

Through the Bible - Genesis 24-26

by Chuck Smith

Abraham's servant is tasked with finding a bride for Isaac, and through obedience and faith, God leads him to Rebekah.

Scripture: Genesis 24 - 26

Topics: "God's Promises", "Faith and Guidance"

Description

Chuck Smith explores Genesis 24-26, focusing on Abraham's servant's quest to find a bride for Isaac, which symbolizes the Holy Spirit's role in gathering believers for Christ. The servant's faith and prayerful approach highlight the importance of seeking God's guidance in our lives. Smith emphasizes the significance of obedience to God's promises, as seen in Abraham's instructions to his servant, and the fulfillment of God's covenant through Isaac. The narrative also illustrates the dynamics of family relationships and the consequences of choices made by Isaac and Rebekah regarding their sons. Ultimately, the sermon underscores God's sovereignty and faithfulness in fulfilling His promises throughout generations.

Transcript

And Abraham was old, and well-stricken in age: and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh (Gen 24:1-2):

So Abraham is now seeking to extract a promise from the servant and he wants it to be a very strong covenant that he makes with the servant. Now earlier, the chief servant of Abraham was named Eleazar--whether or not Eleazar was still alive is not known at this time because he had been Abraham's servant for a long time, and it is possible that by this point in history, Eleazar had already died. But if indeed it is still Eleazar, it makes the story that much more interesting, because Eleazar means "God, my help", and inasmuch as we look at this story of Eleazar going into the far country to get a bride for Abraham's son.

In this particular story there is a beautiful, spiritual application. For already we have seen Abraham as a type of the Father. We have seen Isaac as the type of the Son, Jesus Christ. And Eleazar would become the type of the Holy Spirit. And thus, his name would become significant, Eleazar: "God, my help". For when Jesus promised the Holy Spirit in the fourteenth chapter of John he said "and I will pray the Father and He will give you another comforter." The Greek word is "parakletos", which means "one to come

alongside to help."

So, here we have the name Eleazar, "God my helper" and the Holy Spirit being called the "Comforter" or "one who comes along side to help." And if you'll keep now in mind the spiritual application as we are reading through the story, it will become very significant to you. And no doubt the Holy Spirit will flash on you certain bits of inspiration, as suddenly you see the real picture of the Father sending the Holy Spirit into a far country, or outside, then, of the Jewish realm, to get a bride for Jesus Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit in convincing the bride that she should go. And so, if you'll keep that in mind as we go through the twenty-fourth chapter here, you will get what I believe to be the picture that God wants us to receive from this particular story in the scriptures.

So Abraham caused his servant to swear unto him that he would not take a bride for his son from the nations where they were living, but that he would go back unto Abraham's home and he would get there a bride for his son.

So, as we go on,

And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, thou shalt not take a wife of my son from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, unto my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence you came? And Abraham said unto him, Beware that you do not bring my son there again. The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my family, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from there. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son there again. So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter (Gen 24:3-9).

And so the servant wanted to be clear in the instructions; it was his duty now. He was being charged with the duty of getting a bride for Isaac, Abraham's son. And he wants to make sure that he has things straight and clear and in understanding.

"If I go there, and I find a young girl but she is not willing to come to this land," then that is really asking a young girl to take a chance, sort of. Because you've never seen the fellow and he's some five hundred miles away and the chance of your returning home again are very slim. So she's being asked to take, really, a venture in faith, herself. As she's gonna love him, that she's gonna be happy there and he's gonna be all that she wants him to be. And the chances of a young girl buying such a thing, as that is remote. And the servant understanding that, really, probably questioned in his heart if he could talk a young girl even into coming back with him. He surely foresaw the difficulties of such a thing. And Abraham who believed God had confidence that such would be the case, that the young girl would come back; and thus, he said "the angel of the Lord will go before you and he'll set things up". But the big command was "Don't take Isaac there."

This is the land that God has promised. Abraham is certain about that, and Isaac is not to go back to the land of Haran. And if the girl doesn't come, then the servant is freed from this vow that he took. And the vow became a sacred kind of a vow or a trust. It was something that he was obligated to fulfill to his very best ability and so he is determining before he promises, he wants to know completely what he's

promising. He wants to get the terms of the vow clear. And so Abraham clarifies the issue concerning the girl, and thus he takes the vow that he will go and seek to persuade a young girl to come and be Isaac's bride.

And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and he departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and he went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, about the time when women go out to draw water (Gen 24:10-11).

Then he prayed,

And he said, O Jehovah God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: Now let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same one be the one that you have appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that you have showed kindness unto my master (Gen 24:12-14).

So the servant of Abraham is sort of setting up a fleece with God in a manner of speaking, he's setting up, now, a certain little thing. "Lord, I don't know where she is, now you've got one picked out here some place. And so, inasmuch as I don't know the one that you've got picked out, let's make a deal. When the girls come out here to draw water, I'll go up to them and I'll say "give me a drink". Now if one will give me a drink and if she will respond to me and say, "Oh, I'll get water for your camels also", Lord, let that be the one you have chosen. Let that be the sign. I'll know when she says that, that that's the one you've chosen.

