

What You Need to Know About ISAAC & JACOB:

“The Lord who leads armies makes this solemn vow: ‘Be sure of this: Just as I have intended so it will be; just as I have planned, it will happen.’” Isaiah 14:24 NET

Study Number One – Genesis 24:1-33

There are two great patriarchs that are in this series. We have Isaac and then Jacob. They are very different, but the chemistry between them is amazing and how God uses them. There are some awesome lessons in these verses.

As the scene of our study opens, Abraham is 140 years old. Remember when we said farewell to him? He and Sarah had a baby by the name of Isaac. And now as the scene of our study opens, Isaac is 40 years old.

Sarah died three years ago so it’s just the two boys now. And usually when they got up to about 140, they started thinking about maybe there are some things to get done. And that’s where Abraham is.

Of course he’s going to live for 35 more years, but we never have any of those guarantees. And so the big thing in his mind is passing the baton—how to be faithful to see to it that the covenant goes to Isaac legitimately, and from Isaac through a

wife who is acceptable in God's divine program. And so that's the scene of our study.

He's thinking about his covenant responsibilities, he's thinking of the needs of his son Isaac, and he's also thinking of his own responsibility.

What's unique about that? Usually as we get older, we get increasingly more selfish. After all, we've earned it. We start thinking about us. We start thinking about what's happening to us.

The thing that marks Abraham off is so beautifully is he knows in his heart that he's got this responsibility. We have seen this in people who are just so unselfish, even up to the very last day, who are sacrificing themselves in serving until the call comes for them to go home.

We can title the chapter:

HERE COMES THE BRIDE.

Because that's really in essence what's taking place in the study. Now let's pick up with verse 1 and we will jump right in.

v. 1 Abraham was now old and well advanced in years, and the Lord had blessed him in every way.

“Abraham was now old and well advanced in years, and the

Lord had blessed him in every way.”

THREE THINGS at first:

1. he’s “old,”
2. he is “well advanced in years”—and we can agree with that.

But that last phrase is very interesting:

3. “the Lord had blessed him in every way.

Now if we were being “blessed in every way,” how would we be blessed?

FOUR THINGS:

1. He’s blessed because God made a **COVENANT** with him.

When he left Ur the Chaldees, the Lord entered into this unconditional covenant that he’d have a **SEED** that would last forever, and he would have a **LAND**. And those two things are what happened in him being blessed initially.

2. The **BIRTH OF ISAAC**—which was miraculous for that to have happened—when Sarah was 90 and Abraham was 100.

3. The first time there was a crisis in the land, he left and went down to Egypt with Lot. And for a number of years he

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was out of fellowship with God in that regard.

And then secondly, we also find that when we come to the 15-year mark, they—Sarah and Abraham—believe they have to help God out with regard to fulfilling the promise. And that's when Ishmael is born.

So God has to address that. Thirteen years we have just a blip on the screen of Abraham's life as he's out of fellowship with God.

But isn't it wonderful that God always has a way for us to get back on track? He's always longing for us to seek forgiveness, to seek reconciliation, and to be right with Him so He can bless us. And so forgiveness is a big part of it.

4. And JEHOVAH-JIREH.

In our last episode God asked Abraham to offer a sacrifice of his son, Isaac the promised boy. And he went through that. But on the mountain God stayed his hand and God became Jehovah-Jireh, "the Lord will provide." There was a ram in the thicket that became the sacrifice on the mountain.

That's God blessing "him in every way." Blessing him with a covenant, blessing him with the birth of Isaac, blessing him in forgiveness, blessing him as Jehovah-Jireh.

Here's a man who's walked with God and the Lord "blessed him."

Warren Wiersbe, when he summarizes chapter 24, says:

[Chapter] 24 is a great encouragement for those who want God's will in the selection of a mate. Today, while we do not use the same manner as Abraham's servant, the principles still apply: We must want God's will, we must pray and seek His guidance, we must be willing to obey and we must be alert to what God is doing.

(source unknown)

Sometimes when we look at a phrase like this, and we come back and look at it again, the simple answer is in the beginning of his life.

How many times did we see the word "bless" in the covenant between God and Abraham?

