



The Zion Letter

The Monthly Newsletter of For Zion's Sake Ministries, Inc.
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PROSPERING IN A TIME OF FAMINE

"Now there was a famine in the land, besides the previous famine that had occurred in the days of Abraham. So Isaac went to Gerar, to Abimelech king of the Philistines. The Lord appeared to him and said, "do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land of which I shall tell you. Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham. I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed..." Now Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. And the Lord blessed him, and the man became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy." Genesis 26:1-4, 12-13.

These days many people are

nervous and scared about the shrinking economy. Bad news is everywhere you look. The stock market is tanking, people are losing their jobs and their homes, and the government is spending our money wildly and putting us all in debt up to our grandchildren's eyeballs. Bail-outs and stimulus packages seem to be throwing money at the wind. What can you do to make it in times like these? The Bible has answers for every situation imaginable. There were numerous times of famine (a biblical word for "recession" or "depression.") in the Bible. In a time of famine, God sent the prophet Elijah to a brook where he was fed by ravens until the brook dried up. Then God sent him to the widow of Zarephath who provided for him until the famine was over (See 1Kings 17). Abraham's son Isaac lived during a time of famine also.

Isaac was afraid to stay in the Promised Land during that time of famine. He wanted to pack up his things and move to Egypt. Perhaps he'd heard there were better crops there, more opportunity? But God appeared to Isaac and told him to stay in the Promised Land. So Isaac settled in Gerar. Gerar is located

in what would be known today as Gaza. Gaza is part of the land God promised to give to Abraham and his descendants forever. Isaac obeyed God. He defied reason by staying in a land of famine, he sowed in that land and he reaped a hundredfold in the same year! He even became very wealthy the Bible tells us.

ISAAC'S FEAR:

At first Isaac wanted to flee the Promised Land! He was fearful that he and his family might not survive the famine.

Isaac obeyed God. He defied reason by staying in a land of famine, he sowed in that land and he reaped a hundredfold in the same year!

Isaac's worry overwhelmed his faith in God, the same God who had brought his father Abraham into the Promised Land many years before. The same God who promised to bless Abraham and his descendants and give them that land forever. Because of his fear, Isaac took his eyes off God and focused on his circumstances.

He worried about the economy, the drought, the shortage of food. Are you focused on God these days or are the troubles of this world causing you to worry? Franklin Roosevelt once said, "*The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.*" The economic troubles that the world is experiencing were surely brought on by greed, the idolatry of materialism and people generally forgetting about God. But it is fear that will make the situation worse. It is fear that is causing the stock market to decline. It is fear that is keeping banks from lending. Fear causes people to put plans on hold, to not invest in that new business venture or to build that new house... And it is fear that causes many people to make the mistake of not giving to the Lord. The worst thing people can do because of fear is to stop giving to the Lord in a time of famine. Isaac was afraid and it's normal to be afraid during times like these, but we mustn't stay afraid. Isaac overcame his fear and he prospered in spite of the famine. You can too.

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Your local connection to Israel!

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ISAAC'S FAITH:

Isaac was ready to pack his bags and move to Egypt when God appeared to him. The Bible doesn't tell us whether Isaac sought the Lord in prayer and supplication before God appeared to him, or whether the Lord just showed up. I'm inclined to believe that Isaac had been praying and seeking God for some answers when the Lord showed up. Either way, God appeared to Isaac and told him not to leave the Promised Land. God said,

"Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham..." Gen 26:3. To paraphrase, God was telling Isaac not to worry, but that He was going to feed, clothe, shelter and protect Isaac and his family. Now that's a promise you can take to the bank... Isaac believed God. He stayed in the Promised Land. Verse 12 says, *"Now Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. And the Lord blessed him, and the man became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy," Gen 26:12-13.*

Isaac didn't just sit still and wait for Manna to fall from heaven, he sowed. He planted seed. We don't know what kind of seed he sowed? Perhaps it was literally crops that he planted. Perhaps he invested in a land purchase to grow his livestock? Whatever he did, God blessed him for his obedience and for his faith. Isaac trusted God to stay in a land of famine. Isaac was obedient to do what God said and God blessed him for it. *Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."* Isaac accepted the terms of the covenant God made with his father Abraham and because he was in covenant with God, God had to take care of him!

GOD'S COVENANT WITH YOU:

Have these troubled times got your worried? Are you in Messiah? Are you in Christ? *Galatians 3:29 says, "And if you belong to Messiah, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise."* That means that what God did for Isaac He is bound by covenant to do for you! Yeshua (Jesus) said not to worry about food and clothing, but that God will take care of those needs (See Matthew 6:25-33). He said *"Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be*

added to you." *Mt 6:33.* If you have trusted in Messiah Jesus for your salvation, then you are in covenant relationship with the God of Israel and He is bound by His covenant promises to bless you and to take care of you just as he took care of Isaac. Now that's rock solid!

God will keep His covenant promises to us, but we must live by faith and not by fear. We must seek God and His Kingdom. We must seek his guidance and obey Him. He can't bless us if we are disobedient. Isaac trusted God enough to stay in a land of famine. We must trust God for our provision during hard times too. Isaac obeyed God. We too must obey God by doing what He asks us to do and by going where He asks us to go even when it doesn't make sense... Friend, God has a wonderful plan

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for your life. If you don't know what it is, the Scripture says, *"Seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul," DT 4:29.*

CONCLUSION:

God isn't worried about the economy. In His kingdom there is abundance and never any lack. If you are in covenant with God through a personal relationship with Yeshua (Jesus Christ), then God is obligated by His own promises to take care of you as He took care of Isaac. But you must obey Him and you must overcome fear with faith. If you have fear, try speaking the word of God to your fear with verses such as (*Proverb 3:5-6, 2Timothy 1:7*). Yeshua said, *"I am the vine and you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing," John 15:5.* To abide in Him means to walk closely with the Lord in prayer and obedience to His word. To abide in Him is to obey Him. While others are running scared, you can prosper in a time of famine.



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Dear friends,

We recently returned from Israel where there was war in Gaza up until two days before we left on our trip. But the war ended and all 48 pilgrims had a fabulous time in the Holy Land. I had the privilege of baptizing my son in the Jordan River on this trip. His brother watched and said "Is Daddy John the Bath-tist?" We invite you to come with us on our next trip to Israel and if you'd like, you can even get *bath-tized*! Folks it is so important to visit Israel if you are able to go. God's Chosen people are so encouraged when you come and visit them and it supports Israel's economy. The only evidence of war we saw were a few tanks being transported back to the north by tractor-trailor.

Our tenth annual Passover Seder banquet is coming up this April 11th. We hope you will join us for this exciting community-wide event! If you would be interested in having us present Messiah in the Passover at your church or school, just call our office or e-mail us and we'll be glad to set something up with you.

We hope that this edition of the Zion Letter is an encouragement to you and that you will find it useful in your own faith journey. For Zion's Sake Ministries is a faith ministry and your tax-deductible contributions are a tangible way that you can bless Israel and the Jewish people.

For Zion's Sake,
Joe and Dawn

*I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.*

Genesis 12:3

