

Like Father, Like Son: Deception and Deliverance

Genesis 26.1-11

Doctors, counselors, and sociologists today all agree: Fathers shape their children into the person they become. That truth is on display in Genesis 26: Isaac was blessed through Abraham's obedience, but stumbled when he replicated Abraham's deception.

- Obedience bring blessing: Father to son (1-6)
A famine in the land forces a move (1)
Isaac is to stay "in the land of which I shall tell you" (2)
The blessings of Abraham are passed on to Isaac (3-5)
Isaac settles down in Gerar (6)
- Fear leads to failure: Like father, like son (7-11)
Isaac's attractive wife Rebekah: "She is my sister" (7)
Isaac's public affection reveals his deception (8)
A Philistine provides the moral instruction! (9-11)

Lessons for my Journey of Faith

For Israel: God's promise to Abraham is passed on to Isaac, and it is protected even when Isaac repeats his father's failure.

For Christians: We are blessed through the obedience of one Man (Jesus), but *enjoying* that blessing comes by obedience.

For Fathers: Obedience to God will bless your family, but beware: Your life will be reflected in the lives of your children.



1. Genesis 26 begins with a historical reference: *Now there was a famine in the land*. Famines were not uncommon in biblical times (as the next phrase reminds us – Abraham went through a famine as well). The lack of food was a life-and-death crisis. It was also an opportunity that God used for His own purposes, to teach His people to trust in Him. Why might Isaac have wanted to go to Egypt? What crises have you faced in your life? How has God used them to teach you to trust in Him?
2. For the nation of Israel, this passage was vitally important. God unequivocally passes on to Isaac the same promises which He made to his father Abraham. Compare Gen.12.1-3 and 26.2-5. Do you see the similarity in God's charge to Abraham in 12.1 and to Isaac in 26.2? What did God desire in both cases? God had promised everything in verses 3-4 to Abraham, and He was not going back on His word *no matter what*...but what would Isaac *enjoy* if he obeyed God that he would not otherwise?
3. Isaac's actions in verse 7 are amazing: God has just appeared to Isaac and made amazing promises of lands and descendants. This should have bolstered his courage, but fear is a powerful motivator, and he inherited a weakness from his father. How is this episode different from Gen.20? How are the two accounts similar? (Note: Abimelech was probably a tribal dynastic name in Gerar; the Abimelech here is probably the son of Abimelech in Gen. 20.)
4. This story provides lessons that would have instructed Israel in her history, and remain applicable today. What does this story reflect about the importance of purity in marriage? What does it teach us about deception, and its danger not only in our lives, but in the lives of others? Do you see God's providential grace and faithfulness in this narrative? As Isaac had sure covenant blessings because of Abraham, so too we do because of Christ. What must we do to *enjoy* those blessings in this life?