

## Genesis Chapters 24 – John Karmelich

1. Chapter 24 is the longest single story in Genesis. There are 67 verses dedicated to this story.
  - a) I promise not even think about trying to cover two chapters today. ☺
  - b) On the surface, it sounds like a simple story: Abraham arranges for a daughter to marry his son Isaac. He sends his servant over to his relative's hometown to find a girl. The servant brings gifts to show he's serious. ☺ He finds the girl. The girl, named Rebekah (or Rebecca, depending upon your translation), agrees to go leave to marry Isaac. They get married, and essentially live happily ever after. ☺
  - c) There, that was easy. Why did God bother to expand this story into the 67 verses that is all of Chapter 24? I did it in six! ☺
  - d) Why is this particular story longer than the story of Abraham offering Isaac? After all, that is pretty important stuff! Why is it longer than Adam & Eve and the "apple" story? Why is it longer than the flood story?
    - i) While I'm asking questions, here is something else to think about. More is said about the arranged marriage of Isaac and Rebekah than say, the marriage of Adam & Eve, the arrangement of Jacob and his two wives, Moses and his wife, etc. More text is dedicated to the finding-a-wife-for Isaac than any other bible person. Even Sarah herself is first introduced as Abraham's wife. There is nothing about how they met.
  - e) The answer to these questions, in my humble opinion, is that the word-pictures being "painted" in this chapter is something God wants us to understand and sink in to our heads. In fact, some of the details get repeated twice so we remember it better. What God desires of us, more than anything else is a relationship with him. That is what "eternity" is all about, our relationship with God himself.
    - i) "In order that in the coming ages (life in heaven) he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:7 NIV)
    - ii) The word-picture being painted in Chapter 24 is about our "arranged marriage" with God himself through Jesus Christ.
      - a) If you get nothing else out of Chapter 24, get that!
      - b) So far in Genesis we spent a lot of text talking about the "promised son" of Isaac to his father Abraham. In fact there is more text about the promise of that son than the birth itself. The emphasis is more about the future prediction on the promised Messiah than Isaac himself.
      - c) The Chapter 25 "word picture" is focuses on another prediction: That of an "arranged wife" for this promised Messiah.
      - d) Let's go way forward to Revelation: "Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready...Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" (Revelation 19:7,9 NIV)
        - (1) In this future wedding, we are not guests, we are all the "bride". Remember there is "one" church and we are all united as the bride of the Jesus. (Reference: See Ephesians 5:31-32)
  - f) OK John, you lost me. Can you summarize this for me?
    - i) Glad to! ☺ Chapter 24 is a word-picture that focuses on finding a bride for Isaac. This girl Rebekah agrees to be his wife. If Isaac is a word picture of the coming Messiah (i.e., Jesus), then Rebekah is a word-picture of the "bride of the Messiah". A lot of Christian "theology" is given in the word pictures taught in Chapter 24.

2. Gee John, all of this is nice, and I already know a lot of this stuff. What does any of it have to do with the fact my kids are sick, I'm behind on the rent, my back is killing me and my mother is getting on my nerves? ☺
- a) First of all, it puts your problems in perspective. All of our problems are temporary. Yes they are real, yes they are painful, but they are temporary. Try to visualize "eternity". How far in the future can you project? Think of how long that will be versus the time frame of your problems. There is a peace that God gives us that we can make it through our problems knowing that they are not forever.
    - i) Yes God wants you to tell him about those problems and He wants to help you through them, but reading these prophetic stories in the bible keep our focus on the eternal picture and remind us of the temporary nature of our problems.
  - b) Second, this chapter is full of lessons about obedience.
    - i) Abraham's top servant is obedient to travel and find a wife for Isaac despite his fears he has about the journey.
    - ii) Rebekah is obedient to go along with Abraham's servant to marry a man she has never met. She states the three most powerful words in this chapter: "I will go".
    - iii) Isaac is obedient as he agrees to accept this bride "sight unseen".
    - iv) Abraham is obedient to God to find a wife from among "his kindred" as opposed to the local residents. We will get to the specific's of why Abraham did this when we discuss the first few verses of this chapter.
    - v) God calls to obedience through fears, through problems as well as through the blessed times of our lives. His plans for us often require that we "walk" through our fears in order to mature us and have a better relationship with Him.
  - c) Finally, this chapter is teaching us, through word-pictures, about our future home in Jesus. Jesus calls us to "abide in Him".
    - i) "If you (believers) abide in Me (Jesus), and My words (bible) abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.  
(John 15:7-8, NKJV)
    - ii) Jesus is making a promise to us. If we "stick" to him, or abide in him, He will do whatever we ask. That is a powerful statement. Here is the catch: If you abide in Jesus, obedience demands that we do what God wants us to do, not what we want to do. That is why God does whatever we ask, because the goal is to do His will.
    - iii) Which leads us back to Chapter 24. Chapter 24 is mostly about Rebekah.
      - a) She agrees to be the "bride" of Isaac, a word-picture of the coming Messiah. She willingly agrees, out of her own free-will to chose to be "one" with Isaac. She agrees to "abide" in him. Rebekah will be submissive to her husband and abide in Isaac, just as we are to be submissive and abide in Jesus Christ.
      - b) This is why marriage is compared to Christ and his church (Ephesians 5:32). A "healthy" marriage between a man and woman is compared by Paul as similar to the relationship between Jesus and his church.
      - c) Chapter 24, in its great length, shows how we should be willing to "abide" in our "husband", who we will not see face to face until our "marriage"!
      - d) Let's face it, none of us have seen Jesus face to face. We don't know what we he looks like. Yet we commit our lives to him. Like Rebekah, we say, "I am willing" to be his bride.
      - e) In fact, Chapter 24 spends more time on the "journey" to arrange the bride than the wedding itself. That is because God spends our life here on earth preparing us (our journey) for that marriage arrangement in heaven.
3. OK, two pages done so far, 67 verses to go, and I haven't started yet. ☺ Let's take on Verse 1.