And so he's sort of setting now, conditions, whereby he might know God's choice in this matter. Now it is interesting, sometimes it seems it takes a long time for our prayers to be answered. Abraham had been praying for a son for years before the answer came, sometimes our prayers are answered almost immediately. Just as quickly as we can ask them, many times the answer seems to be there. Now why is it that sometimes prayers get immediate response and then other times it seems that God isn't even hearing us and it takes such a long time before our prayers are answered?

Well, to me it just shows that God is in control of things. You see, if I were in control of things I would answer all my prayers immediately. But the fact that God waits in some issues only shows to me that I don't have the capacity to do it. It's in God's hands and that He is in control of the issues of my life and the timing of those issues. And I have discovered that it's best for me that God is in control. Because there were many things I asked for that I said later on, "Hey Lord, cancel that request back there on June the 24th. If it's all right, Lord, just forget that one and don't answer it." Because as I get down the road I see that I don't need it or I see that it wouldn't be beneficial; I see where it could actually be harmful, and so I have put in the cancel request on many of the earlier orders. God is in control. It's best that God remains in control or else we've got chaos on our hands.

I believe that every right thing that you have ever prayed for that God intended to give it to you before you ever prayed. And I believe your prayer just opened up the opportunity for God to give it to you. That He was intending to give it to you all the way along. That He, being a wise and loving Father knew years ago what you were gonna be needing yesterday. And those prayers that He answered for you yesterday, He had intended to answer those all the way along.

I believe that your Father knows what you have need of before you ever ask Him. And every right thing you've ever asked Him for He has already intended to do for you. For I do not believe that prayer changes the will of God. That is not my concept of God at all. That I can get down and I can really argue with Him and give to Him reasons and logic and so forth and I can change the mind of God by my persuasive powers in prayer. I don't believe that. I believe that every good thing that I've asked God to give to me He already intended to give to me; that is, before I've ever asked Him.

John said "if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us" (1John 5:14). And if He hears us then we have received the petitions that we have asked of Him. You say, "Oh, but there are some beautiful promises". "If you ask any thing in my name, that will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13). Henceforth, you've asked nothing in my name. Ask, that you might receive, "that your joy might be full" (John 15:11). "And whatsoever things you desire when you pray, believe that you receive them and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24). Whatsoever things! Any thing! Whatsoever things! Pretty wide open, isn't it?

Let me ask you, who was Jesus talking to when he said that? Was he talking to the multitudes? Go back and look. The multitudes weren't around at all when he said that. Jesus was talking at that time to a close-knit little group that were called his disciples. But what did it take to be his disciple? He said, "if any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24).

So stamp that over, all of those whatsoever things, and all things in all. Stamp that over the top. Because he's only talking to those persons who have already denied them self and are taking up their cross and following Him. They've already come to the cross in their own life. They're not looking for their own glory or for their own welfare or for their own benefit. They're looking now only to glorify Jesus Christ. They've made that total kind of commitment of themselves and their lives to him. And for that person, "whatsoever things ye desire," because the only things you're going to desire are those things that are pleasing to God and those things that God is wanting to do. So you can't just take these "all things" and "whatsoever things" and "if you ask anything". You can't take those and make them blanket promises to just a multitude of people. Those are special promises to a specialized group.

So with the servant, he prayed and made this little arrangement with God.

And it came to pass before he was through praying, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder (Gen 24:15).

Now, Milcah was the sister of Lot. Their father died early. When he died, Abraham took the boy, and his brother took the girl, but his brother married the girl. And so he actually married his niece. And she then bore Bethuel who was the father of Rebekah and of Laban, who we find figuring into the story quite prominently as we get down the line. And Jacob goes in his flight from his brother, Esau, and comes against his uncle, Laban. But that's the family kind of tie-in here. So before he was even through with his prayer, Rebekah came out with a pitcher upon her shoulder.

And the damsel was very beautiful to look upon, and she was a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her, and he said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher (Gen 24:16-17).

He'd put out the thing and now here's his first chance to test it. And he made this arrangement with God, and so now he's putting the question; "Let me have a little drink of water". And he waits in anticipation to see, you know, here's a beautiful--oh my, wouldn't that be nice, you know, the first one along, she's pretty, and oh, "let me have a drink of water". And watching now for the response.

And she said, Drink, my lord: And she hurried, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and she gave him a drink. And when she had done giving him a drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they are through drinking. And she hurried, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again to the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. And the man wondering at her held his peace (Gen 24:18-21),

But don't you know his heart was pounding at this point? Man, Lord, that's fast! She's so beautiful! As he watched her he thought, "Oh, could this possibly be it?" And he just was holding his peace. He was wanting to burst out, but he held back. And so, the next question,

As the camels were through drinking, he took a golden [it says] earring [literally, it's a nose ring] of a half-shekel weight (Gen 24:22),

Now, a half-shekel weight would be about a quarter of an ounce. A shekel is about a half an ounce. So about a quarter-ounce little nose ring and

two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold [or about five ounces of gold]; And he said, Whose daughter are you? (Gen 24:22-23)

Question number two. This is gonna be the clincher. Who's your father? Whose daughter are you?

