



Pastor Scott Velain

## Genesis 26

### Faith Apart from Works... WRONG!

This week we're going to move through the 26<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of Genesis, and as we always do, the first thing we need to do is to read the 26<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of Genesis for ourselves so that we can know both what it does say... And what it does not say. And so, with that being said let's go ahead and move into Genesis chapter 26:

*Gen 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.

*Gen 26:2* And the LORD appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you.

*Gen 26:3* 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.

*Gen 26:4* 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,

*Gen 26:5* because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."

*Gen 26:6* So Isaac settled in Gerar.

*Gen 26:7* 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.

*Gen 26:8* 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.

*Gen 26:9* 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.'"

*Gen 26:10* 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."

*Gen 26:11* So Abimelech warned all the people, saying, "Whoever touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."

*Gen 26:12* And Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold.

*The LORD blessed him,*

*Gen 26:13 and the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy.*

*Gen 26:14 He had possessions of flocks and herds and many servants, so that the Philistines envied him.*

*Gen 26:15 (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.)*

*Gen 26:16 And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we."*

*Gen 26:17 So Isaac departed from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar and settled there.*

*Gen 26:18 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.*

*Gen 26:19 But when Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of spring water,*

*Gen 26:20 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.*

*Gen 26:21 Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that also, so he called its name Sitnah.*

*Gen 26:22 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."*

*Gen 26:23 From there he went up to Beersheba.*

*Gen 26:24 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."*

*Gen 26:25 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.*

*Gen 26:26 When Abimelech went to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath his adviser and Phicol the commander of his army,*

*Gen 26:27 Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you?"*

*Gen 26:28 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,*

*Gen 26:29 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.”*

*Gen 26:30 So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank.*

*Gen 26:31 In the morning they rose early and exchanged oaths. And Isaac sent them on their way, and they departed from him in peace.*

*Gen 26:32 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.”*

*Gen 26:33 He called it Shibah; therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day.*

*Gen 26:34 When Esau was forty years old, he took Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite to be his wife, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite,*

***Gen 26:35*** *and they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah.*

As we move into the 26<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of Genesis, we find that the life of Isaac winds up becoming much like his father Abraham's life. We also see Isaac vacillating back and forth between fear, and faith much the way his father Abraham did, but this time Isaac will not go down to Egypt during the famine the way his father Abraham did.

In verse two we're told that God appears to Isaac. Now we're not explicitly told how God appears to Isaac. Does God appear to Isaac in a dream? Does God appear to Isaac in a transient state? Does God appear to Isaac in the form of an Angel? To put it very simply and very bluntly... we simply are not told. But let there not be any doubt about the fact that God did indeed make himself known to Isaac.

Now I want us to understand that we've already been told in verse one that there was a famine in the land much like the one that Isaac's father Abraham saw happen in his time. And I want us to notice what God tells Isaac concerning this famine in verses three and four.

God tells Isaac to stay where he's at even though he's in the middle of a famine. Now at this point in time, Isaac and his clan have grown quite large. His father Abraham was a rich man that had many sheep's, and goats, and camels, and donkeys to feed not to mention the many Klansmen that he had with him. Isaac at this point in time had grown quite large and quite wealthy and quite powerful.

And so, here Isaac is in the middle of a famine with all these animals and people to feed and instead of going down to Egypt where he knows that food and water is plentiful... God tells Isaac to stay put, and God once again repeats his promise to Abraham in verse four, and he tells Isaac that he will multiply his offspring as the stars of heaven, and that he will give his offspring all these lands, and that his offspring will cause all the nations of the earth to be blessed.

