

# Isaac

What use is a well that is filled in and dry?

Isaac, second in line of Hebrew patriarchs, must have asked this question many times.

**Genesis 26:12-22** [NIV] *“Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the LORD blessed him. The man became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy. He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him. So all the wells that his father’s servants had dug in the time of his father Abraham, the Philistines stopped up, filling them with earth. Then Abimelech said to Isaac, ‘Move away from us; you have become too powerful for us.’ So Isaac moved away from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar and settled there. Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died, and he gave them the same names his father had given them. Isaac’s servants dug in the valley and discovered a well of fresh water there. But the herdsmen of Gerar quarrelled with Isaac’s herdsmen and said, ‘The water is ours!’ So he named the well Esek, because they disputed with him. Then they dug another well, but they quarrelled over that one also; so he named it Sitnah. He moved on from there and dug another well, and no-one quarrelled over it. He named it Rehoboth, saying, ‘Now the LORD has given us room and we will flourish in the land.’”*

At least at one point in his life, Isaac showed great concern for the unused, stopped-up wells that his father Abraham earlier had dug.

Meditating on Isaac and his well-digging gives us an opportunity to consider the Christian fellowship we are a part of.

**John 7:37-39** [NIV] *“On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”*

It is the life-giving Holy Spirit we are talking about and what will cause Him not to be refreshing our Christian lives and producing “fruits” of God’s character in our lives, [**Galatians 5:22-23**].

As we follow our emphasis on genuine Christian experience, we can profit by considering what keeps us from meeting our Creator God in daily Bible meditation and private prayer.

We should also question how much “living water” is flowing from wells of scriptural confession and reconciliation.

Also, in many Christian fellowships, people and preachers shy away from such unpopular subjects as self-discipline and serious, wholehearted commitment, wells that need to be re-opened if we are to please our Creator God.

As Bible students we do **not** always remember Isaac in the same way as we do his father Abraham, but he was also God’s man in his generation.

**Genesis 22:1-12** [NIV] *“Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, ‘Abraham!’ ‘Here I am,’ he replied. Then God said, ‘Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.’ Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, ‘Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.’ Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on*

his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, 'Father?' 'Yes, my son?' Abraham replied. 'The fire and wood are here,' Isaac said, 'but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?' Abraham answered, 'God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.' And the two of them went on together. When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, 'Abraham! Abraham!' 'Here I am,' he replied. 'Do not lay a hand on the boy,' he said. 'Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.'"

What young man had a more memorable and dramatic experience of God's dealings with people than the boy Isaac?

As Isaac grew older, what do you suppose he would have replied to anyone who suggested that his father's God was not real or alive?

Isaac knew very well the faith in the Creator God that his father had, he was only alive because the Creator God lives and cares, and was known personally by Him.

**Genesis 26:23-25** [NIV] *"From there he went up to Beersheba. That night the LORD appeared to him and said, 'I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham.' Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD. There he pitched his tent, and there his servants dug a well."*

After this encounter with the Creator God, Isaac did two things, both have significance.

Isaac built an altar and worshipped God, then his servants dug another well.

Isaac remembered his boyhood and the wells of flowing water in a part of the world that was very arid, he knew that water was not an option but a necessity.

We need to tie in these actions of Isaac to our own Christian life.

**Amos 8:11-13** [NIV] *"'The days are coming,' declares the Sovereign LORD, 'when I will send a famine through the land, not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the LORD. Men will stagger from sea to sea and wander from north to east, searching for the word of the LORD, but they will not find it. 'In that day "the lovely young women and strong young men will faint because of thirst."'"*

Amos prophesied of what I feel is the generation in which we now live.

The underground streams of water in the world are a free gift from the Creator God, but we have to dig new or unblock old wells to reach this "living water."

**John 4:7-15** [NIV] *"When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Will you give me a drink?' (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?' (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.' 'Sir,' the woman said, 'you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?' Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.'"*

Jesus Christ offered “*living water*” to the Samaritan woman, symbolic of the Holy Spirit, [**John 7:37-39**].

**Isaiah 55:1-3** [NIV] *“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; hear me, that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David.”*

In his day the prophet Isaiah used the same analogy.

Once this hidden water is released, by digging wells to reach it, all humanity is blessed by it.

We need to think of the wells of water as being God’s Word, the Christian Bible, that contains the doctrines, promises and channels we use to obtain the water of life, that is salvation from eternal death through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit He has sent to open up access to this “*living water*,” [**John 16:13**].

For Christians this flow of “*living water*” started when Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for all humanity on the cross.

We may now be tempted to pray for God to open these wells of living water for us, but this is **not** what Isaac did, he and his servants dug wells down to this hidden life-giving water.

