

## LETTER FROM CARTER CONLON

Dear Friend,

In John 16:33, Jesus cautioned those who followed him, *"In the world ye shall have tribulation."* People are aware that the future before them is fraught with unprecedented difficulties. Many are afraid and if you are one of them, please let this letter bring comfort to your heart.

Thankfully, the verse previously quoted doesn't end with the word tribulation, rather continues to say, *"But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."* Jesus was communicating to us, "I have taken the full impact of everything this world can bring to destroy the stability and hope of the righteous, and have triumphed over it. After I have risen again, I will come to you and the victory I have won will become fully yours."

Beloved, our victory is in Christ! It is fully, always and only His. By faith in His overcoming life and an honest walk with God, we are assured that in spite of what lies before us, we can "be of good cheer." Let the truths of this accompanying message find deep roots in your heart. The truth will set you free from the power of all fear.

Yours in Christ,



Carter Conlon  
Senior Pastor

## DIGGING UP THE OLD WELLS OF ABRAHAM

by Carter Conlon

Visit any cemetery and you will see gravestones standing at attention like soldiers on a parade ground. Each of these stone sentries endures the heat of the sun, the beating of the rain, and the frigid blast of winter's cold. Yet, these mute bands of soldiers continue to tell the stories of those they represent in the graves beneath them. They proudly bear on their broad chests the epitaphs of individuals long gone; inscriptions ranging from the trite to the tragic, from the flippant to the faithful.

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If the patriarch Abraham had a headstone, it probably would have read: "Abraham – The Father of Faith: All the nations of the earth are blessed because of you." Abraham's son Isaac desired to follow in the heritage of his father's faith, being challenged by God not to trust in his own initiatives but in God's unending promises.

### ■ THE CHALLENGE TO ISAAC

Isaac was now head of the family; he had a wife, servants,

flocks and herds. Many depended on him. The land he was living in had entered into a devastating drought. It seemed that the most sensible and practical thing to do was to go to Egypt with its ample supply of fresh water and fertile lands. Why would he put the well-being of his family at risk by staying in a barren and fruitless land when they were his first responsibility?

*"The Lord appeared unto him [Isaac], and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father; And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (Genesis 26:2–5).* By directing him away from Egypt during the lean years, God was teaching Isaac to rely on Him and not look to the world for his security. God had something much deeper for him if he would trust Him with his life and family. Against popular opinion, Isaac chose to believe God and stay where he was, in spite of the hardships. You will find that when you choose to obey God,

difficulties do not cease immediately. As a matter of fact, you may at times have to contend with adverse circumstances, but God will give you the victory over and over again.

No sooner had Isaac made the decision to remain in the land than the presiding king came to him and requested that he remove himself from the area. *“Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we. And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there”* (Genesis 26:16–17).

### ■ THE OLD WELLS OF ABRAHAM

One of the great truths God teaches all believers is wherever He leads, He will also provide. This principle has been proven many times throughout Old Testament history. We see this when Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. God took more than three million people into a barren wilderness and there supplied them with an abundance of water and manna from heaven. In order for Isaac to know the blessing of God's provision, God used King Abimelech to redirect him back to the old wells of Abraham.

*“And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them”* (Genesis 26:18).

When Isaac arrived at the place where the wells had been dug, he found the Philistines had been in the area and had filled them with dirt. Although the outlook of his immediate security was extremely bleak, God would use these unfavorable circumstances to speak to Isaac.

In a land where water is always at a premium, you would have to

ask yourself, “Who would be crazy enough to fill wells with dirt when there was such a scarcity of water? Why would they do that when there could have been enough for everyone?” But this is a picture of a darker and more subtle attack of Satan. This is what the devil wants to do in the life of the believer; he wants to stop the flow of water until nothing is left. Then he covers over the places where others once found their strength and sustenance in God. This makes it almost impossible for those coming afterwards to know and understand how God had sustained them in difficult times. For example, simply look at the thousands of monolithic cathedrals left to us today which dot the landscape with their peaked towers and crosses. Architecturally these buildings are beautiful, but inside they have become empty relics of a past revival. No longer do they brim with people or are filled with the praises of God; they only stand as stone edifices and outer shells called churches.

