

### 09.03 Isaac in Gerar (Genesis 26:1–33)

✓ “Check” it out: opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows  
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher, not the student. It also indicates answers to questions.

#### Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and/or visual aids found at the end of this lesson (Please give credit to the sources of pictures.)
- Check also “Activities” and “Handwork” below for additional suggested items.
- Accent Publishing's Primary 24, Lesson 4, visual aid, ©1993. See this source for a good presentation of the story for younger children; it includes sound effects made by students.

**Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:** Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *famine*: a long period without rain
- *one hundredfold*: for every seed planted, harvesting one hundred seeds. “The rates of increase vary from thirty to a hundred. Sixty-fold is very good, and was not unusual in Palestine. A hundred-fold was rare, and only in spots of extraordinary fertility” (Barnes in Online Bible).
- *well-digging*: “The digging of the well was an enterprise of great interest in rural affairs. It conferred a sort of ownership on the digger, especially in a country where water was precious. . . . [T]he envious Philistines were afraid that from a sojourner he would go on to be a settler, and acquire rights of property. They accordingly took the most effectual means of making his abiding place uncomfortable, when they stopped up the wells” (Barnes in Online Bible).
- *oath*: a promise; a covenant

#### Scripture: (ESV)

Genesis 26:1 Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines. 2 And the Lord appeared to him and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. 3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. 4 I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, 5 because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.”

6 So Isaac settled in Gerar. 7 When the men of the place asked him about his wife, he said, “She is my sister,” for he feared to say, “My wife,” thinking, “lest the men of the place should kill me because of Rebekah,” because she was attractive in appearance. 8 When he had been there a long time, Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out of a window and saw Isaac laughing with Rebekah his wife. 9 So Abimelech called Isaac and said, “Behold, she is your wife. How then could you say, ‘She is my sister’?” Isaac said to him, “Because I thought, ‘Lest I die because of her.’” 10 Abimelech said, “What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us.” 11 So Abimelech warned all the people, saying, “Whoever touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.”

12 And Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. The Lord blessed him, 13 and the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy. 14 He had possessions of flocks and herds and many servants, so that the Philistines envied him. 15 (Now the Philistines had stopped and filled with earth all the wells that his father’s servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father.) 16 And Abimelech said to Isaac, “Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we.”

17 So Isaac departed from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar and settled there. 18 And Isaac dug again the wells of water that had been dug in the days of Abraham his father, which the Philistines had stopped after the death of Abraham. And he gave them the names that his father had given them. 19 But when Isaac’s

servants dug in the valley and found there a well of spring water, 20 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 contended with him. 21 Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that also, so he called its name Sitnah. 22 And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, saying, "For now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

23 From there he went up to Beersheba. 24 And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of Abraham your father. Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring for my servant Abraham's sake." 25 So he built an altar there and called upon the name of the Lord and pitched his tent there. And there Isaac's servants dug a well.

26 When Abimelech went to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath his adviser and Phicol the commander of his army, 27 Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you?" 28 They said, "We see plainly that the Lord has been with you. So we said, let there be a sworn pact between us, between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you, 29 that you will do us no harm, just as we have not touched you and have done to you nothing but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the Lord." 30 So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. 31 In the morning they rose early and exchanged oaths. And Isaac sent them on their way, and they departed from him in peace. 32 That same day Isaac's servants came and told him about the well that they had dug and said to him, "We have found water." 33 He called it Shibah; therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day.

### **Introduction/Review:**

1. Who was the first one to whom God promised special blessings in his family? [Abraham.]
2. Name three of these blessings. [Land; descendants multiplied; all nations blessed in his seed.]
3. When Abram went to Egypt, what did he say about his wife? ["She is my sister."]
4. When Abraham went to Gerar, what did he say about his wife? ["She is my sister."]
5. How did Pharaoh and Abimelech learn Sarah was really Abraham's wife? [God showed them.]
6. What was Abraham and Sarah's main personal problem? [No child.]
7. How did God keep His promise? [He gave a son, Isaac.]
8. How did Isaac get his wife Rebekah? [Abraham's servant went to Abraham's family; he prayed that the woman who offered to water the camels would be God's choice; Rebekah was the answer to prayer.]
9. What was Isaac and Rebekah's personal problem? [No children for 19 years.]
10. What was God's prophecy and promise to Rebekah? [The older would serve the younger son.]
11. What were the names of Isaac and Rebekah's sons? [Esau, Jacob.]

