

God (who Is with Isaac in Gerar) Preserves Rebekah (Genesis 26:1–11)

Grace Chapel December 2, 2009 Dr. John Niemelä

INTRODUCTION

CLARIFICATION OF AN ISSUE FROM LAST WEEK

Malachi 1:2 and Romans 9:13 *Jacob I have loved, but Esau I hated*

The passage uses Jacob (the progenitor of Israel) to stand for Israel
It also uses Esau (the progenitor of Edom) to stand for Edom

Within the context of Malachi, much is said about how God blessed Edom, but the fact of the matter is Israel is God's chosen people, not Edom.

Remember, though, Genesis 12:3. Only Israel was chosen, but Gentiles still could be saved. The choosing was corporate, not individual.

The point last week (when discussing Genesis 25, Malachi 1, and Romans 1) is that many expositors treat all these passages as if they spoke of individual election.

WHY IS GENESIS 26 HERE?

The *Toledot* of Isaac consists of the following passages

- Jacob & Esau Born & the birthright** (25:9–34)
 - **Isaac in Gerar** (26:1–33)
 - Jacob's trickery to get the blessing** (26:34–28:9)
 - Jacob's vision & Bethel named** (28:10–22)
 - Jacob's marriages & dealing w/ Laban** (29:1–30)
 - Jacob's dysfunctional marriages** (29:31–30:24)
 - Jacob blessed & Laban cursed** (30:25–43)
 - Jacob flees Laban & God protects him** (31:1–55)
 - Jacob tries to appease Esau** (32:1–21)
 - Jacob at the Jabbok & at Peniel** (32:22–32)
 - Jacob reconciles w/ Esau** (33:1–20)
 - **Shechem (a Canaanite) raped Dinah** (34:1–31)
 - Jacob returns to Bethel** (35:1–29)

Note that every passage (except Genesis 26:1–33 and 34:1–31 focus on Jacob).

Why did Moses insert these two passages into a section focusing on Jacob?

Reason 1: The passages between them (Gen 26:34–33:20) have a common theme

Reason 2: Genesis 26:1–33 and 34:1–31 share a theme

Reason 3: Genesis 26:1–33 lays a foundation for Gen 26:34–33:20

NEW EXPOSITION**COVENANT BLESSINGS CONFERRED UPON ISAAC (26:1–6)**

(26:1) In a famine, Isaac left his Canaanite area and went to Abimelech, king of Gerar

(26:2–3a) Then the Lord appeared to Isaac & commanded him not to go to Egypt, but to go where the Lord would tell him (specifically, he was to dwell in the land given by God)

(26:3b–4) God reiterated the extended land and seed promises that he had sworn to Abraham, to multiply his seed as the stars of heaven, to give them all the promised lands, & to (in his seed) to bless all nations of the earth

I will comment on the term *extended* in discussing verse 5

(26:5) The reason God will keep His extended land and seed promises is because of Abraham's obedience [in Genesis 22]

At its heart, the Abrahamic covenant is not conditioned on Abraham's obedience

However, in Genesis 22 God increased the terms to which He committed Himself, because of Abraham's obedience in that chapter

The covenant will not be nullified if generations after Abraham proved disobedient
(Cf. the future provisions in the Land Covenant for regathering)

(26:6) Isaac obediently dwelt in Gerar

GOD'S PROTECTION OF REBEKAH IN GERAR (26:7-11)

(26:7) Isaac (in fear of death) referred to Rebekah as his sister (rather than as his wife), whenever men inquired about her

Like father, like son: Cf. Abraham in Genesis 12 and 20

(26:8) After a long interval, Abimelech saw Isaac & Rebekah acting more like husband & wife than like brother & sister

(26:9) When Abimelech confronted him about his long-term deception, Isaac said that he did so out of fear for his life

(26:10) Abimelech rebuked Isaac for a great evil upon his people, leaving open the possibility that one of his people might have unknowingly become guilty of violating their marriage

(26:11) Abimelech commanded his people that anyone who harmed Isaac or Rebekah would be put to death

CONCLUSION