This is why God took Isaac back to the old wells and caused him to dig in the same places Abraham had dug. In his time of trial, Abraham went down deep into the bedrock and had found water to live by. Here Isaac, representing the next generation, could also find the same source of strength his father had found. If we want our lives to make a difference in our generation, I believe we have to go to the old wells of truth where others previously found their hope in God. We must learn what it means again to trust completely in God's direction. His ways are always right and though He does not expect us to always understand, He does expect us to believe Him and obey.

### ■ THE INVALUABLE LESSONS FROM ABRAHAM

*“And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar”* (Genesis 20:1).

Isaac in his own walk with God was living in the same place where his father had dwelt years earlier. God was about to show Himself mighty on Isaac's behalf. In this place where Abraham had faced tremendous trials and had overcome, so Isaac would experience the same victories with God's help. When Abraham lived there, Abimelech, the king of Gerar, had wronged him. Abraham had every right to become bitter and hold grievances towards this king. Instead, he chose to pray and ask God to bless and restore this man, as well as his whole household.

Today many Christians are feeble, and their prayers ineffective. They weep and ask God, “Why am I so weak and my prayers powerless?” Yet, if these same believers would respond like Abraham did and forgive those who have unjustly hurt them, they would experience incredible freedom and see miraculous things happen. It is interesting to note in the very next chapter of Genesis, Abraham's barren wife Sarah, supernaturally becomes pregnant with Isaac when Abraham was 100 years old. When you choose to go God's way and do what He says, the miraculous power of God begins to be released in your life.

### ■ LAY ASIDE HUMAN REASONING

After Isaac was born, Sarah said to Abraham, *“Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son [Ishmael] of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac”* (Genesis 21:10). In essence, she was exhorting him to put away the works and reasoning of human endeavor. *“And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba”* (Genesis 21:14). Abraham revealed true character by having the courage to do what was right. Every Christian



who wants to live a victorious life in Christ reaches a point where he says, “God, I give up trying to figure out things in my own strength. I lay aside all my own thinking and trust explicitly in your ability to keep me.”

Not only does God ask you to lay aside fleshly thinking but He wants you to give to Him those things you treasure most. Testing comes to us all and we must decide if we are willing to trust God with those things that are closest to our heart. In Genesis 22, Abraham demonstrated his own willingness to give up all that he cherished, if God required it. Nothing was dearer to him than his own son, Isaac, who was his heart and life. Isaac represented the very essence of everything God had promised Abraham, and now He was asking him to give Isaac back as a sacrifice to God. In total obedience, Abraham believed God was able to raise the dead as he had witnessed in his own body. So Abraham took Isaac to a mountain where he prepared to offer him to God. You know the story well how as he was about to kill Isaac, the angel of the Lord stayed his hand and the boy lived. Hallelujah!

Abraham then worshipped God on that mountain and referred to Him by a new name, Jehovah Jireh (God our Provider). Abraham had come to understand that God would make provision for everything he would ever need in his life. What is dear to your heart? What is it that stands between you and Christ that He might be asking you to give to Him? Obey the Holy Spirit today, God will open your eyes and you will know Him as Jehovah Jireh, your Provider.

### ■ WELLS OF LIVING WATER

Isaac was in a dry and barren place, he needed to see God as the one who would take care of him. So, he began to dig again the same wells of Abraham. *“And Isaac’s servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water”*

(Genesis 26:19). In the Hebrew text, the Scriptures indicate that the words springing water here literally mean alive or living water. God was providing life sustaining water for Isaac’s family, servants and herds.

### ■ THE WELLS OF CONTENTION AND HATRED

No sooner had Isaac’s herdsman dug out one of the wells than the people of the land began to strive with them saying the water was theirs. *“And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac’s herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him”* (Genesis 26:20). Isaac named the well Esek, which means strife or contention.

In the life of the Christian the devil does not want you to find living water, so he will immediately attempt to stop its flow by bringing you into contention with someone. James, the Lord’s half brother, wrote about strife, saying, *“For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work”* (James 3:16). James understood that when the door of contention is opened, it will lead to hurtful and destructive conditions. In Isaac’s situation this was proven to be true, for when they attempted to dig another well, even greater strife arose.