### **Story:**

#### ***Hungering***

Abraham had experienced two famines that forced him out of the land of Canaan to other countries—first, Egypt, and second, Gerar of Philistia [locate these places]. Now in Isaac's time another famine caused him to take his wife, Rebekah, and their two sons, Esau and Jacob, to Gerar of Philistia. In fact, God spoke to Isaac and specifically told him not to go to Egypt. He also said He would bless Isaac and be with Isaac.

In saying that, God repeated four Abrahamic blessings, promising them to Isaac: (1) "I will be with you and will bless you; (2) I will make your descendants to multiply as the stars of heaven; (3) I will give you and your descendants all these lands; (4) in your seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed" (vv. 3-5).

So Isaac settled in Gerar, possibly near the city, where the men of the place noticed Rebekah's beauty. (Why they didn't see her sons and assume they were also Isaac's, we do not know. ✓They would have been about fifteen years old at this time, and perhaps they were working away from the city in the field. This is mere assumption, for nothing in the text hints at the whereabouts of Esau and Jacob.)

#### ***Lying***

At any rate, when the men of the place asked Isaac about Rebekah, he said, "She is my sister." Isaac was

worried that the men of the place might kill him because they wanted Rebekah.

One day after a long time, however, Abimelech, the king of the place, looked out his window and observed Isaac and Rebekah “sporting” or “laughing” together as a husband a wife might do. Abimelech called Isaac to him and said, “Look, she is obviously your wife. How then could you say, ‘She is my sister’?”

Isaac answered, “Because I thought, ‘I might die because of her.’”

Abimelech rebuked Isaac, saying, “What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have taken your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us.”

Nevertheless, Abimelech didn’t kick Isaac out of the land. Rather, he protected him, warning all the people, “Whoever touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.”

### ***Planting***

So Isaac planted seed in the land of Gerar, and the Lord blessed him. He reaped one hundredfold in this land near a land affected by famine. Other blessings were to gain more and more until God made Isaac wealthy with flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and many servants.”

### ***Departing***

People around a rich man generally don’t appreciate that man. Seeing how great Isaac had become, the Philistines envied him. So Abimelech asked Isaac to leave them because he was so much greater than they. Isaac complied and went to the Valley of Gerar, away from the city.

### ***Digging***

Now, Abraham, having lived here himself, had dug wells in this area. However, for some odd reason, the Philistines had filled up all these wells with dirt. Isaac needed water; so he dug again all Abraham’s wells, calling them by the same names as Abraham had called them.

Then, Isaac's servants dug a new well and found springing water. One would think they were far enough away from Gerar, but Gerar herdsman claimed this well belonged to them. Jacob named the well Esek, which means ”contention” and moved on to a different location. Isaac's servants dug another well. Again, the Philistines claimed it; so Isaac called the well Sitnah, meaning ”hatred.”

Would Isaac ever get a well he could call his own after digging it? Yes, for when Isaac moved again and dug another well, it was not claimed by the Philistines. Its name was Rehoboth, meaning “room,” for now Isaac’s huge household was not crowded by the Philistines but had “room” to live in the land.

### ***Moving***

For some unknown reason Isaac moved to Beersheba [locate]. ✓Perhaps he considered this the land of his childhood, for his father Abraham had spent much time here.

The same night in which he moved, the Lord appeared to Isaac for the second time, saying, “I am the God of Abraham your father; fear not, for I am with you, and will bless you, and multiply your descendants for my servant Abraham's sake.” What a wonderful assurance this was from God Almighty.