I pray thee: let's see, is there room in your father's house for us to dwell? And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bore to Nahor. And she said moreover unto him, We have both straw and food enough, and room to lodge in. And the man bowed down his head, and he worshipped the LORD (Gen 24:23-26).

Man, hit it right off the bat. She's one of Abraham's relatives, and, you know, can it be? I'm sure that his heart was just really filled with excitement and anticipation. And he worshipped the Lord.

And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and truth (Gen 24:27):

So, blessing the Lord for his goodness to Abraham. But then he said something that I think is very significant:

I being in the way, the Lord led me (Gen 24:27)

I think that is one of the most important verses in the scripture for those who are desiring to know how to be led of God. "I being in the way, the Lord led me." I believe that God expects us to step out in faith. And as we step out in faith, he leads us. I think that many times we make a mistake by just lying back and saying "now, Lord, lead my life. And I'm just gonna lie here, Lord, until you lead me." Chances are, you'll never be led. Stand up. Start walking. And then the Lord will lead you where you should go.

Too many people take a very passive attitude toward the leading of the will. "Well, Lord, I'm available; here I am, you can just lead me, Lord, wherever". But you have a very passive attitude towards God leading

your life. There is that necessity of "and I being in the way, the Lord led me."

Now, had he stayed back in Bersheeba and just prayed for months "Lord, now you lead me to the one. Lead me to the one, Lord. You lead me to the one." How could the Lord have ever led him to Rebekah as long as he was in Bersheeba? He had to get out. He had to go. When he went, then the Lord led him. "I being in the way, the Lord led me." I think that one of the things that we often make a mistake as far as the leading of God is that we expect God to lay out the whole picture.

Phillip was in the midst of a great revival up in Samaria; many people were believing and turning to the Lord. And the Lord said, Phillip, get down to the desert, to Gaza, the desert area there. Now, the Lord would say that to half of you, you'd say, "Well Lord, why do you want me to go down there? Are you sure, Lord, that that's where you want me to go? I--what do want me to do Lord? What have you got in mind for me down there? Lord, there's a neat revival going on here and there's a lot of people that surely, Lord--what is it that you want?"

We want God to lay out the whole picture. But God doesn't always lay out the whole picture to us. Many times he just gives us one step at a time. And you're not gonna get step number two until you've taken step number one. Why should you? Why should God give you the second step if you haven't followed the first step?

So Phillip left Samaria, went down to Gaza. When he got down to Gaza, he saw a chariot heading towards Ethiopia and the Lord said "Go up and join yourself to the chariot." "Well Lord, what, --what do you want me to do that for? Why should I go join myself to the chariot?" No, no questions, just he went and he ran up next to the chariot. You see, God leads us one step at a time. "But I being in the way, the Lord led me." If I don't take step number one I'll never be directed to step number two. I've got to step out in faith at step number one. And as I get in the way, as I start moving, then God will lead my movements. "I being in the way, the Lord led me." I love that, because that's just how God leads us. When we have stepped out in faith, following the directions of the Lord, then God will lead us in the next steps that we should take.

"I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brothers". Oh, how about that! Five hundred miles and hit right on the nose! The Lord has led me to the house of my master's brothers. There were probably many wells that he could've stopped at but God led him right to the right one. Many young girls coming out to draw water, but the timing was just perfect; Rebekah was the first one. After five hundred miles, success!

And the damsel ran, and she told them of her mother's house these things (Gen 24:28).

She ran home and said "Oh, there's a man there with ten camels and he gave me these golden bracelets and this nose ring and oh, you know, and he's just got all the servants and all with him."

And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, and to the well (Gen 24:29).

Now, as you will learn later in the story, not tonight, Laban was a fairly greedy fellow. And the thing that really attracted him was his sister coming home with these golden bracelets. And so he's gonna be a very gracious, charming fellow. And he comes running out, "Man, she made out with a couple golden bracelets, maybe I can get something out of this deal." He was always looking for what he could get out of a deal. And so he comes out, you know, this charming, gracious host, and Laban ran out to the man at the well.

And it came to pass, when he saw the earrings and the bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, This is what the man spoke to me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well (Gen 24:30).

So the servant had stayed there at the well in order that she might go home and see if it would be all right. You know, there's a man with some servants and they've got ten camels and they want to know if there's room for them to spend the night.

And so, he said, Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; why should you be standing out here? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels (Gen 24:31).

He hadn't had time to do that yet, but believe me, I'll do it, you know. He saw the bracelets and the whole thing.

And the man came into the house: and he [unsaddled or] ungirded the camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him. And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I don't want to eat, until I have told you my errand. And so they said, Speak on. [Go ahead, tell us.] And he said, I am Abraham's servant. And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he has given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and donkeys. And Sarah my master's wife has borne him a son when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he has (Gen 24:32-36).

And now we begin to see the picture and the intercession of the Holy Spirit as he seeks to draw out a bride for Jesus Christ. And the Holy Spirit tells us the wealth of the heavenly kingdom, the glories of God's kingdom, and in the word we read the glory of heaven, streets of gold, gates of pearl, walls of precious stone, beautiful river, trees on either side, crystal clear fountain of water, the living water of life. And the Holy Spirit has revealed the glory of God's kingdom, the world, the universe. And God has a Son and God has given all things to the Son. He is the heir of all things. And God has put all things under Him.