*“And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah”* (Genesis 26:21). When you study the names of both these wells, you see that Esek literally means contention, while Sitnah means hostility or, even stronger, hatred. When you combine the two, you get a deadly combination. If contention is not dealt with in the early stages, it can easily turn into hatred. The apostle John wrote in 1 John 4:20 that if a man hates his brother, he’s a murderer and does not have eternal life abiding in him. What a tragedy when people have served the Lord

for years and then finally walk away from God because their hearts become hardened. If you allow hatred to develop towards others God has no alternative but to declare you to be a murderer. Just think about it! These are the only two things the devil needs to begin stopping the supply of life which God has given you in Christ. This is exactly what this message is about; exposing Satan before you are embittered by contention that turns into hatred. By God’s grace, we will move away from these wells, we will move away from strife and contention, and allow the Lord to heal every wounded heart.

***There is  
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### ■ REHOBOTH – THERE IS ROOM

*“And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land”* (Genesis 26:22). Isaac and his herdsman dug yet another well and called it Rehoboth, which means room. They did not allow the strife they experienced to turn their focus away from the wells of Abraham.

In the same way you need to believe there is room for all of us in God’s kingdom! His covenant with His Son has opened the way for everyone who believes on Christ to have a place in this kingdom. There is room for all people at the cross no matter what age, race, or nationality. And when you become His child, He

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enlarges your heart to love all of His people even those who wounded you. He will make enough room in your heart to overlook the willful and hurtful transgressions of others. Whereas, you could not do this before you came to Christ. But now, like Abraham who prayed for King Abimelech and blessed him, you are going to be able to pray for others, "God bless you, God bless your family, God bless your home, God bless your children, and God forgive you as He has forgiven me."

In John chapter four, Jesus gives us this same principle by loving and forgiving someone who would be considered as an outsider or even as an enemy. When He came to Jacob's Well in Samaria, Jesus sat down and asked a woman of religious and cultural mixture for a drink. If a Jew, other than Christ had met that woman at the well, she would have been ignored and shunned because of her background, let alone her gender. Jesus did not allow anything to alter his deliberate treatment of her as being someone created and loved by God. That day she was given living water from God Himself.

If you want to continue to experience the same fullness as the woman at the well, you have to start by forgiving those the world says should be your enemy. You offer love and forgiveness, whether it is accepted or not. The moment you do, it will be as though you have dug out all the dirt from the old wells of Abraham, and living water will begin to flow again. Just think of the impact you would have in the workplace if you forgive a co-worker who had wounded you. Think how everyone on the job would marvel that you would actually reach

out to this hurtful person and offer friendship to them again.

Do you want to make the world marvel? Start talking to the very people who have turned their back on you and at this point may intensely dislike you. Speak to people you know need God's grace. And just like the name of the last well Isaac opened and named Rehoboth, the Lord will make room for you and you shall be fruitful in a land regarded as barren and useless. Hallelujah!

### ISAAC'S EPITAPH

If Abraham truly had a grave marker and the epitaph on his headstone had read "Abraham – The Father of Faith: All the nations of the earth are blessed because of you." I have no doubt that the epitaph on Isaac's gravestone would have read: "Isaac – The son of Abraham and Sarah: Everything God promised to my father I have proven to be true."

Today, beloved, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is also our God, He is our Jehovah Jireh, He is our Rehoboth, and the kingdom of His Son, Jesus Christ, rules and reigns in our lives. Praise God!

Carter Conlon  
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### CARTER CONLON

Carter Conlon is senior pastor of Times Square Church, where he has been on the pastoral staff since 1994.

### TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

Times Square Church was founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of "The Cross and the Switchblade." It is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City.

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### WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday	10:00AM	3:00PM	6:00PM
Tuesday	7:00PM	Church Service	
Thursday	7:00PM	Prayer Meeting	
Friday	7:00PM	Church Service	

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This newsletter is an edited version of "Digging Up the Old Wells of Abraham," a sermon given on June 10, 2007 in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in New York City. Other sermons are available by visiting our website at [tscnyc.org](http://tscnyc.org). You can also write to: Times Square Church, Sermon Ministry, 1657 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. You are welcome to make additional copies of this sermon for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission existing copyright laws apply. This sermon cannot be posted on any website or webpage without written permission from Times Square Church. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references are from the King James Version.