

Isaac & Abimelech

Genesis 26

PPT Title

Isaac & Abimelech

Main Point: By faith, we must remain focused on God and His promises.

PPT Verse

Key Verse: *But he kept believing in God's promise. He became strong in his faith. He gave glory to God.* - Romans 4:20

Props: one set of "blindners" (two toilet paper tubes tapes together to resemble binoculars); 3 signs, large enough to be seen by your back row of students: God's Promises, Trouble, Fear (*signs are included at end of lesson*); any two objects, such as an apple and a stapler

REVIEW

Say: After Abraham's wife Sarah died, Abraham sent his most trusted servant to find a wife for Isaac. Trusting God every step of the way, the servant traveled nearly 500 miles to the home of Abraham's relatives. There, the servant met Abraham's great-niece, Rebekah. Rebekah was a beautiful woman who respected and followed the Lord. Rebekah's family knew that it was God's plan for her to leave her family and marry Isaac. They trusted God and allowed their daughter to go to Isaac. Isaac married Rebekah and dearly loved her.

DEATH OF ABRAHAM (Genesis 25:1-18)



Say: After Sarah died, Abraham married another woman. He had six more sons with his new wife. Abraham died at the good old age of 175. He left all that he owned to his son Isaac. Isaac and Ishmael buried Abraham along side his wife Sarah. Ishmael and his wife had twelve sons. They grew up and each became a tribe of people. The Bible tells us that all of Ishmael's descendants were unfriendly to each other. But God blessed Isaac. He lived near Beer Lahai Roi.

Note to Teacher: Beer Lahai Roi is the well where God met with Hagar in Genesis 16:7-14. It was located between Kadesh and Bered, which was southwest of Beersheba.

PROMISE RENEWED (Genesis 26:1-6)

Say: A famine struck the land where Isaac was living. There was very little food to eat. This had happened before, in Abraham's time. Isaac went to Abimelech, king of the Philistines, in the city of Gerar. **Teacher:** Show the path from just southwest of Beersheba, going to Gerar. Isaac must have considered going to Egypt to find food.



The Lord appeared to Isaac. He said, "Do not go down to Egypt. Live in the land where I tell you to live. Stay here for a while. I will be with you and give you My blessing. I will give all of these lands to you and your children after you. And I will keep the promise I made with an oath to your father Abraham. I will make your children after you as many as the stars in the sky. And I will give them all these lands. All nations on earth will be blessed because of your children." - Genesis 26:2-4

Ask: Where have we heard these promises before? *God promised these things to Isaac's* 1

father, Abraham. **Say:** God had made these promises to Abraham. Surely, Abraham had told Isaac about these promises many times. But, as far as we know, this was the first time Isaac heard the promises directly from the Lord! Isaac must have been VERY excited to hear that God was going to be with him and bless him so much.

Listen to why God was going to do these things for Isaac. God said, *"I will do all of those things because Abraham obeyed Me. He did what I required. He kept My commands, My rules and My laws."* (Genesis 26:5)

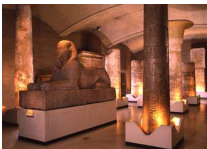
Isaac listened to God, and obeyed Him. He stayed in Gerar just as God had commanded.

FEAR REPEATED (Genesis 26:7-11)



Say: The men of Gerar noticed how beautiful Rebekah was. They asked Isaac about her. Isaac lied and told the men that she was his sister. Isaac was afraid that the men might kill him in order to take his wife for themselves. One day, King Abimelech looked out of his window. He saw Isaac hugging and kissing Rebekah! Right away the king knew Isaac had lied and that Rebekah was really his wife. Abimelech sent for Isaac. He asked Isaac why he had lied. Isaac confessed that he feared losing his life because of his wife. The king was angry that Isaac had lied. He asked, "What if one of the men had taken Rebekah for himself?" The king said then they would have all been guilty of doing wrong. Abimelech was right to be angry about this deception, but he gave orders to all of his people not to harm Isaac or Rebekah in any way.