And so the Holy Spirit testifies to us of the glory of the kingdom of God and how that he has made his Son the heir of the whole thing. And the Son is looking for a bride. The Father, actually, is looking for a bride for his Son. So that when the Holy Spirit has finished his work in the testifying to us of Jesus Christ, it's like Peter said "whom, having not seen, he loves" (1Peter 1:8). The Holy Spirit's done a good job.

Though I haven't seen Him, I love Him. And even though I don't see Him yet, I haven't seen Him yet, yet in my heart I'm rejoicing with a joy unspeakable and full of glory at the anticipation of that glorious kingdom of which I have become a part as the bride of Jesus Christ. I can hardly wait. My heart is filled with longing and anticipation of that glorious day when I will see Him face-to-face. Now I look through the glass darkly, then, face to face. But join now with this unspeakable joy as I just anticipate the glories of that eternal kingdom of God of which I am to share a part as the bride of Jesus Christ.

And so the servant begins to tell of the wealth of his master. All that he has: the servants, the camels, and the gold and all. And everything he has, he has given unto his son.

And my master made me sware, saying, that I would not take a wife for his son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land he dwells: But I should go unto his father's house, and to his family, and to take there a wife for his son. And I said to my master, what if the woman will not follow me. And he said to me, The Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way (Gen 24:37-40);

Abraham's faith and belief that God would prosper and make it a successful journey.

And you will take a wife for my son from my family, and of my father's house: Then you shall be clear from this oath, when you come to my family; and they will not give you one, thou shalt be clear from thy oath. And so I came this day to the well, and I said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go: Behold, I am standing by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when a virgin comes forth to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink; And if she say to me, Both drink you, and I will also draw for your camels: let the same be the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my master's son. And before I was done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came with her pitcher (Gen 24:40-45)

Now here to me is an interesting thing, and that is that God hears the prayers of our heart. It isn't necessary that prayers be verbalized. So often we think we haven't prayed if we haven't spoken out. But God knows the prayers of your heart. The servant wasn't out there with hands raised saying "Now Lord, God of my father, Abraham," you know. Had he been doing that, then all of the girls around there thinking "oh, you know, look at the loot, you know, and everything else. And they'd all be running to get water.

I think that many times our loud prayers are answered just because people are tired of hearing our cries and they say, you know, anything to shut them up, you know. And they'll respond to our needs because I've let them really be known before man. Jesus said go in your closet, shut the door, your father that sees in secret will reward you openly. And prayer doesn't have to be uttered.

Now, I find that it's good for me to verbalize. I don't have to but I find it's good for me if I do. Or if I kneel down next to the bed and put my head on the bed and just begin to pray to the Lord in my heart, it isn't long before I am "resting" in the Lord. So for me it's good to verbalize because it keeps my mind on what I'm praying. If I'm just praying in my heart, so often my heart will run off into something else and I find my mind is wandering. I'm back in Hawaii again all of a sudden. So my mind has a tendency to wander when I'm just praying in my heart.

Now, I do a lot of praying just in my heart. There are some things I just don't want to utter and they're just prayers of my heart. But then I do find it necessary to verbalize my prayers; it keeps my mind on what I'm saying and on my prayer, and on my conversation with God. But it isn't necessary that prayers be verbalized. God knows the cry of our heart. And to me, it is very interesting that he was just praying in his heart as he was there. His head was bowed, perhaps, and not even necessarily. But in his heart he was thinking, Oh Lord, now let it work out like this. And it was just a prayer that was going on in his heart.

And when I was done speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came forthwith her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down to the well, and drew water: and I said to her, Let me drink, I pray thee. And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also. And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets (Gen 24:45-47)

Now, I told you it's a nose ring; that's why he put it on her face. It would be hard to put an earring on your face.

and the bracelets upon her hands. And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me to the right way to take my master's brother's

daughter unto his son. And now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left (Gen 24:47-49).

Now I'm here, and that's the issue, now tell me, are you gonna let her go or not? Let me know.

Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing is proceeding from the LORD: we cannot speak to thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee (Gen 24:50-51),

In other words, what can we say? It's obviously from God.

Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken. And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth. And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: and he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and they tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master (Gen 24:51-54).

Now notice as soon as the arrangement was made, then he came forth with gifts. As soon as Rebekah was committed, then he brought forth the gifts of gold and silver and beautiful raiment and all; began to just load her down with gifts. As soon as we have committed our lives to belong to Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit begins to give to us the glorious gifts of the Spirit. Begins to just give unto us gifts of peace, joy, love. Gifts of power. And he begins to really work in a special way within us.

So, in the morning he said Send me, I pray back to my master.

But her brother and mother object and they say, [Oh, wait a minute, that's so fast] Let the girl abide with us for a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go. And he said unto them, Don't hinder me, seeing the LORD has prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master. And they said, We will call the girl, and inquire at her mouth. And so they called Rebekah, and they said unto her, Will you go with this man? And she said, I will go (Gen 24:55-58).