4. Chapter 24, Verse 1: Abraham was now old and well advanced in years, and the LORD had blessed him in every way. <sup>2</sup> He said to the chief servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh. <sup>3</sup> 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, <sup>4</sup> but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac."
- a) Chapter 23 was all about the death of Sarah and the arrangement of a burial ground.
  - b) I suspect at this point, Abraham was thinking about his own mortality. The death of a loved makes us focus on the eternal perspective. The one major goal he wants to accomplish in his life is to get a bride for his son.
  - c) Although I spent the introduction describing the word-pictures of this chapter, I also see the practical side as well. I believe Abraham was a real person and this was a real story. God "designed" all of this to teach us lessons, but going through it on a moment by moment basis, I doubt Abraham thought about the prophetic aspects of it all.
  - d) Let me summarize the story so far: Abraham understood that his son was of the line of the Messiah. He tells his chief servant to go to his relatives and find a bride for his son.
  - e) The text emphasizes the "seriousness" of Abraham in asking his servant to perform this oath. He told the servant to place his hand under Abraham's thigh.
    - i) That was a cultural way of making an oath.
    - ii) The closest comparison I can think of is liking holding a child's hand while you explain something to them so they can't go anywhere! ☺
  - f) Let' talk about why his servant had to do all of this:
    - i) First of all...this is a difficult journey. We're talking a 450-mile journey on the back of animals. Further, we'll read in a few verses that this servant takes along 10 camels full of valuable possessions. Robbery is a serious threat.
    - ii) The emphasis is to not get a wife from the Canaanites, who are the dominant people in the land where Abraham dwells. The question is why?
      - a) I believe the answer goes back to Noah: Noah said, "Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers." (Genesis 9:25, NIV).
      - b) I believe Abraham knew of that curse. Further, Noah made a prophetic blessing on one of his other two sons Shem (Genesis 9:26). Therefore, I believe Abraham wanted his servant to get a bride from the "Shem line".
  - g) Before we move on, let's talk a little about this servant.
    - i) The first thing to notice is that his name is never given in the text.
    - ii) We know his name is Eliezer only because that was his name back in Chapter 15.
    - iii) In Chapter 15, we learn that if Abraham never had a son, Eliezer would inherit all of Abraham's possessions. Despite the miraculous promise of the son coming, we don't read of any resentment by Eliezer and we do read of his loyalty.
    - iv) I'm going to argue that in Chapter 24, Eliezer is a model of the Holy Spirit.
      - a) First of all, the name Eliezer means "comforter" or "helper".
      - b) Look at what Jesus says about the Holy Spirit: "If you love me, obey me; and I will ask the Father and he will give you another Comforter, and he will never leave you." (John 14:15-16, The Living Bible)
      - c) The word "Comforter" (KJV) is also translated "Helper" (NKJV) or "Counselor" (NIV). You can take any of these words and see them apply to the Holy Spirit. The basic job of the Holy Spirit is to draw us to Christ. For unbelievers, it is about leading people to that commitment. For believers, it is about drawing us closer to God the Father. The Holy Spirit never draws people to himself. In that word-picture, the Holy Spirit is an "unnamed servant" working for God. That picture fits Eliezer very well.