And I want us to know and understand that this promise that God made to Abraham is going to be repeated several times especially here in the book of Genesis. We first see it in Genesis chapter 12 verses two and three. But we can also see it here in Genesis chapter 26 verse four,

and again in Genesis chapter 28 verse four, and again a little farther down in Genesis chapter 28 verses 13 and 14, and we can see it again in Genesis chapter 35 versus 11 through 12. And so over, and over, and over again, we hear our Father in heaven repeating this promise that he gave to Abraham, but what I want us to fully understand is why he made this promise to Abraham in the first place, and we can find that in Genesis 26 verse five:

**Gen 26:5** *because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.”*

Now, my friends this is tectonically important for us to understand. Why? Because today’s modern-day professing Christians constantly love to misquote the apostle Paul by trying to get us to believe that Abraham was saved by faith apart from works.

Abraham was not saved by faith apart from works my friends. That is nothing more than a steel jawed trap, put forth by the devil himself. Today’s modern-day professing Christian gets the idea that Abraham was saved by faith apart from works from twisting and turning Romans chapter 4 verses one through eight:

**Rom 4:1** *What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh?*

**Rom 4:2** *For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.*

**Rom 4:3** *For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”*

**Rom 4:4** *Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due.*

**Rom 4:5** *And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,*

**Rom 4:6** *just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:*

**Rom 4:7** *“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;*

**Rom 4:8** *blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”*

You see the ignorant and the uneducated will boastfully proclaim that all Abraham had to do was to believe. They would have us wrongly believe that all Abraham had to do was run around saying “I believe, I believe, I believe”. And the reason that they want you to believe that all that Abraham had to do was run around saying “I believe, I believe, I believe” is so that they themselves can run around saying “I believe, I believe, I believe”.

You see today’s modern-day version of Christianity is drunk on the Devils proverbial Kool-Aid.

They will wrongly preach and teach from their pulpits that Abraham was chosen by God because of his faith and not because of his works. But that's not at all what the Bible says. That's what men say's... that's what the denominational charters of men say... and that's what their so-called "early church fathers" say... but... that's not what the Bible says.

My friends I want us to fully understand why it was that God chose Abraham according to the Scripture... and not... and I repeat not... according to men. Once again, I want us to go back to Genesis chapter 26 and I want us to reread versus four and five:

**Gen 26:4** *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,*

**Gen 26:5** *because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."*

Now, my friends... I don't know about you, but when some man approaches me and tells me that Abraham was saved by faith apart from works... I am educated enough to know that I am looking at one of two kinds of people. Number one... this brother is simply unstudied and ignorant. Or... number two... this is no brother at all, but rather a Wolf in sheep's clothing who is going to try to get me to believe that I am once saved always saved, and because I'm once saved always saved... for as thou wilt is now the whole of the law for me... Because I'm once saved always saved. Neither scenario is good.

Today's modern-day version of Christianity as we said many times over is really what should be rightly called "Catholicism". It is Catholicism and her daughter churches that continuously preach faith apart from works. But that's not what the Bible says. That's what Catholicism says... but that's not what true Christianity according to our God breathed Scriptures says. I want us to turn to the book of James to see what James who was the brother of our Messiah and the head of the Jerusalem Council had to say about Abraham only being saved by faith apart from works. Let's turn to James chapter 2 versus 21 through 24:

**Jas 2:20** *Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless?*

**Jas 2:21** *Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?*

**Jas 2:22** *You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works;*

**Jas 2:23** *and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God.*

**Jas 2:24** *You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.*

According to both the book of Genesis and the book of James... and the book of Romans if you



read it properly... Abraham's faith was completed by his works. Just as James tells us in verse 24 and I quote, "*you see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.*" But what does today's modern-day version of Christianity preach? Faith apart from works. It's all about faith apart from works. It's all about turning God's people into bird brains that simply continuously mimic "I believe, I believe, I believe", all the while thinking that they can honor our Messiah with their lips while their hearts are far from him.

Even a bird could mimic the words "I believe, I believe, I believe". What are we told just a few verses up in James chapter 2 verse 19?