Now it became Rebekah's decision. He is wanting to go right away in order that he might hurry back with the good news that his journey has been prosperous and successful. Her mother and brother, naturally, are objecting. They are willing to give her, but oh, they wanted to spend at least a few last days with her because they know that they'll probably never see her again. And the servant is insisting, "no, I want to go now". Well, let's ask her. "Will you go with the man?" And the beautiful response, "I will go". Even as we must by choice and we must exercise that choice to be part of the family of God, so the exercise of Rebekah's own choice.

And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse (Gen 24:59),

Evidently they were wealthy too, for she had her own private maid.

And Abraham's servant, and his men. And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions (Gen 24:59-60).

Oh boy, they want her to be the mother of a billion people.

And let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them. And Rebekah arose, and her damsels [plural] and they rode upon the camels and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah and went his way.

And Isaac came from the way of the well, Lahairoi (Gen 24:60-62).

Now you remember Lahairoi means "the well of him that lives in seas." It was at this well that Hagar was weeping. She didn't see the well and Ishmael was dying from dehydration; she put him under a bush and went over a ways because she didn't want to see him die. And she was crying out to the Lord and Ishmael was under the bush; crying out to God and praying. And the Lord said "What ails you?" And she said "Ah, I'm, you know, I'm dying, and I don't want to see my son die and all." And the Lord said here, behold, there's a well of water. And she went over and got the water and gave him a drink and he was refreshed and revived. She called the name of the well, "the Lord sees me".

Now Isaac has taken up residence near this particular well. And this well comes into the story a couple more times as we find it is the area where Isaac had moved.

Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming (Gen 24:62-63).

Now it is interesting that there is much spoken to us concerning the faith of Abraham. Very little is spoken to us concerning the faith of Isaac or concerning the relationship of Isaac to God; that is, directly, but here is an indication of the spiritual kind of a depth that Isaac had, meditating in the evening. I've found that one of the greatest places to meditate is in the evening time. I love it about the time of twilight, the sun just going down in the twilight time. Seems like it's just a neat time if you're out in the desert.

When I was just a little guy we used to live near the beach. And one of my favorite things was to just go down there and sit in the sand, all by myself, watch the sunset and the seagulls and the sandpipers, and just to meditate upon God and the greatness of God. And it's just a childhood memory that really lingers. It's just a beautiful experience, meditation at evening time. And so here is Isaac engaged in meditation at evening time. And he looked up and behold, he saw the camels coming. All right. Now at this point he doesn't know if Eleazar the servant has been successful or not.

And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she has said to her servant, Who is this man walking in the field to meet us? And the servant said, It is my master: therefore she took a veil, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all of the things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death (Gen 24:64-67).

CHAPTER 25

Then in chapter twenty-five we find that

Abraham [after Sarah's death] took another wife, her name was Keturah. [The name means, "mother of us all".] And she bare him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, Shuah. And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim. And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher (Gen 25:1-4),

And so forth, and the names mean nothing to us and probably never will. As I told you so often, it'll follow a line just for a generation or two and drop them; that's the end of it 'cause this line has nothing to do with Jesus Christ. It'll follow it for a generation or so, and pop, that's it. Whatever happened to them, where they went, who they became, nobody knows. That's just they're not significant to the story. The story's

about Jesus Christ.

Back here in Genesis, this story is about Jesus Christ. And we're gonna come on down the line that's gonna lead us to Jesus Christ. We're gonna let the others go. We might follow them for a generation or two, but we're gonna let them go, they're not important. It's whole story centers around the person of Jesus Christ. We say His-story. What is history? It is His story. The story of Jesus; that's what history is all about. And so that's what this record is all about. It's all about Jesus. And it's only gonna center in the one person, Jesus. It'll let the others go; go quickly. We'll have a name or two thrown in and then that's the end of it. We're gonna let them go because we want to center in--we want to concentrate on the central person of history. So follow out the rest of Abraham's children for just a ways.

And Abraham [and this is the important one, verse five] gave all that he had unto Isaac (Gen 25:5).

Isaac's the son of promise. All that he had went to Isaac.

But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts (Gen 25:6),

Gave gifts to them, but everything that he had went to Isaac.

And he sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, to the east country (Gen 25:6).

So he gave gifts to them, sent them away. Isaac is the one in whom the story is going to center because Isaac comes in the line that's gonna bring us to Jesus Christ.

Now these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, a hundred and seventy-five years. Then Abraham gave up the ghost [or his spirit, literally] and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and he was gathered to his people (Gen 25:7-8).

A hundred and seventy-five years old and Abraham died; that is, he gave up his spirit. In reality what happened is that his spirit moved out of this old tent, because this old tent just couldn't manage it anymore. It was worn out. Once a tent is worn out and has no more value, doesn't keep out the rain or wind, rips and it just constantly needs patching and repairing, it's time to move out of the tent. And so Abraham moved out of his tent.

So now this was before Jesus Christ made access into heaven. So Abraham did not go into heaven, but he went into the grave, into Hades where he became the master comforter of all of those who went into Hades, waiting for the promise of God. So in the sixteenth chapter of Luke we find Abraham in Hades comforting Lazarus. And we find the rich man talking to Abraham and Abraham responding with him.