### ***Worshiping***

It seems that rather than being concerned mainly with well-digging, ✓Isaac was now becoming interested in worshiping God. He built an altar there, the only one of his that Scripture records. There in Beersheba at this altar, Isaac called on the name of the Lord, and there in Beersheba Isaac pitched his tent, apparently intending to stay there. Indeed, he was still there sixty years later (Genesis 28:1–10).\*

### ***Covenanting***

Abimelech, the Philistine king observed Isaac from afar but ✓became impressed enough with Isaac’s increasing wealth and power to bring a diplomatic delegation made up of an adviser and the commander of

his army. Isaac said to them, “Why have you come to me, seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you?”

They answered, “We see plainly that the Lord has been with you. So we said, let there be a treaty between you and us, that you will do us no harm, just as we have not touched you and have done to you nothing but good and have sent you away in peace. You are blessed of the Lord.”

Isaac made a feast for these Philistines, and Abimelech and company stayed overnight. The next morning after they promised not to hurt each other, Isaac sent them on their way.

That same day Isaac's servants came to Isaac, saying, “We have found water in the well we began digging \the other day.”

✓“Great!” Isaac might have said. “I will name it Beersheba, meaning ‘well of the oath’ since I just made a covenant with Abimelech of the Philistines.”\*\*

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\*Isaac stayed here a long time: we read that Esau was forty years old when he married two Hittite women; that would make Isaac 100 years old since the twins were born when he was 60 years old.

\*\*“[A] second well has now been dug in like circumstances in the same locality [Genesis 21:27–32]. This gives occasion for a new application of the name in the memories of the people. This is another illustration of the principle explained at #Ge 25:30. Two wells still exist at this place to attest the correctness of the record (Barnes in Online Bible).

### **Lessons from this lesson:**

- Avoid fighting about small things, even when you think you are right. Be kind (Ephesians 4:32).
- Abimelech saw that God was with Isaac. May it be that the unsaved recognize that God is with us.
- Things are not so important as a right relationship and testimony before God.

### **Activities:**

- Play dough: well, shovel
- Add two items to the bulletin board, “Well, Lots of Things Happened at Wells.” For printables and a photo of the finished bulletin board, go to the Extras page at [teachingthebibleto kids.org](http://teachingthebibleto kids.org).
- Sing the whole or part of the song, “Abraham,” found on the Songs page at [teachingthebibleto kids.org](http://teachingthebibleto kids.org).
- Sing the first five stanzas of “Isaac” found on the Songs page at [teachingthebibleto kids.org](http://teachingthebibleto kids.org).
- Review Questions: (Game:
  1. What caused Isaac and his family to leave the land God had promised? [Famine.]
  2. God warned Isaac not to go where? [Egypt.]
  3. Where did God allow Isaac to go? [Gerar of Philistia.]
  4. Name one of the four promises God gave to Isaac. [(1) “I will be with you and will bless you; (2) I will make your descendants to multiply as the stars of heaven; (3) I will give you and your descendants all these countries; (4) in your seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed” (vv. 3-5).]
  5. What did Isaac say about his wife, Rebekah, in Gerar? [“She is my sister.”]
  6. How good a harvest did Isaac reap in Gerar? [One hundredfold.]
  7. How did the Philistines feel about Isaac’s wealth? [They envied him.]
  8. Isaac dug several \_\_\_\_\_? [Wells.]
  9. Why did he need to dig Abraham’s and his own wells again? [The Philistines had filled or stopped them.]
  10. Why did Abimelech want to make a covenant with Isaac? [They could tell the Lord was with him;

they wanted no harm brought to themselves.]

**Memory Verse[s]:**

- Psalm 34:14—Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

**Handwork:**

- Make a well. Bring empty, washed tuna fish cans. Have students use a marker to draw stones on the can as in the photo.