Genesis 12:2, 3

I will make you a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great, you will be a blessing, I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. And all the people on the earth will be blessed through You.

So yes! God's been faithful, now at 140 looking back at this time when God promised to bless, He did it.

This is what Samuel Rutherford says about age:

(The Loveliness of Christ: Extracts from the Letters of Samuel Rutherford selected by Ellen S. Lister)

Therefore I commend Christ to you as the staff of your old age; let him have now the rest of your days; and think not much of a storm upon the ship that Christ saileth in; there shall no passenger fall overboard; but the crazed ship and sea-sick passenger shall come to land safe.

p. 55

What a treasure. What a promise.

Lewis Smedes says:

(Days of Grace Through the Year by Lewis B. Smedes)

We often need this kind of courage as we get older, when our spicy juices turn to a sluggish syrup; when we feel in every joint a rusty resistance to healthy intentions; when our sexual drive is more memory than temptation; and we notice too often that too many of our old friends have died. It takes courage to celebrate life while numbering our days.

p. 174

It's pretty graphically described. And that's where we are as Abraham is getting ready to pass off the scene.

We can imagine how very painful it is to Abraham because Sarah's now been gone for three years.

Here he is, now we're ready for the ongoing part of the story—verse 2.

v. 2 He said to the chief servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, “Put your hand under my thigh.

“He said to the chief servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, ‘Put your hand under my thigh.’”

Okay, this chief servant we've already met him. This is 60 years later than when we first met him. When we were talking about the promise that God made that they were going to have a son, Abraham had given up. He said, “I'm still childless. Who is going to get the inheritance?”

And this is what he said:

Genesis 15:2

But Abram said, “O Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?”

He is the chief servant of the household. Now he's the star of the study, okay? We need to really get a handle on this guy because he is a very special saint that people just don't talk about.

First of all, he is getting ready as the chief servant to

Abraham to go look for a wife for the guy who took his place in the estate planning. Just stop and think of what happened when Isaac was born. Eliezer was put outside of the inheritance of the whole estate of Abraham. That was in God's plan.

This guy is such a spiritual guy, we're going to watch him and be amazed. But we need to learn some things about him and how he serves and why God just blesses him so much.

He's the "chief servant in [the] household." He uses the phrase, "Put your hand under my thigh."

Now this particular ritual occurs in one other place. Remember when Jacob got old and he's with Joseph in Egypt? He said, "Joseph, put your hand under my thigh and promise me that you'll not bury me in Egypt. I want to go back to the cave of Machpelah, where Abraham, Sarah and the rest of the crew are buried. Don't leave me in this foreign land." So that was an unconditional promise that he'd do that. (see Genesis 47)

Why putting his hand under the thigh? It could be generational; it could be the mark of the circumcision. All of those things are possible. Just understand that it was a tradition that when someone was going to make a promise to carry it out, their life would be spent or taken if they were not faithful to do what was being promised. So it was a normal thing for Abraham to do that.

Now notice what he says in verse 3, because here's the promise.

v. 3 I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living,

“I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living,”

In other words, he understands that he can't marry unequally and expect God's blessing. We read that very same thing about being “not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, that is the manner of some” in 2 Corinthians.

He knows that the line of the blessing has got to come through the family. And so he's getting ready to tell him, first of all, “If I die and you're responsible for helping Isaac get a bride, don't you dare settle for somebody from here—a Canaanite from this line.”

Sometimes God drops a little clue about what He's going to do. And then He backs off to see if we got it. And then a little later He'll do it again to see if we got it. Then pretty soon if we don't get it, He's going to get our attention by something a little more severe than that so that we'll do what He wants us to do.

Lovingly, when Abraham was on Mount Moriah and he just

got through being willing to sacrifice Isaac, what was in those last verses? Listen to this. This is the coolest deal.

Genesis 22:20

Some time later Abraham was told, “Milcah is also a mother; she has borne sons to your brother Nahor.

Abraham’s brother Nahor—we left him back in Haran. They’ve been very prolific to have eight boys. And the way they named these kids:

Uz,

Buz,

Kemuel,

Kesed,

Hazo,

Pildash,

Jidlaph, and

Bethuel.