Now when Jesus died, before he ascended into heaven, he first of all descended into the lower parts of the earth. And he preached to those souls that were imprisoned, the spirits, Abraham's spirit, down there in prison. Jesus preached to him and to all of those who with Abraham were waiting for the promise of God, the Messiah to come. And so the prophecy of Isaiah, concerning Jesus Christ is that he would open the prison doors to those who were bound. That's the prison door of death, where these people were bound and he opened the doors so that when he ascended he led the captives from their captivity.

So that now as a child of God, when my spirit leaves this tent, because of the way that Jesus Christ has made for me, when my spirit leaves this tent, it's going into a new house that is not made with hands, a building of God, eternal in the heavens. I'm moving out of this old tent into a new house that the Lord said

he had gone to prepare for me. For he said, "In my Father's house there are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you"(John 14:2). He's preparing me a new body. It is a building of God. It's not made with hands. It's eternal. This one is temporary. It'll never see the number of years that Abraham's body saw. That would be to me the worse thing that could ever happen to me, would be to live to be a hundred and seventy-five.

In fact, I don't even want to see the seventy-five! If God so wills it, fine, but I don't think I'll ever see it, because as this tent wears out, the Lord's already prepared a new building for my spirit, a new house, not a tent anymore. I'm getting sort of tired of the tent. The tent's getting sort of tired, too. The tent's good for awhile, but after awhile you begin to realize that there's not just the conveniences in a tent that you'd like to have. You get longing to move into a house. And one of these days I'm gonna move into a brand new house, a building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

That's why Paul said, "we who are in this body, do often groan, earnestly desiring to move out. It's not that we would be unembodied spirits but that we might clothed upon with the body which is from heaven" (2 Corinthians 5:2). For we know that as long as we are in this body, in this tent, that we are absent from the Lord, but we would choose rather to be absent from this body and to be present with the Lord.

Abraham gave up the ghost. Or his spirit left his body after dwelling in it for a hundred and seventy-five years. Good old age. An old man. Full, and he was gathered to his people.

And his sons Isaac and Ishmael (Gen 25:9)

Notice they are joined together now. You know, there was that animosity that existed between them, but it seems that at least at their father's death they were brought together. And at their father's death they joined together. Ishmael is still there, and they

buried Abraham in that cave at Machpelah, the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is there before Mamre; And that field which Abraham purchased [in that, you know, cultural thing we got into last Sunday night]. Now these are the generations of Ishmael (Gen 25:9-10, 12),

And so we'll follow Ishmael for just, you know, a little ways, and then we're gonna drop him because Ishmael isn't important to the story. And so he gives us the name of Ishmael's descendants and they are no more important to you as are the descendants of Abraham's concubines, and so I'm not gonna wrestle with those names. You can wrestle with them if you want.

Verse sixteen, it says,

And these are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and their castles; twelve princes according to their nations. And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, he lived to be a hundred and thirty-seven years: and he gave up the ghost and died; and was gathered unto his people. And they dwelt from Havilah to Shur, that is before Egypt, as you go to Assyria: and he died in the presence of all of his brothers. And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son (Gen 25:16-19):

Now we come to the one that's important, the one we will follow.

Abraham begat Isaac: And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister to Laban the Syrian. And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren (Gen 25:19-21):

Now he married her, but yet she was unable to bear children. And so Isaac prayed for her, that God would heal and allow her to bear children. It is interesting how many children we have running around Calvary Chapel that are answers to prayer. Couples that could not have children, who came to the elders and were prayed for and God blessed them and now we have so many little children who are running around here that are just true answers to prayer. They're little miracle babies that God has given. And it is scriptural that Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife.

And the LORD was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her; and she said, Why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the LORD (Gen 25:21-22).

My, there was just all kinds of--she was pregnant, and man, there was more than just a baby kicking or moving. This was a real fight going on in there.

And this fight was continued after they were born. How much consciousness does a child have in the womb? We really don't know because we can't remember. How much consciousness did you have during the first year out of the womb? You really don't know. You can't remember. Now that a child is conscious out of the womb, I have no doubt. For out of the womb during the first year a child is capable of expressing feelings of contentment, happiness, anger, being upset. And yet none of you can remember that first year of your life outside of the womb. The fact that you can't remember it doesn't mean that you didn't have feelings.

So we have no proof at all that a child doesn't have emotions and feelings within the womb. Maybe some of those movements you're feeling are feelings of anger. The kid gets mad at the position and kicks you, you know, tired of this position. We don't know what feeling they may have preternaturally.

Now it is quite possible that these two little guys in the womb were angry with each other and were going at it. They were struggling in her womb. And when they were born, as soon as they were born, the one little guy reached out and grabbed the other guy's heels, still struggling with him. Fight's still going on and it really never did stop. So, she was concerned with all of this movement and so she prayed about it. "Lord, what's going on?"

And the LORD said to her, Two nations are in your womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from [their birth, or from] your bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger (Gen 25:23).

Now this is before they were ever born. Before they ever did, ever did anything. How is it that God could already make this prediction? Is their fairness with God? Is it fair for God to say, "Well, the elder's going to serve the younger?" before they were ever born?