Ask: Does this story sound familiar to anyone? **Listen for answers. Students may or may not know the stories of Abraham.** **Say:** Believe it or not, this very thing happened two times before in the Bible. Both times, it was Isaac's father, Abraham, who lied about his wife, Sarah. Both times happened before Isaac was born. First, because of the famine that happened during Abraham's life, Abraham and Sarah went to Egypt where there was food. Because Sarah was very beautiful, Abraham told her to say she was his sister. He, too, feared that the men of the land would kill him to take Sarah for themselves. The king of Egypt heard how beautiful Sarah was and had her brought to his palace. But God stepped in to rescue Sarah. Just in time, God sent terrible diseases to Pharaoh and his family because Sarah was in his palace. Pharaoh realized Sarah was Abraham's wife. He gave Sarah back to Abraham and sent them on their way. (Genesis 12:10-20)



The next time, Abraham and Sarah were back in the land of Canaan, in Gerar. Again, Abraham told Sarah to say she was his sister. This time the King of Gerar took Sarah into his palace. God came to the King in a dream and told him that Sarah was married. The King instantly returned Sarah to Abraham. He told Abraham to choose any land that he wanted and even gave him gifts of sheep, cattle, silver, and servants. (Genesis 20)

Note to Teacher: The Abimelech in Genesis 20 was most likely the grandfather of the Abimelech in Isaac's day. Abimelech may have been a title, rather than a name, such as Pharaoh.

We know that it is wrong to lie (Psalm 34:13). But if we look closely, we can find an even deeper sin shown here. Both Abraham and Isaac lied because they were afraid. They both feared for their safety, which is understandable in the culture they lived in. However, in both cases, God had just made a promise that He would be with them and bless them. God ALWAYS keeps His promises. If God promised to be with them and bless them, would He allow them to be killed by evil men who wanted to steal their wives? Of course not. We know that both men were men of great faith - Abraham is even referred to as the father of faith. But during the moments that they struggled, Abraham and Isaac **took their eyes off of God's promise and focused on the dangers around them.**

The most important point for us to see in these stories is that God ALWAYS keeps His promises. God is faithful, even when His children are not. God was so faithful that He protected Sarah and Rebekah, even when their own husbands placed them in danger. God would not allow the women to marry other men because He had promised that their children would become a great and special nation of people.



Application: Ask: Who can tell me what this horse is wearing around his eyes? *Horse Blinders.* **Say:** These are blinders, also called blinkers. **Ask:** Does anyone know why a horse wears blinders? **Say:** Horses' eyes are on the sides of their heads, so they have incredible peripheral vision. That means they are able to see all the things all around them, all the time. The blinders are worn to block them from seeing what is around them, especially during races. During a big race like the Kentucky Derby, there are tons of people, cameras flashing, and (probably the biggest distraction) other horses. These things can "spook" a horse and cause him to run off course. If a horse has blinders on, he cannot see the things around him, and he can only see what is directly in front of him - the track and the finish line. **Ask for a volunteer.** **Say:** Look straight ahead. Without turning your head, tell me what I am holding up. **Hold an object (such as an apple) about two feet away from the child, just to the left or right of their center of vision. Allow the child to shift his or her eyes if needed. (If the child cannot guess, slowly move the object closer so he or she can guess.)** Good. Now hold up these "blinders." **Give the child the tubes to hold up to their eyes.** Again, without turning your head, tell me what I am holding up. **Hold up another object (such as a stapler). This time you may get even closer to the child, but DON'T allow the object to come in front of the tubes.** **Say:** What? You can't guess? How about this object? **Hold up your sign that says "God's Promises." Do not allow it to come in front of the tubes.** **Say:** Still can't guess? Well tell me what you *can* see. You are so focused on that, you can see anything else. **Ask for another volunteer, and instruct him or her to hold the "God's Promises" sign in front of the first child.** **Ask:** Now what can you see? (He or she should say, "God's Promises.") **Say:** Again, without turning your head or moving the blinders, tell me what am I holding up. **Hold up the signs that say, "Trouble" and "Fear," out of the child's sight.** Now that you are focused on God's Promises, you can't see anything else. **Thank your volunteers.**

Say: Okay, let's all try this together. Everyone look straight at me. Without moving your head, move your eyes to look at all the things around you. **Move your eyes around exaggerratedly.** Now, everyone put on your blinders. **Hold your hands up to your eyes, binocular-style.** Okay, without turning your head, look around. Now you can only see what is in front of you. In the same way, when we focus on God and His promises, we won't see the difficult or frightening things around us.