5. Verse 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?"
- a) Ok, the difference between the Holy Spirit and Eliezer is that the Holy Spirit doesn't have the fears and worries that Eliezer does here. ☺ This sentence was added for our sake!
    - i) We're the one who has the fears when God asks us to do something.
    - ii) Abraham told Eliezer to get going. Instead of packing the camels, Eliezer starts asking a lot of "what if" questions.
  - b) Eliezer asks a good question. How does Eliezer know that he would find the willing bride to come back with him? The answer is in Verses 6-7.
6. Verse 6: "Make sure that you do not take my son back there," Abraham said. <sup>7</sup> "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. <sup>8</sup> 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." <sup>9</sup> So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and swore an oath to him concerning this matter.
- a) Let me paraphrase Abraham. "Listen Eliezer, God told me a long time ago to get out of the land of my relatives (in Mesopotamia) and move here (what-is-today Israel). Further, God told me he is giving this land to my offspring. Therefore, since I am trusting in that promise, I have no doubt in my mind that you will find a girl among my relatives to come back. You see, the local Canaanites are cursed, and Isaac needs a wife, so I need to get someone from a "godly line" to continue the offspring to the Messiah.
    - i) This statement is about Abraham trusting in God's promises and acting on them.
  - b) Let me paraphrase Abraham some more: "Further, if the woman you find is unwilling, than you are released from this oath."
    - i) The point of this sentence is that from our perspective, it is about free will. God will never force you to "marry" Jesus. You must come out of your own free will. There is a pre-destiny aspect of our relationship in that God knows all things and He knows in advance that Rebekah would accept this invitation.
    - ii) It is the job of the Holy Spirit to encourage someone to become a believer, but it is never the job of the Holy Spirit to "force" one to believe in God. If we become followers of Jesus out of force, then we are not coming out of our own free will.
  - c) The last thing that Abraham emphasizes is the idea of "don't take my son back there".
    - i) Remember that the promise of the land is to Abraham's descendants. God told Abraham to "get out of your country" and essentially go to the Promised Land. (Ref.: Genesis 12:1). For Abraham to actually send Isaac to "his country" is a violation of what God asked Abraham not to do.
    - ii) As a word picture, remember that the resurrected Jesus isn't going around from place to place, looking for people to follow him. That is the job of the Holy Spirit to draw people to Jesus "where he is". In this word-picture Isaac is "home waiting for his bride to come to him." Where is Jesus, post resurrection? He is at his father's side (e.g., Acts 7:55). He is there and waiting for people to come to Him!
  - d) There is an interesting parallel between Abraham's command to find a wife for his son Isaac and later, in Chapter 28, where Isaac gets a bride for his son Jacob.
    - i) In Chapter 28, Isaac tells his son Jacob to go his uncle Laban (the brother of Rebekah) and get a wife. The difference between Abraham and Isaac is Abraham sends a servant and Isaac tells Jacob to go himself. One could argue it was a mistake to send Jacob out of the land. More on that in future lessons.
    - ii) My point here is that what Abraham taught his son about getting a wife from his family was "not wasted", many years later.

7. Verse 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. <sup>11</sup> 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.
- a) The NIV translation says that Eliezer took, "All kinds of good things from his master".
  - b) The KJV verses says, "All his master's goods *were in his hand*".
    - i) Personally, I lean more toward the literal interpretation that everything of value that Abraham had was loaded on these ten camels. Why do I believe that? Because that fits the "word-picture" of our life in Christ.
      - a) "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son." (Revelation 21:7, NKJV)
      - b) The Father has given "all things" to Jesus, as "his bride", we get to share in all the blessings that God has bestowed upon His son.
  - c) The location of "Aram Naharaim" is a transliteration. The location is northwest Mesopotamia. It is a 450-mile journey from Israel. "Nahor" is the name of Abraham's brother as well as his grandfather (Genesis 11:24 and 11:27). Nahor may also be the name of the city, or just the key names of the people Abraham wanted his servant to find.
  - d) Verse 11 is a good visual for a movie: Imagine coming to the outskirts of a gated town. The town doesn't have running water, so there are well(s) outside of the gate. The ritual of this town is the women go out at dusk, when the weather cools, to draw water in buckets.
8. Verse 12: Then he prayed, "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, give me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. <sup>13</sup> See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. <sup>14</sup> 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."
- a) Let me paraphrase the servant. "Dear God, I don't know what to do next. Therefore, I'm asking for a sign. Any girl might offer me a drink, but if a girl takes the time to get water for 10 camels, let that be a sign that this is the right girl."
    - i) First of all, give the servant Eliezer a little credit. He is nervous. He has pulled into a strange town with 10 camels loaded with expensive stuff. He doesn't know what to do next, so he prays. He offers God a "suggestion" and God accepts it.
    - ii) Personally, I'm "mixed" on the topic of asking God for signs. In a world where they don't have a printed bible for guidance, God worked more through signs and dreams. I still believe God can and does work this way. He mostly works this way through non-believers and through people with limited access to the bible. For believers, I believe God primarily wants us to study our bible for guidance and not ask God for special signs. Don't get me wrong. I have personally asked God for signs and have received them. I am simply reminding us to be "cautious" of signs. If they violate any biblical principal, they are not to be trusted.
    - iii) I do believe God allows Satan the power to use signs and dreams as well. Signs are to be watched for, but they must also be bible-tested and prayer tested.
9. Verse 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. <sup>16</sup> 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.
- a) Here is where we get the actual introduction to Rebekah.