And then the next phrase is a clue. It’s so small.

Genesis 22:23

[Eighth born son] Bethuel became the father of Rebekah...

Pull the curtain, drop the shade, let's get on with the rest of it. There's her name. And we just see how God just puts that name in his mind.

And so as he begins to think about a bride, "go my family"—he doesn't mention Rebekah, but he's going to be thrilled when the servant comes back with Rebekah.

Isn't it wonderful how God just does stuff like that? And then He just blesses us with such great rejoicing over the fact that He fulfilled it?

Tommy Franks in his book *American Soldier* helps us understand success.

(American Soldier by General Tommy Franks with Malcolm McConnell)

GRANT ME:

- One opportunity to influence the course of history.
- The foresight to anticipate that opportunity.
- The conviction to plan for it.
- The fortitude to implement the plan.
- The intensity of action to make it work.
- The flexibility to change it when it won't.

- The loyalty to self to admit defeat.
- The humility owed to victory.
- The tenacity to continue.

p. 198

Time will provide the opportunity. It's not too late to accomplish that passion, if God put it on our heart in the first place.

v. 4 but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac.”

“but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac.”

This is so important that he says this is what he's going to do.

We can call this the MY, MY, MY VERSE because we have:

“my country,”

“my relatives,” and

“my son Isaac.”

Everything centers around all of this.

Abraham has been a man who's been characterized by increasing separation:

1. He was called to leave home, the Ur of the Chaldees.
2. He had the painful separation from Lot after they came back from Egypt.
3. He had the painful separation from Ishmael when God said Ishmael was the work of the flesh. It's going to be Isaac, not Ishmael.
4. There was a willingness to separate himself from Isaac by offering him as a sacrifice because God had said so.
5. The biggest separation of all was the death of Sarah.

And so his life has been progressively like that. And he knows in his heart what God wants and that is somebody from the family who will qualify to be Isaac's wife.

v. 5 The servant asked him, “What if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from?”

Now, he's a very practical guy. This is Eliezer of Damascus.

“The servant asked him, ‘What if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from?’”

Talk about lighting a fire in an old guy. Just because he's 140

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he hasn't lost it either. He is dead on, determined in the response he's going to give.

There are two legitimate questions:

1. "What if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land?"

Stop and think about that. It's a 450-mile trip over to the land. What woman in her right mind is going to leave with a servant with a promise to go back 450 miles to become the wife of some guy she's never seen?

We know that has to be a God-thing for that to happen. And so he's being practical at this point.

And then the follow-up question is:

2. "Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from?"

v. 6 "Make sure that you do not take my son back there," Abraham said.

"Make sure that you do not take my son back there,' Abraham said."

Why? Well, he knew in his heart how hard it was for him to leave in the first place and Isaac would get back there with all the old cronies in the land and start living there and settle in

just like their dad did. They delayed for quite a few years in heading toward the land and they stayed in Haran until the old man died.

And he does not want the possibility of temptation to come into Isaac's heart to settle for second best by settling back over there rather than being here in the land that God had promised.

To get him out of the land means that he's out of the blessing. The only thing that still needs to be done is the SEED and that's what he's taking care of right now. He is enabling the servant to go on a mission.

v. 7 “The Lord, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father’s household and my native land and who spoke to me and promised me on oath, saying, ‘To your offspring I will give this land’—he will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there.

“The Lord, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father’s household and my native land and who spoke to me and promised me on oath, saying, “To your offspring I will give this land”—he will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there.”

He has comfort and confidence that God is going to enable this servant to find her. But, he puts an “if” doesn't he?

v. 8 If the woman is unwilling to come back with you, then you will be released from this oath of mine. Only do not take my son back there.”

“If the woman is unwilling to come back with you, then you will be released from this oath of mine. Only do not take my son back there.”

He said that in verse 4 and he’s making it quite clear here in verse 8. There’s no wiggle room on this, no compromise on this at all. “You are not going to take Isaac away from the land.”

So the servant went along with it.

v. 9 So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and swore an oath to him concerning this matter.

“So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and swore an oath to him concerning this matter.”

