

Genesis 26:1-35

Isaac's last location is BEER-LAHAI-ROI:

Genesis 24:62 – (When Rebekah arrived to marry Isaac) – “Now Isaac had returned from Beer-lahai-roi and was dwelling in the Negeb. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening. And he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, there were camels coming.”

Genesis 25:11 – “After the death of Abraham, God blessed Isaac his son. And Isaac settled at Beer-lahai-roi.”

Genesis 26:1-5 – THE FAMINE

Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines. 2 And the Lord appeared to him and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. 3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will

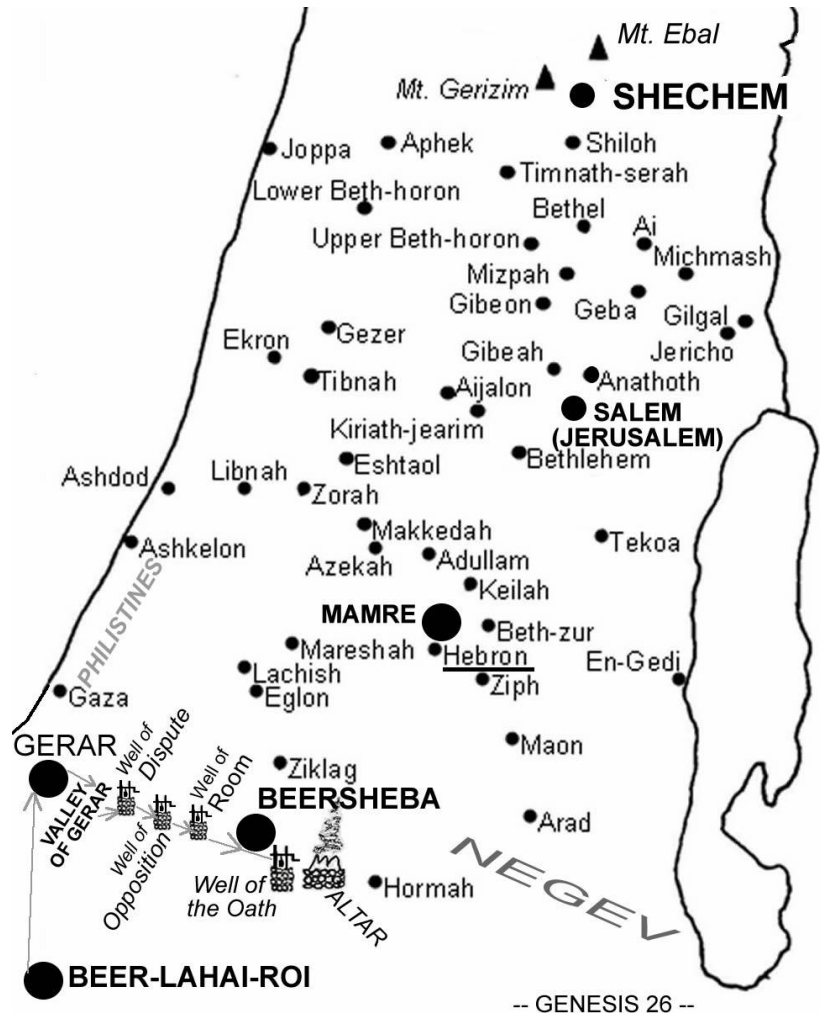
give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. 4 I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, 5 because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.”

1. The LORD appeared to Isaac at Gerar and forbid him to go to Egypt as Abraham had.

Genesis 26:6-11 – ISAAC MOVES TO GERAR

6 So Isaac settled in Gerar. 7 When the men of the place asked him about his wife, he said, “She is my sister,” for he feared to say, “My wife,” thinking, “lest the men of the place should kill me because of Rebekah,” because she was attractive in appearance. 8 When he had been there a long time, Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out of a window and saw Isaac laughing with Rebekah his wife. 9 So Abimelech called Isaac and said, “Behold, she is your wife. How then could you say, ‘She is my sister’?” Isaac said to him, “Because I thought, ‘Lest I die because of her.’” 10 Abimelech said, “What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us.” 11 So Abimelech warned all the people, saying, “Whoever touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.”

1. Abraham and Isaac both:
 - a. Move towards Philistines



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- b. Interact with a Abimelech and a Phicol:
 “At that time Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his army said to Abraham, “God is with you in all that you do.” – Genesis 21:22
- c. Declare the wife to be their sister in a foreign land (Genesis 12:10-20)
- 2. Abimelech of Abraham’s account in Genesis 20 meets Abraham before Abraham is 100. This Abimelech of Isaac meets Isaac at the age of 60. This means there are at least 75 years separating the two adult, married Abimelech’s and the Phicol that serves with them.
- 3. Isaac’s fear for Rebekah seems to have been overstated since no one made a move on her as his “sister” while he was there for a long time.
- 4. The deception of the wife-as-sister scheme has been revealed by:
 - a. Plague in Egypt
 - b. Dream with Philistines
 - c. Observation with Isaac
- 5. “Laughing” with Rebekah is the word **sahaq**. It is used in the OT to say “laugh, laughed, make sport, entertain, amuse, jesting, mocking, play”. Here it seems to refer to “play” as in “sexual play” or “foreplay”
- 6. Abimelech is the honest and righteous leader who fears YHWH.
- 7. Abimelech forbids anyone to “touch” (naga) which is a technical term to describe contact with something holy or unholy.
- 8. Abimelech may have knew God’s words to Abraham (12:3) and to Abimelech the First (20:7) to come to this conclusion.