- b) Notice the reference to being a virgin. Look at what Paul says about Christians:
  - i) I am jealous for you (believers) with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 11:2, NIV)
  - ii) The word picture in the New Testament is that we are being prepared as a “virgin bride to our “husband” Jesus. “Virginity” is a word-picture of our sins being 100% taken away by Jesus’ payment on the cross.
  - iii) Here in Chapter 24, we have Rebekah, described as a virgin (how did Eliezer know this? ☺) being “pre-destined” by God and “freely-choosing” to follow Eliezer to meet her new husband!
- c) By “sheer coincidence”, she just happened to be the girl Abraham wanted!
  - i) Remember, “coincidence” is simply God working in the background.
- 10. Verse 17: The servant hurried to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water from your jar."
 

<sup>18</sup> "Drink, my lord," she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink.

<sup>19</sup> After she had given him a drink, she said, "I'll draw water for your camels too, until they have finished drinking." <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> Without saying a word, the man watched her closely to learn whether or not the LORD had made his journey successful.

  - a) Rebekah went out of her way to give Eliezer, i.e., “the unnamed servant” a drink as well as enough for his camels. Don’t take this lightly. A camel can drink 20-25 gallons of water. I’m guessing that this is at least an hour’s work.
  - b) There are people who read this whole section and think, “Well no wonder God picked Rebekah. She was a good person prior to her commitment to her future husband. She believed in God (as will become obvious in the next few verses).”
    - i) Don’t think that you have to be “super-person” in order to be used by God. I doubt Rebekah was thinking about her eternal destiny when she performed this task. Rebekah did understand that God uses people who are willing to help others. God didn’t reward Rebekah with being in the Messianic line “because she was this great person”. God uses who God wants to use, period. Reading through your bible, you’ll discover there are a lot of rotten people that are also part of the Messianic line to Jesus.
  - c) Let’s get back to Rebekah going out of her way to feed the camels. This reminds me of something Jesus taught on the “Sermon on the Mount” speech:
    - i) “If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.” (Matthew 5:41, NIV) Jesus point is about being a good witness. If someone asks you to give them a drink, ask if you can also give a drink to their camels. (I realize as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century American, this doesn’t happen to often, but you get the point! ☺)
  - d) Remember the “unnamed servant” was looking for a sign from God as to whether or not this is the right person. Rebekah just “happened” to be at the right place at the right time.
    - i) For all we know God placed the extra-service in Rebekah’s heart to do and was also in charge of the timing of this event.
    - ii) The application to us is to you never know who is watching us in our service for the Lord. It is not our job to look for such people. Just do what God called you to do, and be His witness. You may be surprised as to how God is using you.
  - e) Notice the phrase in Verse 21: “Whether or not the LORD had made his journey successful.
    - i) This verse gives proof that Eliezer (“the unnamed servant”) worshipped God.
    - ii) Eliezer never forgot his purpose. He did ask God for a sign, and God answered it.
    - iii) Eliezer’s focus was on God, and his purpose for serving God, a good model for us!

