

## **Part II            Dig Another Well– Following In Dad’s Footsteps.**

This is the second of three part allegory written to help Christian job seekers continue to dig for God’s blessing in their careers. The first part can be found at ...[www.intercristo.com](http://www.intercristo.com).

Part II – Isaac has just been kicked out of the land where he has prospered and needs to find a new source of sustenance for his family and his servant and flocks.

Right after king Abimlech left our tent, I began thinking of relocation options. Now I don’t want to make a pyramid out of a sand hill, but it’s not easy moving 10,000 cattle, 15,000 sheep, 200 Camels and more than 50 servants – on a day’s notice. So you can imagine that I was more than a little concerned with the move. When I finally calmed Rebekah down long enough to discuss our next step, of course her first suggestion was, “What about Southern Egypt? We could move to Brazenly Hills near the Nile, they have an urbane civilization and your favorite meat pies could be bought by the bushel.” I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. God had personally told us not to return to Egypt and now my Rebekah, my dear, dear beloved wife was thinking that God would honor our slavish return to a land that was far away physically, and spiritually remote from Him. I had to think fast. A germ of an idea started to cross my mind. What if we moved out of town, you know, not too far away maybe to a suburb that would be out of harm’s way. The more I thought about it, the more I liked the idea. My dad had, years ago, built a thriving business in a nearby suburb, Gerar Valley and I thought I could return and get the business up and running again. Matter of fact, since the only difference in the name was the word Valley, all the worker’s uniforms could be easily modified, same with the letterhead and even signage on the chariots. Oh how sweet it is to have a plan that can work.

Off we went to VOG (Valley of Gerar) to find my father’s wells, not a simple task. Sand shifts, filled-up wells are not easy to spot in the middle of a desert, and the process of digging seemed to go on forever. Finally, we got the work finished and the flocks watered. We were just beginning to settle down when I got the newest bad news. Now, I don’t want you to think I’m making anything up, so lets reference the good book:

Genesis 26:17-20 So Isaac moved away from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar and settled there. Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died, and he gave them the same names his father had given them. Isaac's servants dug in the valley and discovered a well of fresh water there. But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen and said, "The water is ours!" So he named the well Esek.

There you have it, the same old problem all over again. I mean, how greedy are these Philistine shepherds? I could understand their jealousy in the city of Gerar, but can’t they leave the valley alone, come on, that’s unfair. Moreover, I thought going back to restart the family wells would no way encroach upon anyone else’s water rights. This reminded me of an old saying, “The best laid plans of scorpions and slaves, often goes awry.” What’s a young mogul to do? Sure I could stay and fight or I could start a class action suit or I could throw in the towel. Whatever I decided was not going to be popular with Rebekah or easy to implement. I really didn’t have enough job skills to be a tent maker, or a money changer or to start a long haul chariot service. Maybe I was just unlucky, I’m sure there has to be a place big enough for all of us somewhere. So far I have been kicked out of the place I was thriving and now I have been kicked out of the family business. If I didn’t have bad luck, I wouldn’t have any luck at all. Just then I

remembered the promise that God gave me before we had moved to Gerar in the first place:

Genesis 26:2-6 The LORD appeared to Isaac and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live. 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 Abraham. I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because Abraham obeyed me and kept my requirements, my commands, my decrees and my laws." So Isaac stayed in Gerar.

Well I thought, better stick to my guns and look nearby for God's blessing to return.

#### **Reader Takeaway –**

Isaac's situation illustrates clearly a sequence of events compressed into a few verses in a single chapter. Initially Isaac trusted God for his provision in the face of famine when conventional wisdom would have been to strike his fortune in the big city, i.e., Egypt. However, that was not God's will for Isaac. So Isaac dutifully goes to Gerar and sure enough God blesses him there – perfect, just as planned. Suddenly the blessing turns into a trial, so to speak. Meaning Isaac's one hundred-fold increase produces jealousy and strife that leads to being kicked out of the land. Not exactly expected by Isaac, but certainly within the realm of possibilities. If you are the counting type, there is one positive (a 100-fold increase) and one negative (kicked out by Abimlich), so it's a wash.

Since Isaac can't fight an entire kingdom, he takes off to find God's next blessing. At this time he has a deep bank account and doesn't feel too worried about his next step. But, like anybody who has sunk their roots deeply in a community, Isaac wants to stay close to his original source of blessing, which in this case is Gerar.

That leads him to choose the Valley of Gerar where he and his servants do the hard work of looking for God's next blessing by digging another well. But instead of finding God's blessing he finds Esek, or quarrel, not good thinks Isaac. For those of you who are counting, there are now a total of one blessing and two non-blessings (if we weren't being E.C. (evangelically correct), Isaac might call the score, two to one (+1 blessing and –2 curses). Now a little anxiety creeps into Isaac with a some confusion to boot. Here we see Isaac trying to stick with God's apparent plan (stay in Gerar) and not stray too far from His will. But all that seems to be happening is more problems. You can almost hear him thinking, "I'm willing to give God another chance to prove Himself faithful. After all, I am doing my part. But, does God know the pressure I am under with all my staff, my wife, my herds, if we don't find water soon we are in big trouble?"

We too find ourselves doing these kinds of calculations. Adding up our blessings and subtracting our curses to see if God is still on our side. This is a dangerous proposition. The devil wants us to believe that God is not good, to actually think that God is evil. If he can break the bond of our faith in God, he (our enemy) has gained a great advantage in our lives. The question you must ask yourself whenever strife confronts you, "Is God Good?" If you have given your Life to Christ, are regenerated and have the hope of expectation for eternal life with God, the obvious answer will be "yes." The problem is the very next word – but. "Yes, but, doesn't God see our financial need. Yes, but doesn't he see that my husband is stressed out. Yes, but our kids will have to leave their friends." This leads us to ask, "Does God care?" The but... is the gate that allows doubts and fears to pour into our hearts. We can't allow ourselves to become defeated by the slew of doubts that follow the "but." The key is to have a child like heart and count your blessings name them one by one and it will amaze you what the Lord has done. In order to thrive in the face of adversity, you need to know there is purposes and

value to trials and that God is eternally faithful. Romans chapter five tells us, trials produce persistence and persistence leads to character, a godly trait. Think of the persistence Jesus had to possess to go to the cross. The persistence Paul had to have to evangelize in the face of death threats. The persistence of Joseph to believe God when he was in prison, or Daniel when thrown into the lion's den. The Bible is full of examples that we can read for help in times of strife. Remember, God doesn't want us to rest on our "laurels" or to allow past success to blind us to his future plans. Rather God's intention is to make a life of faith both a training ground and a personal adventure for every believer.