

## **Saturday, May 23, 2020 ▫ Read Genesis 26:12–22**

*Questions from the Scripture text: What did Isaac do in v12? How much did he reap? How did this happen? Of what was this the beginning (v13)? To what extent did it continue? What did he have (v14)? How did the Philistines feel about this? What did they do in v15? What did Abimelech say and do to Isaac in v16? Where did Isaac go in v17? What did he do in v18? What else in v19? Who quarreled over these wells (v20)? What does he call the well in response (v20)? What does he do in v21? What do they do? What does he call the well in response? What does he do in v22? What does he call this new well? Why? Whom does he recognize as doing what for him?*

Although Isaac had given much evidence of his remaining sin, the Lord was merciful and faithful to prosper him both materially and spiritually.

We're usually less keen to see spiritual fruitfulness, so the Holy Spirit sharpens our vision by how extraordinary is the material fruitfulness. When Jesus teaches the parable of the soils, "a hundredfold" represents maximum-imaginable-fruitfulness (cf. Mat 13:8).

So this would be a remarkable crop by anyone at any time. But it isn't by anyone; it's by a man who up until that time had focused primarily upon livestock. And it isn't any time; it's in the midst of a famine (cf. v1). This is, apparently, how these crops went far beyond feeding his clan and his herds and flocks, to enabling him to procure the great wealth described in v13–14. Considering that wealthy Abraham (24:35) had left Isaac all that he had (24:36, 25:5), the fact that this crop-in-famine takes Isaac to a new level of prosperity tells us that he is now extremely wealthy indeed!

Thus, by Isaac's material fruitfulness, we are enabled to see the greatness of the spiritual fruit as well. He is content to walk by faith in the steps of his father, Abraham (cf. v18). And, surely his water needs were very great during this famine. But, at great cost to himself, he gave up well after well that he had dug again. If he was too mighty for Gerar itself (v16), certainly he was too mighty for its herdsmen (v20), and could have retained the wells by force.

But we see what enabled him to value and pursue peace so much—he trusted that it was Yahweh who was making room for him, v22. What a turnaround from the lack of faith that led to fear that led to lying that endangered before God an entire nation, in vv6–10!

Just as with the crop fields, there is only one valid explanation for the spiritual fruitfulness: undeserved grace from God! And truly, all of our material fruitfulness comes by grace and mercy. And, all of our spiritual fruitfulness comes by grace and mercy.

What has God given you materially? What has God given you spiritually?
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**Suggested songs: ARP65B "The Far and Distant Peoples" or TPH429 "Come Thou Fount"**