11. Verse 22: When the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a gold nose ring weighing a beka (half-shekel) and two gold bracelets weighing ten shekels.<sup>23</sup> Then he asked, "Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?"<sup>24</sup> She answered him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son that Milcah bore to Nahor."<sup>25</sup> And she added, "We have plenty of straw and fodder, as well as room for you to spend the night."
- Personally, if I was Rebekah, I wouldn't be impressed with a nose ring, but there is no accounting for personal taste. ☺ We can assume that goes with the culture.
  - From her standpoint she probably thought, "Hey, this guy tips good for feeding the camels." ☺ Remember she never asked nor expected any gift, she just did it willingly.
  - You have to understand that it is one thing for the head of a household to accept a stranger as a guest, it is another thing for a young teenager to have that authority. It was bold of Rebekah to state there was room in the house. This is just another example of God working in the background of this story.
12. Verse 26: Then the man bowed down and worshiped the LORD,<sup>27</sup> 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."
- Even before the "unnamed servant" said yes to Rebekah, he stopped and praised God.
  - It is a good example of what our attitude should be about answered prayer. Which reminds me of something Jesus taught: In Luke 17, there is the story of ten lepers who were miraculously cured by Jesus. Nine of the ten were Jewish and one was a Samaritan. Only the Samaritan returned to Jesus to give thanks. Notice Jesus response:
    - One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice... "Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."" (Luke 17:15,17-19 NIV)
    - My point is that both Genesis and Jesus teach on the concept of stopping to give thanks to God when a specific prayer is answered. It is not for God's sake. He isn't pacing the floor waiting for a thank-you! ☺ It is for our sake to keep our focus on God even after our worries, fears and problems have gone away through answered prayer!
13. Verse 28: The girl ran and told her mother's household about these things.<sup>29</sup> Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, and he hurried out to the man at the spring.<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup> "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."
- We now get introduced to the character of Rebekah's brother Laban. We only read a little about him here. We'll encounter him a lot more in the stories about Isaac's son Jacob coming up in a few chapters.
  - When I think of Laban, I think of a scene from the Monty Python movie "Life of Brian": This is a comedy about a boy who is born "in the manger down the street" from Jesus. In one scene, the "wise men" show up at Brian's manger by mistake. Brian's mother, who reminds me of this Laban character says, "What are you "wise men" doing wandering around in the middle of the night? That doesn't sound very "wise" to me. ☺ Now go away." When the wise men said they brought gifts, Brian's mother said, "Well why didn't you say so? Come on in!" ☺
    - I stated that is that when we read of Laban in Genesis, we are going to read of a conniving man who is more interested in money than of God. I think Laban was more impressed with the material possessions Eliezer brought than the fact that Eliezer was sent by Abraham.

- ii) Because Laban is of the “godly” descendants that are tied to Abraham’s family, he believes in the Lord, but it is a “mixed-blessing” as he is also interested in money
  - iii) With that intro, re-read this paragraph. Notice it said that after Laban saw the gold nose-ring and the bracelets, then he was excited to have this man as a guest.
  - iv) Notice Laban saw the gold jewelry and called the servant “Blessed of the Lord”.
    - a) It is just another example how Laban gives “lip service” to God, but is more impressed by the money.
  - v) Many live their life that way today. They go to church a few times a year, they acknowledge that there is a God. They may even acknowledge Jesus as God. But they are more concerned with the almighty dollar than with God himself.
  - vi) There is a false idea that one is “saved” if at one point in their life they acknowledge Jesus as God, and then go on their lives as if, “OK, now I’m saved, I can go back to my business”. Christianity is about committing your life to serving God, not just making a one-time statement and ignoring God for the rest of your lives. What it really comes down to is, are you trusting in God, or are you trusting in your ability to take care of yourself? I suspect Laban falls into the latter category.
  - vii) Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." (Matthew 6:24 NIV)
14. Verse 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. <sup>33</sup> 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.
- a) This is the first time we are told that Eliezer (the “unnamed servant”) was not traveling alone. Notice Verse 32 says that water was brought for “him and his men”.
  - b) Give Eliezer a little credit for focusing on his mission despite his hunger. If I had just made it into town, found the girl, etc., I’d be a little relieved at this point and ask what’s for dinner! ☺ Eliezer stayed focused on his mission and told the story of his journey.
15. Verse 34: So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. <sup>35</sup> The LORD has blessed my master abundantly, and he has become wealthy. He has given him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, menservants and maidservants, and camels and donkeys. <sup>36</sup> My master's wife Sarah has borne him a son in her old age, and he has given him everything he owns. <sup>37</sup> And my master made me swear an oath, and said, 'You must not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live, <sup>38</sup> but go to my father's family and to my own clan, and get a wife for my son.'
- a) From Verses 34-49, we get a “repeat” of what has already been told earlier in the chapter. These verses repeat what has happened so far, but from Eliezer’s own mouth to Laban and his family.
  - b) OK, the big question: Why repeat all of these verses? Why not just say, “Eliezer told of Abraham’s requirement that I come here to get a wife for his son, and here I am”. ☺ Why repeat a lot of the same text again?
    - i) This is about being a good “witness” to Laban and his family.
    - ii) There is an old saying that “People can deny your belief in God, but they cannot deny your personal testimony.” It is one thing to say, “I don’t believe in your God”, but they cannot deny or contradict facts that you state about how God has changed your life.
    - iii) This is what being a “witness” is all about. In a courtroom, a witness is not an advocate for someone on trial, that is the lawyer’s job. A witness is put on the stand to state the facts for the judge and jury. That is our job as well. A witness does not have to convince people Jesus is God. That is the job of the Holy Spirit.

