

Title: AN ALTAR, A TENT, AND A WELL

Text: Genesis 26:17-25

Intro: Isaac was the son of a famous father (Abraham) and the father of a famous son (Jacob, who was Israel). But being the son of Abraham and the father of Jacob was NOT the key to his spiritual success. Isaac himself lived a life of obedience and faith in God. Read **Gen. 26:25**. We find 3 things in the life of Isaac which are symbolic of the conditions for a believer who desires to have spiritual success.

1. ISAAC BUILT AN ALTAR (v. 25a-b). It was a time of great difficulty for Isaac. God had greatly blessed him in the land of the Philistines where he was living, so that the Bible says in **v. 13 cf. 14-16**. So he began moving ahead as he faced opposition in Gerar until he came to Beersheba. We don't know how low and anxious Isaac was feeling at this point, but the night he arrived in Beersheba, God appeared to him and spoke wonderful words of assurance and promise (See **vv. 23-24**). There is an interesting lesson as to how Isaac exactly responded to God's word (see **v.25a**).

An ALTAR speaks of DEDICATION. Isaac knew all about altars, didn't he? Recall **Gen. 22:3-8** (cf. **Heb 11:17-19**). On that occasion, God tested Abraham's DEDICATION — would he obey even to the point of sacrificing his own son? The answer God received was a resounding YES! Abraham's heart was wholly DEDICATED to God. At the last possible moment God stayed the knife.

An ALTAR speaks of DEDICATION. Possibly NO-ONE knew the cost of full dedication more than Isaac. An altar is where you call upon God and make your sacrifices to Him. Paul implores us in **Rom. 12:1**. What about you? Have you built an altar and offered yourself as a sacrifice to God? Have you re-affirmed that dedication to God?

Maybe you need to do what Elijah had to do in **I Kgs. 18**. When Israel backslid and was living in idolatry — worshipping the Baals and the groves — Elijah challenged the false prophets to a contest on Mount Carmel to see which God was real. He called down fire from heaven and demonstrated the power of the only true and living God.

But what did Elijah do before he prayed for the fire to fall? (I Kgs. 18:30). He REPAIRED the altar of the Lord for it was neglected and broken-down altar. He took Israel back to the very place where their dedication had been left behind — the ALTAR.

Maybe you need to repair a broken, neglected altar in your life. Is it the **ALTAR of – Prayer, Bible Reading, Soul-winning, Giving,**

etc? Consecrate your heart to the Lord afresh today. An altar speaks of DEDICATION. Would you build yours? If not now, then when?

2. ISAAC PITCHED A TENT (v.25c). Isaac had heard the voice of the Lord in Beersheba – he had met with God, and so he pitched his tent there. The people of God should always want to stay close to the presence and the direction of God! Where God speaks is where I do want to be! But notice carefully, **Isaac pitched a tent, he did not build a house or any permanent dwelling.**

A TENT speaks of DETACHMENT. The reason Isaac was in Beersheba was because this was where God was speaking. God brought him there. If God should lead him elsewhere, Isaac was ready to go and move. Here's another proof of his dedication. His "home" was not some geographical location where his possessions were. He was at home where God and His will were to be found!

A TENT speaks of DETACHMENT. As Christians, we are strangers & pilgrims passing through this world. To pass through we must be DETACHED from this world and all its lusts & allurements. As Christian soldiers our loyalty belongs to Christ (**II Tim. 2:3-4**).

No matter how hard you try, you cannot retain the things of this life. They are passing away. There's no future in earthly stuff. Look what Jesus said in **Matt. 6:19-21, 33**. We must be detached from this world's pleasure (**I John 2:15-17**). Remember, an ALTAR is a picture of **DEDICATION** while a TENT of **DETACHMENT**. Then...

3. ISAAC DUG A WELL (v. 25d). Observe the following truth:

A WELL speaks of DEPENDENCE. The Bible describes a person who reads and meditates upon the word of God as "a tree planted" (**Psa. 1:3**). For Isaac it was a matter of **digging** or **dying**! He had to have water. In that Middle-Eastern land, he had to have plenty of clean water. Isaac dug wells wherever he went.

The same is true concerning God's word in our lives. Without it we DIE spiritually! See **John 4:14** (cf. **7:37-39; I Cor. 12:13**). We can't survive without the Spirit of God. We are dependent on Him for power, strength and victory. **A WELL speaks of DEPENDENCE.**

CONCLUSION: Isaac prospered because he had an ALTAR, a TENT, and a WELL. Are these things present in your spiritual life? Are you maintaining your commitment by daily renewing your DEDICATION to God alone? Are your heart & mind DETACHED from the things of this world? Are you DEPENDENT upon God's Spirit as your source?