**Matthew 13:44** [NIV] *“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.”*

This man was willing to dig for the treasure that was symbolic of the Kingdom of God because of the value he placed on finding it. He “*sold all*” to be able to dig it up and possess it.

God has given Christians the “*spiritual*” tools to dig for the treasure of “*living water*.”

They are to trust Him, believe His Word and obey Him.

**Philippians 2:12-13** [NIV] *“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.”*

God will “*work in us*” through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit but we have to “*work out*” as a witness to other humans the love, compassion and faithfulness that the Holy Spirit is developing in us, [**Galatians 5:22-23**].

These words recorded in context to unity within any Christian fellowship [**Philippians 2:1-8**] because without such unity and humble attitude the Holy Spirit cannot do His work of spiritual growth within us.

**1 Thessalonians 5:19-24** [NIV] *“Do not put out the Spirit’s fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil. May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.”*

Our part is to “*work out*” such attitudes of mind, so that the Holy Spirit can continue to “*work in*” us.

**Ephesians 4:20-32** [NIV] *“You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like*

*God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbour, for we are all members of one body. 'In your anger do not sin': Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."*

We can only by "putting off" our old lifestyle avoid grieving the Holy Spirit and hindering His work of spiritual maturing within us.

This is the work, the digging of new wells or opening up old wells that we have to do.

When Christians, who are still human, harbour any ill-feelings against another Christian, or if there are actual sins being committed, in a sincere and honest confession two areas are involved.

**Matthew 18:15-17** [NIV] *"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector."*

We do this only after we have confessed this sin or wrong feeling to God. Note all this reconciliation and confession is first done in private before other people are involved, such private matters do **not** need, in fact should **not** be made public, it is something between you, God and your brother.

Most times this is a sound formula for success but there can be exceptions.

**Romans 12:16-18** [NIV] *"Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."*

There are some people with whom you cannot live in peace and keep our conscience clear but we are to do all we can to heal such a rift in relationships.

Another part of "living waters" that we have to dig a well to obtain, having realised how much we need it to live spiritually, is self-discipline and total commitment to the Creator God.

**Revelation 3:14-22** [NIV] *"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so that you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so that you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so that you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."*

Here we see a fellowship of "Christians" who did **not** consider self-discipline and genuine humble commitment were necessary. A comparative luxurious way of life had blinded them to the need for self-discipline, such an attitude of mind causes the Creator God to reject them [v16]. They had **not**

allowed Jesus Christ to come into their lives and direct their lives by feeding them with the “*bread of life*,” [John 6:32-35, 38, 50, 58].

I want to emphasise another important well that needs to be dug or unblocked.

**Isaiah 1:16-20** [King James] “*Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.*”

Our forefathers found very refreshing waters in this well of repentance, this is **not** even coming close to talking about legalism!

**Luke 13:1-5** [NIV] “*Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, ‘Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them, do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.’”*

Jesus Christ plainly taught that repentance was essential for all Christians if they are to avoid eternal death.

Repentance does **not** make us fit for God to save us.

No person has changed the character and goodness of God by an act of repentance, all the repentance in the world **cannot** make God any more loving, any more gracious.

**Repentance means turning around our evil ways in order to look to Jesus Christ for salvation.**

A person who will **not** repent still has their back turned on God.

In this sense then a person who loves their sin and hangs on to it **cannot** reasonably expect the goodness and grace of the Creator God.

**Romans 12:1-2** [NIV] “*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.*”

We, out of gratitude for what Jesus Christ has done for all humanity, offer our lives to Him so that the Holy Spirit can re-educate our minds to be acceptable to a Holy Creator God, that is true repentance, [Isaiah 53:5].

**Ephesians 6:10-18** [NIV] “*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*”

Just as a physical soldier needs to train to fulfil his duties, so Christians need to train spiritually and be protected from Satan who is constantly trying to block the well of spiritual growth and personal prayers.

Not one of us among God's children are immune to this danger of losing out on our study of God's Word, the Christian Bible, and our personal prayer for all other human beings.

**1 Thessalonians 5:17** [NIV] "*pray continually,*"

If we want to be honest with our Creator God, we will take this admonition solemnly.

God's work through human beings languishes when God's people give up their ministries of prayer and supplication, also for all Christians to study and meditate on God's Word, the Christian Bible, so we can be prepared to teach others about God now and on into our future after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, [**1 Peter 3:15-16; 1 Peter 2:9-12; Revelation 1:4-6; Revelation 5:9-10**].

The believer who takes their spiritual problems and personal training to God and to His Word, the Christian Bible, will always be spiritually refreshed by "*living waters.*"