Now we have Eliezer. He’s a man on a mission. He’s committed to the task. He’s loyal to his master. And by the way, the one favorite phrase we’re going to see through the rest of the study is, “My master Abraham.”

He recognizes authority, he lives comfortably under it, and he speaks very respectfully of Abraham over and over again as “my master.”

What we're getting ready to see is something we can't explain from human terms. We're going to see a man led right to the place where God wanted him to go. The evidence of God's presence is very real, even though we hardly see it as we read the text.

One writer put it this way:

(A Treasury of Wisdom: Daily Inspiration from Favorite Christian Authors compiled by Ken and Angela Abraham)

Guidance is not a game—it is serious business where we learn what God wants us to do in ministry and how He wants us to do it. The will of God is doing and saying the right thing in the right place, with right people, at the right time and in the right sequence, under the right leadership, using the right method with the right attitude of heart.

p. 76

There's our man. He is right in every way.

(The 8th Habit by Stephen R. Covey)

Give the world the best you have and you may get hurt. Give the world your best anyway.

MOTHER TERESA

p. 143

Keep on being faithful. Eliezer is a great illustration of that.

Now watch. Here's the trip.

v. 10 Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and left, taking with him all kinds of good things from his master. He set out for Aram Naharaim and made his way to the town of Nahor.

“Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and left, taking with him all kinds of good things from his master. He set out for Aram Naharaim and made his way to the town of Nahor.”

Now Nahor is Abraham's brother. The town might have been changed over the years and now carries the name of his brother. It could be that it's Nahor from Haran. It's still the same city where we left Nahor way back in the life of Abraham.

Now why does he take ten camels? One camel lets someone know they're wealthy, ten camels let them know they're pretty high falootin' folks.

Abraham wants to make an impression—an initial impression. He's got to. Four-hundred and fifty miles with a distant brother in a far country to get a bride is a big mission. And so he takes ten camels.

Now one other thing, it looks like the servant takes ten camels by himself. That'd be a big job. He really had some guys with

him and we'll see it. At the end of the study we're going to see the other guys that have been helping him on the trip.

Now notice nine times he's going to call him "my master Abraham" as we go further in the study.

Eliezer is certainly a man on track, willing to keep his promises and willing to do what God wants him to do.

God has our life in His hands and if we surrender to Him, we're on His schedule and in His place at the right time, doing the right thing in the right way for the glory of God. That's what this whole story ought to do to each of us of how miraculous and how faithful God is to fulfil His promise.

v. 11 He had the camels kneel down near the well outside the town; it was toward evening, the time the women go out to draw water.

Now notice that he made the trip to Nahor—the 450 miles went fast but it probably took him two or three months.

"He had the camels kneel down near the well outside the town; it was toward evening, the time the women went out to draw water."

He's probably pretty excited, just like we are when we finally reach the destination after a long, arduous trip? And we're tired of being in a vehicle and we're tired of hearing kids say, "Are we there yet?" When we're able to say, "Yes, we're here!"

It's a great relief.

Well, he's at this well. Listen to Samuel Rutherford in *The Loveliness of Christ*:

(The Loveliness of Christ: Extracts from the Letters of Samuel Rutherford selected by Ellen S. Lister)

My shallow and ebb thoughts are not the compass Christ saileth by. I leave his ways to himself, for they are far, far above me . . . There are windings and to's and fro's in his ways, which blind bodies like us cannot see.

p. 11

In other words, we have to trust Him.

Now watch this servant. He's not only loyal to his master Abraham, right? He's living comfortably under authority. But, he's also been a faithful servant who is unselfish with regard to the fact that he has been replaced as heir apparent to the estate.

He's also a man of prayer. Look at this! He's caught the faith of Abraham.

v. 12 Then he prayed, "O Lord, God of my master Abraham, give me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham.

"Then he prayed, 'O Lord, God of my master Abraham, give

me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham.”

“There’s just TWO REQUESTS I have of You Lord:”

1. “give me good success today,” and then
2. “show kindness to my master Abraham” by providing someone to fulfill the mission and make it successful.

And so as he continues in his prayer.

“See Lord, do You see me? Have I got your attention?”

v. 13 See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water.

“See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water.”