- a) Our job is to be a witness. State the facts. Preach the “Word”, and sometimes just state what God has done in our lives. People can’t argue with what God has done through us.
    - iv) Which leads us back to Eliezer. He repeats the story of this commitment to Laban. He is proving that God is behind this, not himself, nor Abraham.
  - c) One thing that made me laugh about these verses is that you almost get the sense that Eliezer is “bragging” about how much material stuff his master Abraham has.
    - i) Verse 35 says, “He (God) has given him (Abraham) sheep and cattle, silver and gold, menservants and maidservants, and camels and donkeys.”
    - ii) I suspect, but cannot prove, that Eliezer caught-on to the fact that Laban was impressed by material wealth, so he added that fact to his sales pitch. ☺
  - d) One thing to notice in these 15 verses is the repetitive phrase “my master”.
    - i) It emphasizes the loyalty of Eliezer to Abraham. Notice Eliezer never says, “Your cousin Abraham sent me here, so you are obligated.” Eliezer states that they are family, but never that they are obligated to do this because they are family. Instead Eliezer emphasizes how God is working in his life for this commitment.
16. Verse 39: "Then I asked my master, `What if the woman will not come back with me?' <sup>40</sup> "He (Abraham) replied, `The LORD, before whom I have walked, will send his angel with you and make your journey a success, so that you can get a wife for my son from my own clan and from my father's family. <sup>41</sup> Then, when you go to my clan, you will be released from my oath even if they refuse to give her to you--you will be released from my oath.'
- a) The key of this repetition of the story is in Verse 41: The servant Eliezer states that even if Laban refuses to release Rebekah, it doesn’t matter as far as Eliezer’s “oath” is concerned.
  - b) In the first part of the chapter, Eliezer swore an oath to go get a wife for Isaac. The oath was about making the journey and not necessarily bringing a girl back. The oath specifically stated that if the girl is unwilling, then Eliezer is “done”.
  - c) This again gets back to the model of Eliezer as a type of “Holy Spirit”. A function of the Holy Spirit is to bring people to Jesus, but there is still a “free-will” aspect involved.
    - i) If Rebekah refused to come, Eliezer would be “released” from his oath. It is a word picture that of the Holy Spirit not “forcing” people to become believers.
  - d) Notice that Eliezer does not say, “Hey, my job was to get here and fetch a wife for Isaac. Here’s some gold. So is she coming with me or not?” ☺
    - i) My point is that Eliezer does his best “sales job” to convince Laban and Rebekah that she should come back with them. Even though the oath only required that Eliezer go the land, he does his best to convince Laban to let the girl go.
    - ii) The emphasis of Eliezer’s “sales pitch” is on how God is working in his life. There is a sentence about Abraham’s material wealth, but most of Eliezer’s speech focuses on how God has worked in Abraham’s life and his own life.
17. Verse 42: "When I came to the spring today, I said, `O LORD, God of my master Abraham, if you will, please grant success to the journey on which I have come. <sup>43</sup> See, I am standing beside this spring; if a maiden comes out to draw water and I say to her, "Please let me drink a little water from your jar," <sup>44</sup> and if she says to me, "Drink, and I'll draw water for your camels too," let her be the one the LORD has chosen for my master's son.'
- a) Here is the part where Eliezer emphasizes the “testimony”. He tells how he prayed to God for a “sign” and God answered that prayer.
  - b) The point of this sales pitch is that even Laban couldn’t argue with the “coincidence” that the person who drew water for Eliezer and his camels just “happened” to be Rebekah. Eliezer is describing how God is working in the background in this story.