Paul takes this up in Romans; the sovereignty of God in election. But we must always remember that God's election is always premised upon His foreknowledge. "Whom He did foreknow, those He did also predestinate that they should be conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29).

So God chose while the children were still fighting it in the womb, two nations are fighting. Nations that are gonna be different from each other. One is stronger. And so the two nations, Israel and the Edomites, who never did really get along. Now the Edomite nation has come to the end. The last known Edomite was the family of Herod, who was the king at the time of Jesus and still then he destroyed all the Jewish boys trying to get rid of the Messiah. The Edomites remained antagonistic toward the purposes of God.

When the children of Israel were coming out of the land of Egypt and wanted to pass through their land in order that they might come to the land that God had promised them, the Edomites came out to meet them; to fight them to keep them from coming through. Again seeking, or showing themselves antagonistic to the purposes of God. This is the characteristic of the Edomites from the beginning.

Esau was that way. He really didn't care about God or the things of God. He was a very natural man. He was the typical natural man, interested in manly kind of things to be sure, but not interested in godly things. And God, knowing in advance his disposition and his despising of spiritual things in advance, chose the younger one to be the heir and the one through whom the Messiah would eventually come. So the younger one is chosen by God over the elder while still in the womb.

And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first one came out red, all over like a hairy garment (Gen 25:24-25);

So it's just a little kid covered with hair, and so appropriately, they called his name Hairy. That's what Esau means. And that was very common in those days. You would name your child after a circumstance of his birth.

After that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel (Gen 25:26);

And that was probably exciting. Oh look, he grabbed his brother's heel. And then someone said, "well then, call him heel-catcher". And Jacob literally means "heel-catcher". That's the literal interpretation. It came to mean "surplanter", but the literal meaning is "heel-catcher".

And Issac was sixty years old when she bare them (Gen 25:26).

So they went twenty years without any children. Forty when he was married, sixty before the children were born. So there are twenty years and he prayed and God gave her children, gave her twins.

And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field [An outdoors man]; but Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents (Gen 25:27).

Now I'm afraid that the translators have done Jacob a bad turn in translating this "a plain man". The word that they translated was the Hebrew word "tam". They translated it "plain". The word other places in the Old Testament has been translated "perfect". You remember when God said to Satan concerning Job "Have you considered my servant Job, a perfect man?" That's the same Hebrew word, "tam." Concerning Job, it was translated "perfect". And so the translators have done Jacob sort of a bad turn, calling him a plain man. The scripture's actually saying he was a perfect man, or a complete man, but he dwelt in tents.

Now we have a tendency to really put Jacob down, and I have to confess that I done my share of putting this guy down because of some of the tricks that he's pulled. But in reality, he was the man that God had chosen. And the interesting thing is that God never put him down.

And so about the last time I put him down, the Lord spoke to me and said "Hey, how come you keep putting him down?" I said, "oh man, look at those horrible things he did". He said "Hey, where did I put him down?" And I looked and I couldn't find where God put Jacob down so I quit putting Jacob down. For Paul said, "Who are you to judge another man's servant? Before his own master he either stands or falls and yet God is able to make him stand" (Romans 14:4).

And God made Jacob to stand, so who am I to put him down? If Jacob were my servant then I would have dealt with him as I feel that maybe he should have been dealt with. But he isn't my servant. He doesn't have to answer to me. He is God's servant. Now if that is true about Jacob, then it is true also about each other. Who am I to put you down when God is lifting you up? Who am I to judge you? You're not my servant. If you were my servant then I could judge you. You're not serving me. You're serving God. And thus I have no right to judge you, "oh, you're a rotten servant." I have no right to make that kind of a judgment concerning you. That's God's judgment. That's for Him to judge you because you're serving Him. And it's for Him to judge me because I seek to serve Him.

So Jacob was not a plain man, he was a "tam" man. "Perfect", actually or complete man. And he dwelt in tents. His brother, outdoors; Jacob loved the tent life.

And Isaac loved Esau, [But for base reasons] because he ate his barbecued venison (Gen 25:28):

Now that's no reason for loving one son above another, just 'cause the guy's a good hunter and can bring in some venison. You get hooked on venison and so he loved Esau because he ate the venison.

But Rebekah loved Jacob (Gen 25:28).

So sad, but true, that with the parents there was a displaying of favoritism among the children.

And Jacob was fixing some pottage: and Esau came in from the field, and he was faint. And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with some of that red pottage, for I am faint: and therefore his name was called [from then on "Red"] Edom [means "Red"] (Gen 25:29-30).

And his descendants were called the Edomites, because he wanted this red pottage. He was hungry and fainting.

And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Hey, I'm ready to die: what profit is a birthright to me? (Gen 25:31-32)

He was very flippant about it. Hey man, what about the birthright? I'm ready to die; I want your pottage. But Jacob pressed the point.

And Jacob said, Swear to me then this day; and he sware unto him: and thus he sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau the bread and the pottage of lentils; which he did eat and drink, and they rose up, and he rose up and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright (Gen 25:33-34).

He didn't really care about the birthright at all. He wasn't interested in spiritual things. He could care less about birthright. He hated it; he wasn't interested in it. And thus he despised his birthright.

