

BEERSHEBA IN BETWEEN

²² *At that time Abimelek and Phicol the commander of his forces said to Abraham, “God is with you in everything you do. ²³ Now swear to me here before God that you will not deal falsely with me or my children or my descendants. Show to me and the country where you now reside as a foreigner the same kindness I have shown to you.” ... ²⁷ So Abraham brought sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelek, and the two men made a treaty. ²⁸ Abraham set apart seven ewe lambs from the flock, ²⁹ and Abimelek asked Abraham, “What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs you have set apart by themselves?” ³⁰ He replied, “Accept these seven lambs from my hand as a witness that I dug this well.” ³¹ So that place was called Beersheba, because the two men swore an oath there. ... ³³ Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called on the name of the LORD, the Eternal God. ³⁴ And Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines for a long time.*

Genesis 21:22-23,27-31,33-34

- I. Beersheba was the last stop, and point of beginning.
 - A. In this unassuming place, God shapes the most significant lives in redemptive history.
 - B. Beersheba was the last stop on the road called “the way of the patriarchs.”
 - C. This road ended at Beersheba, the southernmost border of Israel, the last stop before the blistering wilderness.
(Negev)

- D. It was the last place of fertile land before the desert, the final place to store up on water. Wells were the most important ingredient for life.
- E. Beersheba was the point of departure for many spiritual journeys: Abraham, Hagar, Jacob, Elijah. (Genesis 16:8; 21:17; 46:3-4; I Kings 19:3)

* This season is also a glorious point of departure to your next spiritual journey. Preparation is giving way to suddenlies. (II Chronicles 29:36)

³⁶ Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced at what God had brought about for his people, because it was done so quickly.

II. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in Beersheba

- A. Abraham in Beersheba / Abraham received favor with and through his former enemies. God resolved all his previous problems of abuse. (Genesis 21:22-23) Out of nowhere the abuse stops!

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- B. Isaac in Beersheba / Isaac, also, quarrels over wells, and is then assured of Gods companionship. (Genesis 26:3-6)

³ 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. 4 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, 5 because Abraham obeyed me and did everything I required of him, keeping my commands, my decrees and my instructions.” 6 So Isaac stayed in Gerar.

C. Jacob in Beersheba / Jacob is just about to enter into the final 17 years of his life. (Genesis 46:1-4)

1 So Israel set out with all that was his, and when he reached Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. 2 And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, “Jacob! Jacob!” “Here I am,” he replied. 3 “I am God, the God of your father,” he said. “Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. 4 I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph’s own hand will close your eyes.”

1. In the dream the Lord says “I am God.” (Genesis 46:3) “Do not be afraid to go where I am leading you.” “My purposes for you are there; they’re not here.” “I will go there with you.” (Genesis 46:4) Jacob proceeds to Egypt in the golden carts of pharaoh to finish his life in utter domestic bliss.
2. Beersheba is the place “in between” where conflicts with your enemies are resolved completely, and new life begins.

III. A well, a tree, and a new name

A. A Well / A well is the most valuable possession in the desert. It stakes a claim of permanence wherever it is.

B. A Tamarisk tree (Genesis 21:33)

³³ Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called on the name of the LORD, the Eternal God.

This tree, planted, marked the change from strangership to possession. The planting emblemizes settled and long continuance. (Isaiah 65:22)

²² No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the work of their hands.

1. Abraham would never benefit from a tree that he planted in his old age, but it showed that he believed that one day his descendants would enjoy it.
2. Now Abraham had something more permanent than a tent--he has something invested in the land.
3. Why did Abraham take the time to plant such a tree? We might deduce that there was much to celebrate in Abraham's life and so he creates a monument to declare God's provision. The tree represents the Lord, the Everlasting God who has blessed him with a child, a peace treaty and a water supply.
4. There isn't much in Beersheba other than sand and rocks. And yet Abraham plants a tamarisk tree there – the only mention in our Bible of Abraham planting anything. A tamarisk tree is a slow growing tree, increasing only an inch per year and taking close to 400

years to grow to full height - 60 ft. Its evergreen leaves collect water vapor from the moisture in the air during the night, and when the sun radiates its heat, the droplets evaporate and produce a cooling system. It is an outdoor air conditioning unit for the blistering desert heat.

The tamarisk has small scale like leaves and small branches which give the tree a pine-like appearance. During the heat of the day the tamarisk secretes salt, a process very wasteful of water. The salt dries. During the night the salt absorbs water from the air. In the morning the water evaporates creating a sort of natural air-conditioning.

- C. A new name, El Olam. The God without a beginning; the God who never will cease to be; the God who will never grow old; the God to whom eternity is what present time is. He who extends beyond our greatest vision of who we think God is. (No matter how great our concept of God is, He is always greater.)

EL OLAM shows us that God is the God of all ages, everything that happens is under His control throughout human history.