“Lord, now here’s my request.”

When we have the word “may” in a statement like that, that’s the request. The formal request now comes.

v. 14 May it be that when I say to a girl, ‘Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,’ and she says, ‘Drink, and I’ll water your camels too’—let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness

to my master.”

“May it be that when I say to a girl, “Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,” and she says, “Drink, and I’ll water your camels too”—now let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master.”

Isn’t he just like us? He’s just like Gideon, isn’t he?

Gideon said, “You know I’m overwhelmed by the fact that there’s 120,000 Midianites down there and there’s hardly any of us. Lord, surely You don’t want me to go out against them. Well Lord, if You really do, then make the fleece wet and the ground dry in the morning, would You?”

And he’s still not convinced. The next morning, “You know, make the ground wet and the fleece dry—the fleece dry and the ground wet.” He reverses it. Then he’s ready to go.

This is just conditional. He’s saying, “Lord, I just need a little affirmation. You’ve led me to this place. Here I’m at the well, here are some candidates for the bride of my master’s servant and son Isaac. Lord, lead me to the one and the one will say when I say, ‘Give me a drink,’—‘Yes, you can have a drink and then I’ll water your camels too.’”

We have to be sure we’re praying about what we need to be praying about.

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v. 15 Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor.

“Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder.”

God is so good, isn't He? Faster than we can get the words out of our mouth sometimes, He gives us the answer.

Isaiah 65:24

Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.

It delights the heart of God when we are praying in His will and we are praying for His purpose, to see it happen so quickly and so unexpectedly, beyond anything we could have thought of.

“Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out”

Now this beautiful lady is on center stage, and we're going to hear a lot about her in the remaining five studies in this particular series.

“She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor.”

v. 16 The girl was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever lain with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.

“The girl was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever lain with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.”

There are **THREE THINGS** that are said about her:

1. She’s “very beautiful,”
2. she’s “a virgin,” and
3. she’s never had sexual relations.

This woman is the one that he is kind of focused on.

v. 17 The servant hurried to meet her and said, “Please give me a little water from your jar.”

“The servant hurried to meet her and said, ‘Please give me a little water from your jar.’”

The whole book hangs on the response. The covenant hangs on this. The future and the birth of the nation Israel hangs on this. Just a simple response at the well!

We never know—just a cup of cold water given in His name will never return to Him void. Watch it when we’re asked to

do some little thing sometime. It'll come back to bless.

v. 18 “Drink, my lord,” she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink.

“Drink, my lord,’ she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink.”

v. 19 After she had given him a drink, she said, “I’ll draw water for your camels too, until they have finished drinking.”

“After she had given him a drink, she said,”—she passed the test!

“I’ll draw water for your camels too, until they have finished drinking.”

Now what does that involve? Camels normally will drink about 20-25 gallons of water, especially after they’ve been in the desert for that period of time.

Multiply that—10 camels by 25 gallons of water, that’s 250 gallons of water that she has to move from the well to the trough.

If she’s going to move that many gallons of water it will take 84 trips, because she has probably a 3-gallon jug. Five gallons would be too heavy for a woman, so three gallons is going to about do it. That’s 84 trips.

Now, if she took 84 trips and she did each one of them in three minutes, that's 252 minutes, that's 4 hours and 12 minutes. It must have been dark-thirty by the time she got through.

Now she probably took at least between three and four hours to get that done.

Notice that the servant watches her closely. He's had plenty of time to watch her work while she's doing it.

v. 20 So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, ran back to the well to draw more water, and drew enough for all his camels.

“So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, ran back to the well”—that could cut down the time a little. She's running in her youth.

“ran back to the well to draw more water, and drew enough for all his camels.”

She didn't realize what she was doing, but the servant was watching.

v. 21 Without saying a word, the man watched her closely to learn whether or not the Lord had made his journey successful.

“Without saying a word, the man watched her closely to learn

whether or not the Lord had made his journey successful.”

The jury is still out.

v. 22 When the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a gold nose ring weighing a beka and two gold bracelets weighing ten shekels.

“When the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a gold nose ring weighing a beka”—or just a quarter of an ounce—“and two gold bracelets”—a couple of ounces—“weighing ten shekels.”

v. 23 Then he asked, “Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room in your father’s house for us to spend the night?”