- c) Never underestimate the power of sharing how God has answered your prayers. It is often a good idea to keep a prayer-journal to see how God has worked in your life. Not only to show others who are going through similar situations, but as a reminder to you that “God is still there” during the times of our lives where God is silent and is testing us.
18. Verse 45: Before I finished praying in my heart, Rebekah came out, with her jar on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water, and I said to her, ‘Please give me a drink.’
- a) This verse gives us a little insight that we didn’t get the first time this story was told: The key is the word “before”. Before Eliezer even finished his prayer, Rebekah showed up!
- i) Notice the speed in which God answered the prayer. In fact, God didn’t let Eliezer finish the prayer before it was answered.
- ii) Notice Eliezer didn’t say, “Excuse me God, will you let me finish my prayer please?” ☺ It is a reminder that if we are praying for God’s will to be done, “watch out” for answers even before we are finished!
- iii) Other examples of prayer-interrupted-for-answers are in Daniel 9:21 and Acts 12:12-13.
19. Verse 46: "She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder and said, ‘Drink, and I’ll water your camels too.’ So I drank, and she watered the camels also. <sup>47</sup> "I asked her, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ "She said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel son of Nahor, whom Milcah bore to him.’ "Then I put the ring in her nose and the bracelets on her arms, <sup>48</sup> and I bowed down and worshiped the LORD. I praised the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me on the right road to get the granddaughter of my master's brother for his son. <sup>49</sup> Now if you will show kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so I may know which way to turn."
- a) The emphasis of this “testimony” is on how God is working in Eliezer’s life.
- i) He stated on how fast God worked to answer the prayer. Notice the word “quickly” in Verse 46 as well as “Before I finished” in Verse 45.
- ii) Eliezer gave credit to the Lord. He wanted to show that he too, believed in the God of Abraham.
- b) Verse 49, which is the end of the repetitive section, ends with the question of, “OK, Laban, I just stated my testimony, give me an answer to my question”.
- i) Notice the boldness of Eliezer at this point. Remember Eliezer was scared about making the journey and confronted Abraham with his doubts. Now here is at Laban’s house, and he won’t even touch food until the question is answered.
- ii) I have found God works that way in our life as well. When we start a commitment of a particular job for God, especially when we see a few prayers answered, we grow in our confidence and boldness of our trust in God.
- iii) If you ever take a class on being a salesperson, they always teach “never forget to ask the client if they want to place an order”. Many sales people talk about their product, but forget to ask the client for an order. I mention this because there is also a time when you talk to people about Jesus when you need to “ask the question”, and not just give your testimony or quote the bible.
- c) I should also talk a little about the concept of “marrying a cousin”.
- i) This sounds a little repulsive to our standards, but it was acceptable at that time. By the time Moses came around roughly 400 years later, there were some restrictions against marrying immediate family. The point is the “gene pool” was not corrupt enough yet at this time in history.
20. Verse 50: Laban and Bethuel answered, "This is from the LORD; we can say nothing to you one way or the other. <sup>51</sup> Here is Rebekah; take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has directed."
- a) Just as a reminder, Bethuel was the Rebekah’s father (Genesis 22:23).
- i) Laban was Rebekah’s brother (Genesis 24:29).
- ii) Therefore they both had “some say” in responding to this request.

- b) I love the words “This is from the LORD; we can say nothing...”
    - i) Again, you can’t argue with a personal testimony. Both Laban and Bethuel had enough understanding and faith in God to know when and how God is working.
    - ii) Remember that Laban and Bethuel knew that God had called Abraham to “get away from his family” back in Chapter 12. These two must have had some understanding of God.
    - iii) Remember that they were part of “Godly descendants” of Noah via Shem as well as Abraham as listed in Genesis 11. Although Laban maybe materialistic, he still understood the concept of “The Lord” and what that meant.
  - c) One also has to remember that marriages were arranged. One asked the leading male members of the family (father, older brothers) for permission to marry a daughter. Often, the girl would have no say so in the arranged marriage.
21. Verse 52: When Abraham's servant heard what they said, he bowed down to the ground before the LORD. <sup>53</sup> Then the servant brought out gold and silver jewelry and articles of clothing and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave costly gifts to her brother and to her mother. <sup>54</sup> Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night there.
- a) This is celebration time. It was part of the culture to celebrate when the marriage was arranged. It was also part of the culture to give gifts to the family. For those of you who know the concept of a “dowry”, this is the first mention of such in the bible. A dowry is a present from the groom’s family to the bride’s family. It is a way of saying, “If the marriage goes bad, the groom still has to pay to support the bride thereafter”.
22. Verse 54 (cont.): When they got up the next morning, he said, "Send me on my way to my master." <sup>55</sup> But her brother and her mother replied, "Let the girl remain with us ten days or so; then you may go." <sup>56</sup> But he said to them, "Do not detain me, now that the LORD has granted success to my journey. Send me on my way so I may go to my master."
- a) When one commits their life to serve Jesus, God doesn’t want any delays. There is a sense of “get going” when God calls us to do something.
  - b) Notice something Jesus said, “Another disciple said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead." (Matthew 8:21-22 NIV)
    - i) In this story in Matthew, the disciples’ father was not dying. This is a cultural term that implies, “When I’m finished with my family commitments, then I will follow you.” Jesus response of “let the dead bury their own dead” is not meant to be taken literally. That would be a violation of one of the 10 commandments: “Honor your father and your mother”(Exodus 20:12). Jesus response is about following him now and not delaying.
  - c) For Laban and Bethuel to delay the journey is an understandable reaction. Let’s face it, Abraham lives roughly 450 miles away, and Laban and Bethuel may never see Rebekah again. These guys just wanted some time to give proper good-byes.
    - i) Some commentators argue that this is an example of “spiritual warfare” as they are trying to delay God’s will from being done. Personally, I just see it as trying to delay the pain of never seeing Rebekah again.
    - ii) Sometimes for God’s will to get accomplished requires painful decisions on our part. Eliezer made it obvious that God is behind this journey. If Laban and Bethuel accepted that fact, then they had to accept the fact that Eliezer and Rebekah needed to leave quickly, if that is also God’s will.
      - a) I’m a big believer in the phrase, “Where God leads, God provides”. If God wants you to do something painful and difficult, He provides the strength to perform such an action.