CHAPTER 26

Now there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. [And like father, like son,] Isaac went to Abimelech the king of the Philistines unto Gerar (Gen 26:1).

Now, it was to Abimelech that Abraham went, but certainly not the same one that Isaac went to because this is a hundred years later, more than a hundred years later. So Abimelech was sort of a title of the king of the Philistines. And so Isaac went unto the land of the Philistines

And the Lord appeared unto him, and said, Don't go down to Egypt; dwell in the land which I will tell thee of (Gen 26:2):

Now this is God's direct command: "Don't go down to Egypt. Dwell in the land I show you".

Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I'm gonna give these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham thy father. And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and I will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed (Gen 26:3-4);

And so now God visits Isaac as he is going over to the land of the Philistines. God comes to him and visits and reiterates to Isaac the promise he had made to Abraham. The land is gonna be yours. I'm gonna multiply your seed, but then the heart of the thing is "through thy seed shall all of the nations of the earth be blessed". Not plural, but singular, referring to Jesus Christ; so the promise of the Messiah to comedown through Isaac. And thus, reiterated, the promise that he had made to Abraham, now that same covenant and promise is passed on to Isaac at this particular time in his life.

Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws (Gen 26:5).

So really it is because of Abraham that the promises come and Isaac is the beneficiary even of his father's faithfulness.

And Isaac dwelled at Gerar. Now the men of the place asked him about his wife; and he said [like I said, father like son], She's my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, the men of the place would kill me for Rebekah; because she was still beautiful to look upon. And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech the king of the Philistines looked out at the window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife [making love]. And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is your wife: how is it that you said she is your sister? And Isaac said to him, Because I said, Lest I die for her. And Abimelech said, What is this you have done to us? one of the people might lightly have lien [have laid] with your wife, and you should have brought guiltiness upon us. And Abimelech charged all of his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death. Then Isaac sowed in the land, and received in the same year a hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him (Gen 26:6-12).

So the king put out a protective custody over him, saying no one was to touch him or his wife. And Isaac went out and sowed and planted and God blessed it and he reaped a hundredfold from his planting.

And Isaac waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: For he had a possession of flocks, and a possession of herds, and a great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him. For all of the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth. And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we (Gen 26:13-16).

So the same thing that happened to Abraham; they saw the blessing and the work of God upon his life and they became fearful of Abraham. And now Abimelech is doing the same thing concerning Isaac. Seeing the fact that God's hand is so much upon him and the greatness of his wealth and all, he became fearful and they asked him to leave.

And so Isaac departed from there, and he pitched his tent in the valley of Garer, and he dwelt there. 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 the names after the names which his father had called them. And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and they found there an artesian well. And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well "Strife;" because they strove with him. And he digged another well, and they strove for that also: and so he called it contention; And so he removed from there, and he digged another well; and for that one they did not strive: and he called it roominess; for he said, The Lord has made room for all of us, and we will be fruitful in the land. So he went up from there to Beersheeba. And the Lord appeared unto him in the same night, and said (Gen 26:17-24),

Now again, God is appearing to him just like he appeared earlier as he returned. Now though,

I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake (Gen 26:24).

"Fear not, for I am with thee". The presence of God in our lives should be sufficient to dispel all fears. We only get frightened when we forget that God is with us. If you get all filled with fear and just all shook and upset, it means one thing: you've forgotten that God is with you. "Fear not", God said, "for I am with thee". How many times had God made that the basis of dispelling fear? "Fear not, for I am with thee". Be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will help thee. I will strengthen thee. Yea, I will hold thee by the right hand of my righteousness (Isaiah 41:10). "The Lord is my helper" David cried "of whom shall I be afraid?" "Fear not, I am with thee", and for Abraham's sake I'm gonna bless thee.

And so Isaac built an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and he pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well. And then Abimelech came to him from Gerar, with Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phichol the chief captain of his army [which is the title of the army general]. And Isaac said unto them, Hey why have you come to me, seeing you hate me, and you kicked me out. And they said, We have seen that the Lord is certainly with you: and we said, Let us now make a treaty between us, a covenant with you; That you will not hurt us, for we didn't touch you, and we have done nothing to you but good, and we have sent you away in peace: and now you're blessed of the LORD. And so he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink. And they rose up in the morning, and swore one to another: and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace. And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had dug, and they said, We have found water. And so he called it Shebah: therefore the name of the city is Beersheeba unto this day. And Esau was forty years old when he took a wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite: Which were a grief in the mind unto Isaac and Rebekah (Gen 26:25-35).

So Esau, forty years old now, and he married a couple of girls of the Canaanites from the Hittite tribe. And these girls were just a heartache to Rebekah and to Isaac. Probably were so imbued with the customs of their own culture, and all, and probably their own gods that they worshipped, that it was just a heartbreak for Rebekah and Isaac. There wasn't really good fellowship with these daughters-in-law. There was just too much diversity for them to be close and have a close fellowship. So they became sort of a burden and a heartache to Rebekah and Isaac. And that is why, one of the reasons why, they encouraged Jacob to go back and to get his bride from the family of Abraham, back in the area of Haran again. Because Esau's brides, they were just a mess, and brought no joy to Isaac and Rebekah.

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