“Then he asked,”— here come the big questions.

“Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room in your father’s house for me to spend the night?”

He needs to know whether this woman qualifies as being a bride to Isaac.

v. 24 She answered him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son that Milcah bore to Nahor.”

“She answered him,”

Ever gotten an answer that went, “Zing! Zing! Zing!”? That’s what happens here. It’s “Bing! Bing! Bing!” All three of them!

“I am the daughter of Bethuel,”—BING!—“the son that Milcah”—BING!—“bore to Nahor.”—BING!

Abraham’s brother, we are on target. “Eighth born son of Milcah and Nahor, Bethuel is your father? And Milcah is your mother? And you are part of the family of Nehor?” He can’t believe it! And it’s obvious.

v. 25 And she added, “We have plenty of straw and fodder, as well as room for you to spend the night.”

“And she added, ‘We have plenty of straw and fodder, as well as room for you to spend the night.’”

And so what does the servant do?

“Well thanks! I’ll see you there at the house. Just leave the light on for us. We’ll be there in a few minutes.”

No, see what he does? He does what we forget so often. He stops to praise the Lord.

Not only is this guy a man of prayer and a man of integrity, and a man that’s loyal to his master, when God does something so dramatic as this he’s on his face before God. He’s thanking and praising and worshiping the Lord in that twenty-sixth verse. He can see the hand of God in all of this so

the PRAYER now turns to PRAISE.

He bowed down and worshiped the Lord:

v. 26 Then the man bowed down and worshiped the Lord,

“Then the man bowed down and worshiped the Lord,”

Psalm 48:14

For this God is our God for ever and ever,
he will be our guide even unto to the end.

His praise is in verse 27.

v. 27 saying, “Praise be to the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master. As for me, the Lord has led me on the journey to the house of my master’s relatives.”

“[he’s] saying, ‘Praise be to the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master.’”

It’s an UNCONDITIONAL COVENANT!

“As for me, the Lord has led me on the journey to the house of my master’s relatives.””

“No GPS! I didn’t need one! God took me right to exactly the place.”

“his kindness and faithfulness to my master.”

Proverbs 4:18

The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.

He is able to really thank God for what He has done and how He’s manifested in answer to his prayer.

The girl was so excited that she ran and told her mother’s household—Milcah—“about these things.

v. 28 The girl ran and told her mother’s household about these things.

“The girl ran and told her mother’s household about these things.”

v. 29 Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, and he hurried out to the man at the spring.

“Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban,”—BOO!

Laban is bad news. He is Rebekah’s brother. Every time there’s a pretty piece of jewelry around or there’s money

involved, or there's a business negotiation, he's going to be right in the big middle of it and we aren't going to like what he does.

“Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, and he hurried out to the man at the spring.”

Of course he saw the bracelets and the nose ring and thought, “I can't look a gift horse in the mouth,” and so he ran out there.

v. 30 As soon as he had seen the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister's arms, and had heard Rebekah tell what the man said to her, he went out to the man and found him standing by the camels near the spring.

“As soon as he had seen the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister's arms, and had heard Rebekah tell what the man said to her, he went out to the man and found him standing by the camels near the spring.”

We'll see him numerous times and we'll just leave it at that.

v. 31 “Come, you who are blessed by the Lord,” he said. “Why are you standing out here? I have prepared the house and a place for the camels.”

“‘Come, you who are blessed by the Lord,’ he said. ‘Why are you standing out here? I have prepared the house and a place

for the camels.”

Oftentimes when we read stories like this and put all the pieces together, we see the reality of the person come out in the next statement.

v. 32 So the man went to the house, and the camels were unloaded. Straw and fodder were brought for the camels, and water for him and his men to wash their feet.

“So the man went to the house, and the camels were unloaded. Straw and fodder were brought for the camels, and water for him and his men”—there are the guys that are with him—“to wash their feet.”

Cool them down and get them ready for dinner.

v. 33 Then food was set before him, but he said, “I will not eat until I have told you what I have to say.” “Then tell us,” [Laban] said.

