

1. We often hear that those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it. In what two ways would the problems between Isaac and Abimelech have been avoided if they had remembered the lives of Abraham and the other Abimelech? (Genesis 21:22-24)
2. While we've seen some parallels in the lives of Abraham and Isaac, how do the overall story of their lives show a difference in the spiritual development of them as they progress into their old age?
3. What parallels do you see between the story of Ishmael and Isaac and Esau and Jacob?
4. In what ways do the following act deceitfully:
 - Rebekah
 - Jacob
 - Isaac
5. Although they hadn't been given yet, how many of the Ten Commandments does Jacob break in this story?
 6. Hebrew literature is noted for a scarcity of narrative comments on a person's character or motivation. Instead, you're usually left to deduce them from their behavior.
 - 6a. In what ways does the story of Esau up to now reveal his character?
 - 6b. Isaac is described by most commentators, both Jewish and Christian, as being dominated by his physical appetites. How is this demonstrated in the story?
 7. How are we shown in the story that Isaac has lost control of his family?
 8. How are we shown in the story that Isaac knows about God having told Rebekah that Jacob was the chosen one and that he is trying to thwart the plan of God?
 9. What four different types of blessing did Isaac bless Jacob with? Which ones came to pass during his life? Which one did he give away? Which ones will apply more and point ahead to the story of Joseph?
 10. What four different types of blessing did Isaac bless Esau with?
 11. In what different ways might the prophecy of Esau breaking the yoke of Jacob from his neck have been fulfilled?
 12. Consider some of the different ironic ways that the people in the story were affected by their actions in this story:
 - Isaac trying to hide from God
 - Rebekah sending Jacob away so she wouldn't lose him.
 - Jacob, the man of the tents,
 - Esau, the man of emotions and impulsiveness
 13. Lest any should think that we're picking on poor Isaac, the Bible is full of people who have tried to go against the stated plan or will of God. What was the result of each of the following either thinking that they knew better than God or trying to help him?

Lucifer
Adam and Eve
Cain
Abram and Sarai
King Herod
Peter
Saul of Tarsus

14. The Bible is also full of warning stories about people who started out on the right spiritual track but whose stories didn't end well. How did the following people start well but not end well?

Lot
Isaac
Sampson
Gideon
King Saul
Absalom
King Solomon
King Hezekiah
Judas

15. What do these people's stories have to say to us?

16. How are the warnings of these people's endings related to the Bishop's statement that the goal of Christianity isn't going to heaven and that if we think it is then we've missed the whole point of being a Christian?

27. How do the ironic consequences of today's story as well as the lives of the above who either didn't end well and who tried to either help God or get the better of Him illustrate the truths of the following verses:

Galatians 6:7

Galatians 6:9

II Thessalonians 3:13

Hebrews 12:1

I Corinthians 9:24-27

James 1:12

I Timothy 6:12

II Timothy 4:7-8

28. How might our story today have been different if the four characters had had the following verse to put frame and hang over their tent flaps?

Hebrews 12:9-14