**Jas 2:19** You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!

So, I suppose that the demons believe they getting into heaven to? The devil believes, he's believed from the very beginning. I suppose he's getting into heaven to? No! Why? Because his faith has not been completed by his works. His fruit is rotten.

And this is profoundly important for us to understand my friends because as a Christian you're going to hear these would be professing Christians who sit in today's modern-day church pews on the wrong day of the week wrongfully claiming that Sunday is the Sabbath... While they are being pre-programmed by a Wolf in sheep's clothing standing behind a pulpit... not to read the first half of the book because it's all been done away with.

Wolves in sheep's clothing who have traded the wisdom of God for the wisdom of men preach that Abraham was saved by faith apart from works... but... the Bible says that God promised to multiply Abraham's offspring as the stars of the heavens and to give his offspring the promised land, and that Abraham's offspring would bless all the nations of the earth because... and I quote, "*because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.*"

So, the next time you have someone standing in front of you telling you that Abraham was saved by faith apart from works... I want you to know what you're looking at standing there in front of you. That person needs help.

And if you choose to show this person the truth and they refuse to accept it... dust off your boots and be on your way. I have watched far too many true God-fearing, cross bearing, Messiah following Christians arguing back and forth on social media or standing in front of someone until the veins are popping out of their neck trying to get them to accept the truth when that person has no intention of accepting the truth.

Give them the truth. If they rejected it, dust off your boots and be on your way. And if you don't believe that that's biblical, you need to go read Matthew chapter 10 verse 14.

And so now that we fully understand that Abrahams faith was completed by his works... we can now go well armed in the knowledge of our God breathed Scriptures and move forward into Genesis chapter 26.

As we move into Genesis chapter 26 verse seven, we have to wonder if Isaac didn't remember what his father Abraham did when he was in Egypt. It could be said that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree concerning Abraham and his son Isaac. Just like Abraham told King Abimelech that Sarah was his sister... so too does Isaac tell this new King Abimelech that Rebecca is his sister instead of his wife.

Remember when we started this study I told you that we would see Isaac vacillating between faith and fear. This is exactly what I was talking about. Even though God has promised to multiply Isaac's offspring as many as the stars of the heavens, and God had promised Isaac that he would give his offspring all these lands, and that Isaac's offspring would cause all the nations of the earth to be blessed... Isaac still lived in fear of men.

Can you imagine that? God just appeared to Isaac in verse two... and even though God appeared to Isaac... Isaac still feared man. It's important to remember that Isaac was a flesh and bone man. Isaac was not a God, sometimes I think that people get the wrong idea because Isaac was a patriarch, and a biblical hero to many of us because he was the son of Abraham... but we must remember that Isaac was not a God. Isaac was a flesh and bone man just like you and me who lived in very hostile times amongst very hostile people.

It is written that God has winked in times of ignorance, but I want us to understand that even Isaac himself will be held accountable on the day of judgment. I'd like us to turn very quickly to the book of acts chapter 17 versus 30 and 31:

*Act 17:30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,*

*Act 17:31 because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."*

It's important that we remember that Yeshua Hamashiach is also Isaac's Messiah. Even the sins that Isaac has committed can be washed away through faith in the obedience to God. This was our Messiah's whole message. Repent... which means to turn away from your sins, and follow me, and emulate my Father as I emulate my Father, and you will be saved.

Isaac, even in his time could be saved if his faith was completed by his works just like his father's faith was completed by his works. What does first John chapter 5 verse three say? "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome."

Once again, Isaac gets caught in the lie of telling people that Rebecca is his sister instead of his wife, and Isaac is forced to explain himself to King Abimelech concerning why he didn't tell the truth in the first place. And once again my friends I want us to understand that it was commonplace for a King to murder a man who had a beautiful wife so that the King could take that man's wife into his own harem. This is how things were done back in those days.