“Then food was set before him, but he said,”

“I’m on a diet.”—No.

“I will not eat until I have told you what I have to say.’ “Then tell us,” [Laban] said.”

But, hold it just a second. The lesson we get out of this is

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exactly the way Jesus treated the mission that God gave to Him—God the Father.

Remember when they went to that Samaritan village and all the disciples went into town to get food and He met the woman at the well and had that conversation? Then they came back from the Samaritan Safeway and they had all these groceries. And they offered Him something to eat. Listen to what he says. It's exactly the same way as the servant.

John 4:31-34

In the meanwhile the disciples were requesting Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” But He said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” The disciples therefore were saying one to another, “No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work.”

He is a man on a mission and food is going to be secondary to the whole thing.

Chuck Colson put it this way:

(How Now Shall We Live? by Charles Colson with Anne Morse)

Lord, when I make important decisions about work and family, help me to overcome the temptation to lie to myself in order to justify doing what I want to do instead of opening my

heart to what you want me to do.
p. 544

The most important thing is not by sitting down at the table and satisfying his physical needs, the most important thing is to discharge the stewardship of the message and to find out from this family if indeed they are going to be qualifying their daughter Rebekah as the one whom he is seeking and who would be willing to go back.

There are eleven lessons that come out of this.

Lesson #1: Abraham serves as a perfect illustration of the joy of aging well. “The Lord had blessed him in every way” (verse 1).

Lesson #2: Abraham was blessed by an unconditional covenant that involved the seed and the land, the miraculous birth of Isaac, the forgiveness of sin when he failed, and Jehovah-Jirah, the Lord who provides a sacrifice.

Lesson #3: Abraham’s secret was unquestioned obedience, faithful intercession, and fellowship with his Lord.

Lesson #4: Abraham is taking care of business before he gets the call from the home office. David did a similar thing in providing everything that Solomon would need for the building of the temple.

Lesson #5: Abraham’s faith in the project of getting a wife for

Isaac is demonstrated in verse 7: “. . . he [the Lord] will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there.”

Lesson #6: The Lord was faithful to lead the servant and his entourage right to Abraham’s relatives.

Lesson #7: The servant, when he arrives at the destination, prays: “. . . give me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham” (verse 12).

Lesson #8: The Lord is eager to respond to our petitions. The text says: “Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder” (verse 15).

Lesson #9: Rebekah gave him a drink and watered the camels and the servant, without saying a word, “watched her closely to learn whether or not the Lord had made his journey successful” (verse 21).

Lesson #10: It’s one thing to pray but it is another thing to express gratitude through praise and the servant teaches us that: “Then the man bowed down and worshiped the Lord, saying, ‘Praise be to the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master. As for me, the Lord has led me on the journey to the house of my master’s relatives” (verses 26-27).

Lesson #11: The servant is like our Savior in that personal things can wait, the mission takes priority: “Then food was set

before him, but he said, ‘I will not eat until I have told you what I have to say’” (verse 33).

Listen to this very dramatic prayer and also a story as we wrap this up.

Arthur Burns, [was] a Jewish economist of great influence in Washington during the tenure of several Presidents, was once asked to pray at a gathering of evangelical politicians.

Stunning his hosts, he prayed thus: “Lord, I pray that Jews would come to know Jesus Christ. And I pray that Buddhists would come to know Jesus Christ. And I pray that Muslims would come to know Jesus Christ.”

And then, most stunning of all: “And Lord, I pray that Christians would come to know Jesus Christ.”

Mark Buchanan, “Singing in the Chains,” Christianity Today (February 2008), p. 33

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A man who can stand in the midst of a situation like that and put the whole centrality on the person of Christ is an amazing person.

This Eliezer is one special guy, tucked away in the scripture. Every time we read about him, it’s amazing. We’re going to hear what he has to say in our next study as he describes his

mission and as he faithfully fulfills it.