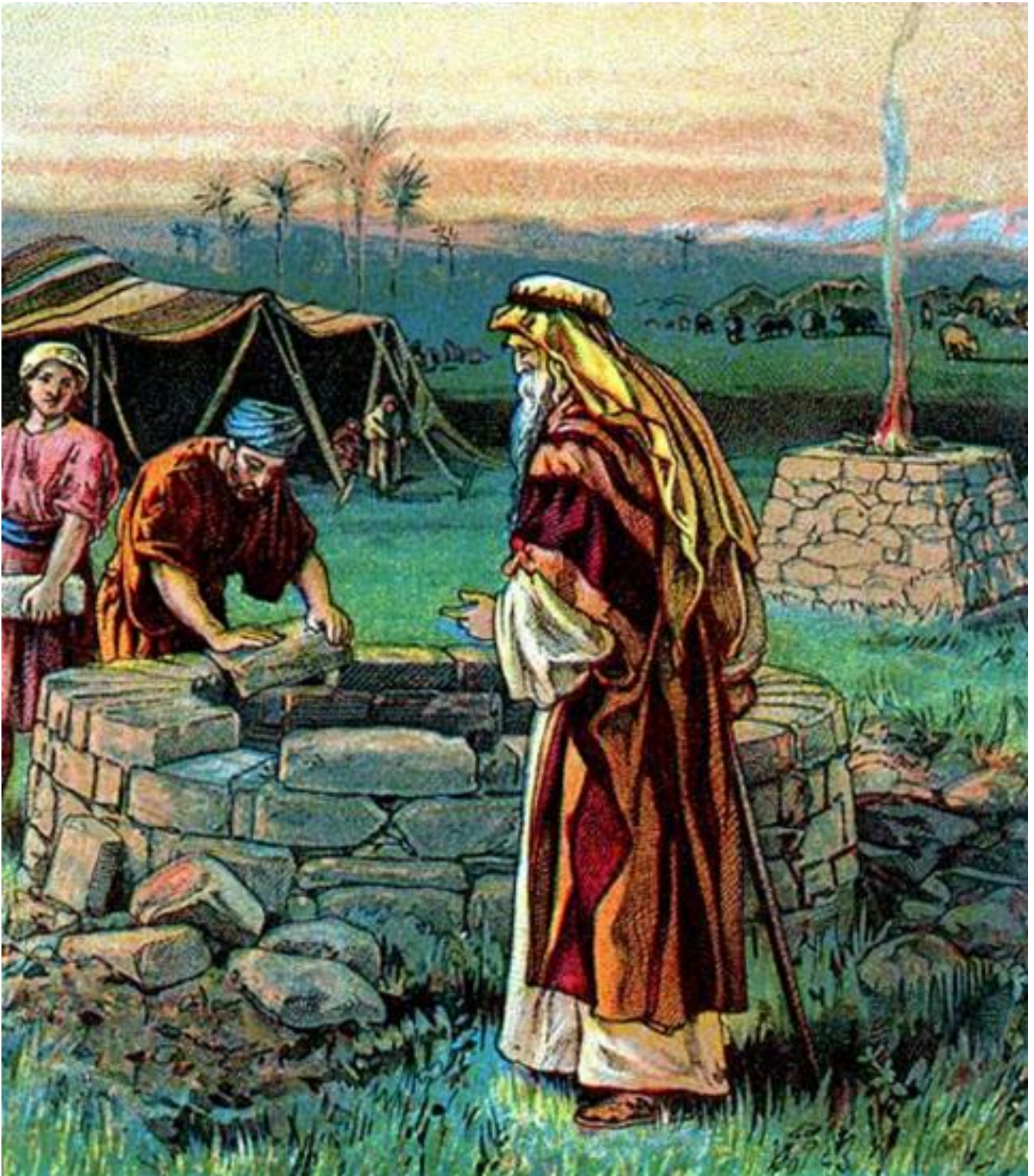


*famine*

*hundredfold*

*well-digging*

*oath*



<http://bibleblender.com/2015/bible-stories/old-testament/genesis/isaac-wealth-power-threaten-genesis-26-12-26-25>

# Isaac Settles in Gerar and He Deceives Abimelech!



Genesis 26







[http://www.sschoo.com/children/bd7\\_98/index.htm](http://www.sschoo.com/children/bd7_98/index.htm)