"Unbelief looks at the difficulty.
Faith looks at the promise."
- Charles Bridges

Let's read this great quote. "Unbelief looks at the difficulty. Faith looks at the promise." (*Charles Bridges*) At times, each of us is overwhelmed by hard situations or difficult people in our lives. At those times, focus on Almighty God. Keep your eyes on His loving promises.

SETTLING DOWN (Genesis 26:12-35)



Isaac stayed in Gerar, just as God had instructed him, and the Lord blessed him. Water was extremely important in the desert area where they lived. While Isaac lived in Gerar, he and his family used the wells that Abraham had dug when he lived there. His crops grew and his livestock multiplied. The Bible says, "Isaac planted crops in that land. That same year he gathered 100 times more than he planted. That was because the Lord blessed him." (Genesis 26:12) Did you hear that? There had been a famine in the land, but in less than one year, Isaac's crops multiplied 100-fold. Isaac obeyed God by staying in Gerar. He trusted that God would take care of him, even in the middle of a famine, and God certainly provided for him and his family! Isaac became so wealthy that all the Philistines who lived there became very jealous of him. The Philistines filled the Isaac's wells with dirt so he couldn't use them! King Abimelech had a message for Isaac.

Then Abimelech said to Isaac, "Move away from us. You have become too powerful for us." - Genesis 26:16



Isaac did not put up a fight. He left and settled in the valley near by. He reopened more wells that his father had dug. Isaac's servants dug new wells, but each time, the Philistines who had been living there argued that the water belonged to them. Each time, Isaac simply moved to another spot. Finally, Isaac dug a well that no one claimed. He named it Rehoboth which means "wide spaces." He said, "Now the Lord has given us room. Now we will do well in the land." (Genesis 26:22)

From there Isaac went up to Beersheba. That night the Lord appeared to him. He said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid. I am with you. I will bless you. I will increase the number of your children because of my servant Abraham." - Genesis 26:23-24



Isaac built an altar on that spot. Then he settled there and dug a well.

It seems Isaac may have been searching for God to reveal the right spot to settle down. Whenever he met any resistance in a place, he moved on peacefully. When God met him at Beersheba, he built an altar and took up permanent residence.



Soon after that, King Abimelech traveled to Beersheba to meet with Isaac. The king brought his personal advisor and his army commander with him.

Isaac asked them, "Why have you come to me? You were angry with me and sent me away."

*They answered, "**We saw clearly that the Lord was with you.** So we said, 'We should make an agreement by taking an oath.' The agreement should be between us and you. We want to make a peace treaty with you. Promise that you won't harm us. We didn't harm you. We always treated you well. We sent you away in peace. Now the Lord has blessed you." - Genesis 26:27-29*

God's blessings on Isaac were even seen by the Philistines who were an ungodly people (Judges 10:6). These men were so amazed by the power of God in Isaac's life, that they begged him not to harm them. They wanted a peace treaty with Isaac, even though Isaac had never shown *any* signs of being unpeaceful. Do you think it ever occurred to Isaac that an entire nation of non-believers was watching his relationship with the Living God? Isaac made an oath of peace with the men. That day, Isaac's servants came to tell him that they had dug another well. "We found water!" they said. This was another blessing from God.

Application: Wherever God meets with you is a place worth staying at! Remain with God and you be blessed by Him (Psalm 40:4a, John 15:7). Remain with God by reading and obeying His perfect Word (John 15:10). Pray to Him and listen to His leading all through the day. Then you will bear fruit that others can see (John 15:4-5), and it will bring glory to God. Jesus said, "When you bear a lot of fruit, it brings glory to My Father. It shows that you are My disciples." (John 15:7-8)

PPT Main Point

Main Point: By faith, we must remain focused on God and His promises.

Good's Promises

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