Father, we thank You for stories like this that we've read in the scripture because it encourages us on our journey. There are many times we wonder whether we're right in the center of Your will. And there are other times it's so obvious we can't stand it. We thank You that You have brought us together to study this passage. We pray that it will live long in the lives of those who've studied this passage. We pray the lessons will prove to be helpful in understanding it further. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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What You Need to Know About ISAAC & JACOB:

“The Lord who leads armies makes this solemn vow: ‘Be sure of this: Just as I have intended so it will be; just as I have planned, it will happen.’” Isaiah 14:24 NET

Study Number One – Genesis 24:1-33

NOTES

v. 1 Abraham was now old and well advanced in years, and the Lord had blessed him in every way.

v. 2 He said to the chief servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, “Put your hand under my thigh.

v. 3 I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living,

v. 4 but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac.”

v. 5 The servant asked him, “What if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from?”

v. 6 “Make sure that you do not take my son back there,” Abraham said.

v. 7 “The Lord, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father’s household and my native land and who spoke to me and promised me on oath, saying, ‘To your offspring I will give this land’—he will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there.

v. 8 If the woman is unwilling to come back with you, then you will be released from this oath of mine. Only do not take my son back there.”

v. 9 So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and swore an oath to him concerning this matter.

v. 10 Then the servant took ten of his master’s camels and left, taking with him all kinds of good things from his master. He set out for Aram Naharaim and made his way to the town of Nahor.

NOTES

v. 11 He had the camels kneel down near the well outside the town; it was toward evening, the time the women go out to draw water.

v. 12 Then he prayed, “O Lord, God of my master Abraham, give me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham.

v. 13 See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water.

v. 14 May it be that when I say to a girl, ‘Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,’ and she says, ‘Drink, and I’ll water your camels too’—let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master.”

v. 15 Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, who was the wife of Abraham’s brother Nahor.

v. 16 The girl was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever lain with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.

v. 17 The servant hurried to meet her and said, “Please give me a little water from your jar.”

v. 18 “Drink, my lord,” she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink.

v. 19 After she had given him a drink, she said, “I’ll draw water for your camels too, until they have finished drinking.”

v. 20 So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, ran back to the well to draw more water, and drew enough for all his camels.

v. 21 Without saying a word, the man watched her closely to learn whether or not the Lord had made his journey successful.

v. 22 When the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a gold nose ring weighing a beka and two gold bracelets weighing ten shekels.

v. 23 Then he asked, “Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room in your father’s house for us to spend the night?”

v. 24 She answered him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son that Milcah bore to Nahor.”

v. 25 And she added, “We have plenty of straw and fodder, as well as room for you to spend the night.”

v. 26 Then the man bowed down and worshiped the Lord,

v. 27 saying, “Praise be to the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master. As for me, the Lord has led me on the journey to the house of my master’s relatives.”

NOTES

v. 28 The girl ran and told her mother's household about these things.

v. 29 Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, and he hurried out to the man at the spring.

v. 30 As soon as he had seen the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister's arms, and had heard Rebekah tell what the man said to her, he went out to the man and found him standing by the camels near the spring.

v. 31 "Come, you who are blessed by the Lord," he said. "Why are you standing out here? I have prepared the house and a place for the camels."

v. 32 So the man went to the house, and the camels were unloaded. Straw and fodder were brought for the camels, and water for him and his men to wash their feet.

v. 33 Then food was set before him, but he said, "I will not eat until I have told you what I have to say." "Then tell us," [Laban] said.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Genesis 24:1-33 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. Answer the questions Why and How Abraham becomes an illustration of a man who finishes well?

3. What three things has the Lord done for Abraham, according to verse 7?

4. According to verse 7, what will the Lord do to insure a successful mission for the servant?

5. What two things does the servant pray for in verse 12?

6. What two things does the servant ask of the Lord in guiding him to the girl that the Lord would have for Isaac? (See verse 14)

7. How quick was the Lord to answer his prayer, according to verse 15? (Also see Isaiah 65:24)

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8. Outline the servant's proper response to what the Lord has done in verses 26 & 27.

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Abraham serves as a perfect illustration of the joy of aging well. "The Lord had blessed him in every way" (verse 1).

LESSON #2: Abraham was blessed by an unconditional covenant that involved the seed and the land, the miraculous birth of Isaac, the forgiveness of sin when he failed, and Jehovah-Jirah, the Lord who provides a sacrifice.

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ADDITIONAL NOTES:
