Isaac Went to Abimelech
king of the Philistines in Gerar
26: 1-5

DIG: How was Isaac like his father Abraham? Why was Isaac to stay in the Promised Land? What was ADONAI's promise to Isaac? How would Isaac benefit by staying in the Land? How would the world benefit?

REFLECT: How many times have you made the same mistake twice? How does that happen? How can we obey God and keep His *mitzvot*, His regulations and His teachings?

Sometime after the two boys had grown to manhood, and **Isaac** (Hebrew: **Yitz'chak**) **himself** was at least eighty years old, **he** and Rebekah encountered a severe test of faith and obedience. We do not have as much information concerning **Isaac's** life as we do for that of **his father**, so we do not know whether **he** had many earlier trials or not. In fact, this is the only chapter that is devoted to the events in **Isaac's** life. Except for the experience on Mount Moriah, and **his** problem with Jacob and Esau, **he** seems to have led a peaceful and comfortable life up to this point.[413]

Now there was a famine in the land where **Yitz'chak** was living, probably near the well at Lahai-Roi. This was the second famine that is mentioned. There was a **famine** during **Abraham's time** over a hundred years **earlier (12:10),** but this **famine** was starting to affect his flocks and herds. However, it wasn't as bad near the Philistine coast so **Isaac** decided to move near **Gerar. He** might have continued all the way into Egypt, but **ADONAI** stopped him.

And Isaac went to Abimelech king of Gerar (26:1). This was not the same king as before **(20:1-18, 21:22-34). Abimelech** was a title for the king of **Gerar**, like Pharaoh was a title for the king of Egypt. There were no **Philistines** living in **Gerar** during **Isaac's** lifetime, but they would eventually settle there and **Gerar** would become a Philistine city. The **Philistines** even kept the title of **Abimelech** for **their kings (First Samuel 21:10-15; Psalm 34). Isaac** had not left the borders of the Promised **Land**, which included **Gerar**, but he was thinking of going **to Egypt.**

In a sense **Yitz'chak** was just like **his father**. This reveals the fact that "like father, like son," sins are carried from the father to the son. You can talk about the generation gap all you want, but there is no generation gap of sin. It just flows from one generation to another. The son makes very much the same mistakes the **father** did unless someone intervenes.[414]

So **ADONAI** intervened and **appeared to Isaac**. **He** had appeared to **him** over fifty years earlier on Mount Moriah with **his father Avraham**. **He** had spoken to Rebekah before the twins were born, and now **He** had spoken to **Yitz'chak** for the first time. **God** had not forgotten **His** promises to **his father**, but told **Isaac** the same thing **He** had told to **Abraham, "Do not go down to Egypt." Isaac** had not left **the Land** to get a bride and **he** was not to leave **the Land** now. **Egypt** represents the world, and as a result, could not be a place of blessing for **the LORD**. If **he** did not to repeat the same mistake, and **live in the Land where** ADONAI told **him to live, he** would be blessed beyond measure. **Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Avraham (26:2-3).**

I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky (Hebrews 11:11-12) and will give them all these lands, and through the Offspring (using the Hebrew absolute singular here, meaning **the Messiah**), **all nations on earth will be blessed, because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My** *mitzvot***, My regulations and My teachings (26:4-5 CJB).** Yes, the **descendants** of **Abraham** would **be blessed** because of **him**, but **they** would also have to exhibit faith and obedience in order to enjoy the promised blessings.

Not only are **Avraham's** promises repeated here for **Yitz'chak**, but they were also expanded and enhanced. But as unthinkable as it would seem, and surely knowing what had happened to **his father** though **his** memory had grown dim, **he** fell into the very same sin. If the details sound familiar, there is an underlying reason.