied and what we heard from Jesse Sunday morning! Concerning how we look at circumstances, including trials and setbacks, that confront us in life--and how we view them and deal with them as believers! As Jesse noted, "If our understanding of God is based on our present circumstances, then we don't really understand the character of God!" He added that it's "better to know God based on His Word, than on our circumstances"! And that even if our circumstances ("stuck in the mud") don't change--or don't immediately change, God is accomplishing something terribly important--even if its effect is only to drive us to God!

Well (there I go again!), speaking of "difficult circumstances," our lesson ends on that kind of low note--after all the manifestations of God's blessings and things seeming to go so well! It's about Esau and what will turn the "marriage made in heaven" (between Isaac and Rebekah) into home of division and strife! We'll learn more about it next week!

But there's one more thing I need to mention! And that is the song that we sang together at start of our session: "Let It Be Said of Us!" The first verse goes (sing along!): "Let it be said of us, that the Lord was our passion, that with gladness we bore, every cross we were given! That we fought the good fight, that we finished our course, knowing within us the power of the risen Lord...Let the cross be our glory..." (That's just the first verse! You gotta check it out online and sing the whole thing!) Well, the point made by John Neal last nite was that it's so much better for us as believers to be seen, in retrospect, as those who "know the Lord," rather than as those having been reprimanded for sinful and otherwise inappropriate actions, by those who make no claim about Christ (and driven further from Him)!

Well, that pretty much does it for last nite's lesson, a lesson at first glance we might all have thought as just a kind of transitional one between the great stories of Abraham and Jacob! The Word of God is so powerful!

Go with God this week, men, and be ready to share "even a cub of cold water" with some thirsty soul!

Lowell