

## Monday, May 18, 2020 ▫ Read Genesis 26:1–11

*Questions from the Scripture text: What happened in the land (v1)? When had this happened before? Where (to whom) did Isaac go? Who appeared to him in v2? What did He have to tell him not to do? What did He tell him to do (v3)? Whom does Yahweh say will be with Isaac? What does He say He will give to Isaac's descendants? What does He say He will perform? What else will Yahweh do to Isaac's descendants (v4)? What will He give them? What would happen in one of his seed? What reason does Yahweh give in v5 for making such promises? Where did Isaac dwell (v6)? Who ask about whom in v7? What does Isaac say? Why? How much time passes before his lie is exposed (v8)? Who sees him "Isaicing" Rebekah? What does Abimelech ask in v9? What reason does Isaac give? What does Abimelech say that Isaac might have done to them?*

How mercifully God protects us from dangers earthly and spiritual! In this passage, He graciously spares Isaac in the midst of both the famine of food and his own faithless fearfulness.

Isaac was supposed to be the one in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, but he almost became the one who led Gerar into incurring God's curse (v10)!

It's amazing how weak we can be. Yahweh has literally just appeared to Isaac and made great promises to him in vv2–4. Yahweh has underlined to Isaac how Abraham's grace-sustained obedience was necessary and instrumental in bringing about these promised blessings.

But Isaac's fear of the Philistines had outweighed his fear of God. And Isaac's confidence in his cleverness had outweighed his confidence in the promises of God. Let us be grateful to God that He has allowed us to see Isaac's amazing weakness, for our own confidence in God and fear of God often fail us.

But more than that, let us be grateful to God that He has allowed us to see His own faithfulness even in the midst of Isaac's failing. As the Lord had said to a previous Abimelech (cf. 20:6), it is God who keeps the Philistines from touching Rebekah.

Isaac fails to protect his own wife—he ought to have been willing to die if he must in order to protect her. But the Lord protected her. Isaac fails to protect the Philistines from sinning. But the Lord protected them.

And the Lord even protects Isaac from any revenge by the Philistines. Rather than take vengeance on the man who had brought them into such danger, Abimelech actually threatens vengeance *on his own people* if they should harm Isaac.

What a wonderful thing the Lord does by putting this into the heart and mouth of the Philistine king! But this underlines for us the failure of Isaac's faith. The Philistines whom he so feared conducted themselves quite nobly with him, and this was always within the scope of God's abilities and intentions toward him. Truly, duty is ours, and events are God's. We have only to trust and obey this God who shows amazing grace to amazing sinners.

What situation is testing your trust in God? Whom should you fear and trust the most?

Suggested songs: ARP23B "The Lord's My Shepherd" or TPH22B "All You That Fear Jehovah's Name"