

Isaac and Abimelech

Genesis 26:1-33

Teacher Preparation

Read background materials from the Dole *Bible Study Notes*: <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/dbsn-1-20-isaac-and-abimelech.pdf>

Introduction

Welcome the kids and ask them how they're doing.

Read and Discuss

1. This story takes place when Abraham has died and Isaac is the leader of the family. He and Rebekah don't have children yet, but they have lots of servants and flocks.
2. Read *Genesis 26:1-33*.
3. There are some unusual aspects to this story. Why did they go to the land of the Philistines instead of Egypt? Why did Isaac, like his father before him, tell the king that his wife was his sister instead of his wife? Why did the shepherds fight over some of the wells?
4. We can learn several lessons from this story. The first one is basic: If you disagree with someone, and it feels like it's the other person's fault, walk away from the problem. Isaac was trying to live peacefully with the Philistines, but they kept filling in his wells. So did he fight back? No, he moved to try to get away from them. Twice they filled in his well, but finally they left him alone. What happened after that? Eventually Abimelech came and asked to be friends! If someone is annoying you and you don't make a big fuss but take yourself out of the situation, the person may realize that they really would rather be friends, stop being annoying, be friendly, and maybe even apologize.
5. There are reasons why these two men told the kings that their wives were their sisters, but they are complicated. One thing we can know though is that it is important because it happened three times. Whenever something happens three times, it is especially important. (Dole says: "In the internal sense a sister pictures rational truth, but a wife pictures truth united to good. People in the Philistine state are interested in learning rational truth; but because they have no desire to apply rational truth to their own conduct, they would destroy the same truth if it were presented as something they ought to do." They wanted to learn truth [sister] but not actually do it [wife].)
6. The Lord told Isaac not to go to Egypt because going to Egypt represents learning natural facts. Going to the land of the Philistines represents learning facts about the Lord and the church, which are more important than worldly facts. The people in the Old Testament represent us as we get older: Abraham was a good man, but Isaac was better, kind of like us as we get older and wiser. So at first we learn about the world around us, and then we start to learn about the Lord and the church. Abraham first digging the wells is like a small child learning the stories from the Word. But the Philistines filled them in with dirt, which is like us trying to make stories from the Word of little importance but using natural

Read and Discuss (continued)

facts to prove that the Word isn't true, or important. Isaac came along and tried to dig them out again, but he wasn't very successful. Sometimes our twisted ideas are too deeply entrenched to clear out. But Isaac kept trying and eventually dug a well that could flow freely and water his sheep. We may not understand all the stories from the Word, or wrong ideas may ruin some of these stories for us; but like Isaac, we should keep on trying until we find the explanations so that we can truly understand the Word, and then apply it to our lives. So you may think that the Word is too hard to understand, or not interesting enough, but you should keep trying—it's worth it! And know that everybody understand the Word a little bit differently, and you need to find the way that works for you.

Project

Do the word search

Colour picture, if there's time

Supplies

- Copy of the Word
- Print out (or be able to show the pictures on a device) a selection of pictures illustrating the story:
<https://hoshanarabbah.org/blog/2019/11/26/isaac-to-obey-or-not-to-obey-to-walk-in-faith-or-in-fear/>
<https://www.torahfamilyliving.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/01026025-C01-Genesis-26-25-Isaac-the-peacemaker.jpg>
- Print out this picture to color:
<http://www.supercoloring.com/pages/isaac-digs-a-well>
- Markers and crayons, etc.

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L E K F A O S K T P Y X X P X N B L T C
M A H A R B A Z V C R Z C X P E U J C H
S E N I T S I L I H P U W K X L W U F J
Y K L O I X R M T D V E Z P T X J Y P Z
R B C T I Q Z O E M L I T B Z U W J I C
F Z N O X T B M Y L E I K A C B Z X D C
U A D S L O A F E S E K M A A I X B N I
H L I A H F H R E P R C A C X G I K L U
T A G E R A R O W W I S H M A E L N K E
T W R E T A W U A J I Q Q A B S C Z K H
A R D A U T Q R R V P M O Q B X J H D T
S S T Q S S R N L L H M P B J V Z Q Q F
J F C O L X M K E F E K C X H E B N W C
H X S W L J Y U D H G P Q G F N V Y R O
J R Y X E X N U E G O L E R M L B Q V C
K Y D J X Q P T Q Y I R Z Z I V H A P C
L S J P X Z U S V R Q V Q W M C O B A H
U E O F N Y Z E J O S Q I P A N L E T E
E G A A T J K I A K B E F X O U H J P Y
H U Z Y F U D I S N O L M E S S S R B O

ABIMELECH

ABRAHAM

DIG

ESEK

FLOCKS

GERAR

ISAAC

ISHMAEL

PHILISTINES

QUARREL

RATIONAL

REHOBOTH

SARAH

SITNAH

WATER

WELL