Genesis 26:12-16 – ISAAC PROSPERS IN GERAR

12 And Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. The Lord blessed him, 13 and the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy. 14 He had possessions of flocks and herds and many servants, so that the Philistines envied him. 15 (Now the Philistines had stopped and filled with earth all the wells that his father’s servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father.) 16 And Abimelech said to Isaac, “Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we.”

Genesis 26:17-22 – ISAAC DEPARTS GERAR and DIGS WELLS

17 So Isaac departed from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar and settled there. 18 And Isaac dug again the wells of water that had been dug in the days of Abraham his father, which the Philistines had stopped after the death of Abraham. And he gave them the names that his father had given them. 19 But when Isaac’s servants dug in the valley and found there a well of spring water, 20 the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac’s herdsmen, saying, “The water is ours.” So he called the name of the well Esek, because they contended with him. 21 Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that also, so he called its name Sitnah. 22 And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, saying, “For now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.”

- 1. *Esek* means “challenge”
- 2. *Sitnah* means “opposition”
- 3. *Rehoboth* means “open spaces”



Genesis 26:23-25 – ISAAC SETTLES IN BEERSHEBA

23 From there he went up to Beersheba. 24 And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, “I am the God of Abraham your father. Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring for my servant Abraham's sake.” 25 So he built an altar there and called upon the name of the Lord and pitched his tent there. And there Isaac's servants dug a well.

1. In Genesis 25:11 Beer-sheba is Isaac's home, so Isaac has returned home
2. The LORD appears to Isaac when he first returns
3. The LORD gives this information to Isaac:
 - a. A revelation of Abraham's God
 - b. The promise of divine presence
 - c. The promise of Blessing
 - d. The promise of a Seed
4. There is nothing new revealed, but the Abrahamic promises are confirmed.
5. Isaac builds an altar in Beersheba and calls on YHWH's name



Ancient Well at Beersheba's city gate

Genesis 26:26-33 – ABIMELECH GOES TO ISAAC FOR A TREATY

26 When Abimelech went to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath his adviser and Phicol the commander of his army, 27 Isaac said to them, “Why have you come to me, seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you?” 28 They said, “We see plainly that the Lord has been with you. So we said, let there be a sworn pact between us, between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you, 29 that you will do us no harm, just as we have not touched you and have done to you nothing but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the Lord.” 30 So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. 31 In the morning they rose early and exchanged oaths. And Isaac sent them on their way, and they departed from him in peace. 32 That same day Isaac's servants came and told him about the well that they had dug and said to him, “We have found water.” 33 He called it Shibah; therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day.

1. Abimelech goes from Gerar this time to Isaac in Beersheba because he realizes Isaac has been blessed with:
 - a. Material power (26:13-14)
 - b. Manpower (26:14, 16)
2. Abimelech is accompanied by two officials from Gerar:
 - a. Ahuzzath, an adviser, the main civilian officer
 - b. Phicol, the military commander, the main military officer
3. The city of Gerar is too close to Beersheba to NOT have a treaty with Isaac.
4. Abimelech has good motive to lock Isaac into a treaty after:
 - a. He has dealt with Isaac in the past

- b. YHWH has protected, led and blessed Isaac (Abimelech says this in 26:29). Other Gentiles who recognized YHWH and his blessing: Jethro (Ex 18:10-11), Rahab (Josh. 2:8-11; Namaan (2 Kings 5:15)
- 5. Isaac is not gracious, but accusative toward Abimelech
- 6. The “oath” (*'ala*) and “treaty” (*berit*) are made.
- 7. Isaac “sends” (*saba*) Abimelech away in peace. Early Abimelech had “sent” or “drove” (*saba*) Isaac away
- 8. While all this is going on Isaac’s servants are successfully digging a well in Beersheba and finding water for the FOURTH time (first three times were 26:19, 21, 22)
- 9. Isaac names or re-names the city
 - a. Shibah (“seven”) from *sib’a* meaning seven
 - b. Sheba (“oath”) from *shobua* meaning oath (שְׁבוּעָה)
 - c. “be'er” (בְּעֵר) means “well”

Genesis 26:34-35 – ESAU MARRIES TWO HITTITES

34 When Esau was forty years old, he took Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite to be his wife, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite, 35 and they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah.

- 1. Isaac was 40 when he married and 60 when the twins were born, so Isaac is 100 years old when Esau marries two Hittite women at the age of 40.
- 2. This account of Esau and his marriages is placed here to:
 - a. Set the stage to justify chapter 27
 - b. Confirm that Esau is not worthy to receive the Abrahamic Covenant
 - c. Alliances with the Canaanites (like Abraham had and Isaac just engaged in) are acceptable, but marriage to the Canaanites is a violation.



Camels outside Beersheba

Landscape around Beersheba

Modern Beersheba outside
ancient Beersheba

Ancient Beersheba's city gate

