

GENESIS –Lesson 43

Learn: Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another. Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of the saints; given to hospitality. Romans 12:9-13

Read: Genesis 24:1-31

Genesis 24 is the longest chapter in the Book of Genesis, and it tells a story that has charmed and enthralled readers for generations.

Not only is it a heart-warming love story, but it chronicles a very important episode in the history of man's redemption. Since Isaac is a type of Christ, according to the New Testament, it is not surprising that there are many fascinating parallels between the story of Isaac's search for a bride, through the ministry of his father's trusted servant, and the sending forth of the Holy Spirit to take out of the Gentiles a people for His name (Acts 15:14), a bride for Christ (II Corinthians 11:2). But of greater importance than the symbolism is the fact that the bride selected for Isaac had to be chosen with particular care, since she would be the mother of a multitude of nations which God had promised would come through Abraham's seed, through which the promised Savior would come, and in which all the nations of the earth would be blessed. This marriage in particular was supremely important, but in fact, the very institution of marriage is of special concern to God. Therefore Christian young people and their parents would do well to study carefully the principles guiding the preparations for this marriage as they contemplate their own.

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1. Verse one tells us that Abraham was "old, and well stricken in age." How old was he?
Genesis 25:20; Genesis 21:5

How old was Isaac at this time?

2. What was Abraham's great concern about the continuing line of blessing that would come through Isaac? v 3

Isaac trusted his father in the matter of a wife. They both realized that no suitable wife could be found among the Canaanites where they lived. It was profoundly important that both Isaac and his wife be completely united in their faith in the covenant of God, in order to properly instruct their children in this faith. His wife must not even be a recent convert. She must be one who had been instructed concerning God from her youth, and who had loved and served Him all her life. To find such a girl, if there were any such anywhere, Abraham must search among his own people. She must be a virgin, one who

loved her own family but who at the same time would not insist on staying near them, because she would have to make her home in the land of Canaan.

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3. What could Abraham base his belief that there was such a girl as was required for his son Isaac on?

4. What had Abraham recently learned about the family of his brother Nahor, so that he knew that there was a possible girl in the family Genesis 22:20-23

5. Because Abraham was too old to make the long trip of five hundred miles back to his family, who did he send as his intermediary? vv 2-4

What were the servant's qualifications? Also see verse 10-12.

6. What were Abraham's strict instructions concerning Isaac? vv 5, 6

7. Abraham placed his servant under a firm oath that he would follow his instructions in every detail. The sign and seal of the oath was a strange one. What was it? vv 2, 3

The only other occasion on which a similar procedure was used was the time that Jacob asked Joseph to put his hand under his thigh and promise he would not bury him in Egypt (Genesis 47:29). The exact meaning of the phrase is obscure. The word "thigh" (Hebrew yarekh) is frequently also translated "side" or "shaft." On two important occasions, it refers to the loins. For example in Genesis 46:26, it obviously refers to the procreative system: "All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins..."

All the ancient Jewish commentators understood this promise to be a euphemism for placing the hand under the male genital organ, and to have a symbolic meaning akin to that of circumcision, so far as the patriarchs were concerned. It was a solemn oath, in any event, and clearly was related to God's promise in connection with both the promised land and the promised seed.

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8. In what name was the oath taken? v 3

9. Abraham certainly did not have a limited view of God. What did Abraham promise his servant that God would do in order to make the servant's endeavor successful?
v 7
10. What assurance did Abraham give to his servant to ease his mind concerning the oath? v 8

11. The journey to Mesopotamia was over 500 miles, what preparation did Abraham's servant make for the journey? vv 10, 53

12. Abraham's servant went directly to the city of Nahor as he had been instructed. What was the first thing he did when he arrived? vv 11, 12

13. What did the servant ask the LORD to do in order to show him which young woman was the one for Isaac? vv 13, 14

The servant's prayer is a marvelous example of specific, believing prayer, and example that we can profitably follow today. It was not presumptuous prayer, the servant knew he was following the Lord to this point, and his motives were only to do that which would honor God and accomplish the mission that the Lord, through his master, had entrusted to him. He needed definite guidance, not general direction, at this point. Therefore, he prayed quite specifically—a reasonable request, but one which would be most unlikely to come to pass without God's definite intervention.

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14. As soon as the servant had finished his prayer a young woman came to the well. How is she described? vv 15, 16

15. What was Rebekah's response to the servant's request? vv 17-20

24. We see the wonderful example of Rebekah, her brother Laban, and their family. What do the following passages tell us should be the lifestyle of all believers in Jesus?

Romans 12:9-12 are for context, we are specifically interested in verse 13.

I Timothy 3:2

Hebrews 13:1, 2