So, if you had a beautiful wife, you had a decision to make. You either covered her up so that nobody can see her and you smuggled her in to the city, or you lied and said she wasn't your wife, or you left the area. God had told Isaac to stay put. There was no way for Isaac to hide his wife from being out in the open. A man and a wife had to work together to raise their children and to survive back in those days. And so, I want us to understand the obstacles that Isaac was up against and the culture, and the society that Isaac lived in. Isaac culture and society was much different than ours is today.

Now the Philistines were upset with how large and how powerful the clan of Isaac was becoming, and so all of the wells that Abraham had dug so that his herds could have water to drink... the Philistines went around and filled back up with dirt. And they did this in order to try to get Isaac to move away because they knew that he was becoming larger and stronger than they were.

And so, in Genesis chapter 26 verse 16 King Abimelech comes to Isaac and he tells Isaac to go away from them because Isaac and his clan were much mightier than they were. And I want us to also notice that Isaac could've told this King Abimelech to go spit if he wanted to. Obviously, Isaac and his clan were much more powerful than the Philistines were, and this is why this King Abimelech was so afraid of him in the first place. But what does Isaac do? Isaac departed from there and encamped in the Valley of Garrar.

Isaac was not seeking war. That land had already been promised to Isaac by God. Isaac knew full well that eventually the land that the Philistines were standing on... was going to belong to him and his people.

And I want us to notice that Isaac moved twice and dug two wells before they stopped harassing him. My friends do you have any idea what it must have been like to dig just one well in the desert heat? But Isaac and his men not only dug one well, but they then left that well to their enemy, and went and dug a second well. And even the second well did not make his enemy happy, so Isaac picks up all of his entourage and all of his sheep, camels, and all of his animals and he moves a third time and he digs a third well... until they finally leave him alone.

I want us to understand that at any point in time Isaac could've stood his ground and simply forced the Palestinians off of his land. But because Isaac was a man of God, and God had given him no commandment to do such a thing, Isaac continuously bowed out gracefully in order to keep peace and tranquility between the two peoples. This my friends is a perfect example of turning the other cheek.



At this point in time it shouldn't be too hard for us to understand that Isaac was getting pushed around an awful lot. Isaac was certainly not a man of war, he was a Shepherd and a herdsman and a farmer, not a battle-hardened warrior. And so, in verse 24 we see that Yahovah appears to Isaac a second time in order to reassure him. Yahovah tells Isaac *"fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring for my servant Abraham's sake."*

So, Isaac built an altar there and Beersheba, and their Isaac's servants dug a well. And just after they got finished digging that well... the hand of God immediately begins to move.

Abimelech and his advisor, and the commander of his army show up, and you can almost hear the anxiety in Isaac's voice when he says to Abimelech, *"why have you come to me, seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you?"*

And this is when Abimelech and his advisor and the commander of his Army admit that they have been watching Isaac and that they know that God is with Isaac. And because God is with Isaac they want Isaac to swear not to do them any harm.

And so, once again, we see Isaac has the upper hand, but instead of inciting a war and threatening this King and his advisor and his general... what does Isaac do?

Isaac makes a big feast and he feeds them and they ate, and they drank, and they exchanged oaths in peace, and then Isaac sent them on their way and they departed from him in peace. Once again, Isaac makes the right decision at the right time, and follows the lead of God.

Now, it is said that this well that they named "Shibah" still stands in Israel to this very day but that it simply can't be authenticated as being the exact same well, so we really can't be sure if that's true or not, but you may hear some people claiming that this very well does still exist.

As we get down to verse 34 we find that Isaac's son Esau has turned 40 years old, and that he once again makes a bad decision by taking a wife from the Hittites, and not only does he take one wife from the Hittites but he takes two. And so, once again we see Esau not having any regard for the wishes of his father or his grandfather and as we'll soon see it again in chapter 27, he also had no regard for his birthright either. And this is the beginning of another tangled web of deceit that we'll get into next Wednesday evening at 7 PM Eastern standard time.