23. Verse 57: Then they said, "Let's call the girl and ask her about it." <sup>58</sup> So they called Rebekah and asked her, "Will you go with this man?" "I will go," she said.
- a) Here is your memorization words of the day: "I will go"
    - i) It's only 3 words. That's not so tough a demand! ☺
    - ii) In fact, it is only one word in Hebrew, so if you know Hebrew, your job is easier!
    - iii) In the last lesson, I talked about the phrase "Here I am". When God spoke to people in the bible, they often showed their willing obedience to listed to God by stating "Here I am". Rebekah stating "I will go" is a similar act of obedience.
  - b) You can do a whole evangelistic sermon on "I will go".
    - i) It is about our willingness to commit our lives to serve Jesus when asked.
    - ii) Eliezer, i.e., "the unnamed servant of Abraham", "plays the part" of the Holy Spirit drawing us to God. It is us to make that commitment and say "I will go".
    - iii) Further, it doesn't end when we first commit our lives to serve Jesus. Our growth in our faith is about a growing willingness to trust God more and more. With each step that God asks of us, He is looking for a "I will go" answer!
  - c) Remember that in this culture, women were submissive to the men. Laban and Bethuel could have ordered Rebekah to go and she would have to. The fact that they asked her for her "willingness" fits the word-picture for us about our commitment to God.
24. Verse 59: So they sent their sister Rebekah on her way, along with her nurse and Abraham's servant and his men. <sup>60</sup> And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, "Our sister, may you increase to thousands upon thousands; may your offspring possess the gates of their enemies." <sup>61</sup> Then Rebekah and her maids got ready and mounted their camels and went back with the man. So the servant took Rebekah and left.
- a) So Laban and Bethuel send Rebekah on their way, along with her personal nurse. A "nurse" is probably a personal assistant, and most likely a slave. It shows that God was blessing the family of Laban and Bethuel as they had personal servants as well.
  - b) Verse 60 is a "blessing" upon Rebekah. In a word-picture, it literally came true.
    - i) Rebekah was part of the Messianic line. Her grandchildren became the 12 tribes of Israel who then conquered the Promised Land. The phrase, "May your offspring possess the gates of their enemies" became literally true.
    - ii) It seems like a strange blessing. You would think Laban and Bethuel would say something like "good luck" or "have a nice life". ☺ It makes you wonder how much Laban and Bethuel understood about the promises made to Abraham.
25. Verse 62: Now Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi, for he was living in the Negev. <sup>63</sup> He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching.
- a) Here we have the first mention of Isaac since Abraham offered him on the mountain.
    - i) This alone is a wonderful prophetic word picture of Isaac as a "type" of Christ.
    - ii) Remember in Chapter 22, we had Abraham offering his son Isaac, until God provided a substitute. In a "word-picture", Isaac was "resurrected" to live again. The text never mentions Isaac coming off the mountain, although it is implied. The text "accidentally" forgot to mention Isaac coming off the mountain. Now the next we read of Isaac himself, is two full chapters later, waiting for his "bride" to arrive. That ties to the word-pictures I discussed in the opening of this lesson, which is that a nickname for Christians is "the bride of Christ".
26. Verse 64: Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel <sup>65</sup> and asked the servant, "Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?" <sup>66</sup> Then the servant told Isaac all he had done. "He is my master," the servant answered. So she took her veil and covered herself.
- a) Remember a function of the Holy Spirit is to lead people to Jesus. Here is Eliezer ("comforter"), who I call this "unnamed servant", leading Rebekah to Isaac. It completes the word-picture very well.

- b) Notice that “only” Verse 66 is used to repeat the whole scene to Isaac. We get every detail repeated when Eliezer told the story to Laban and Bethuel, but only a short sentence summary in Verse 66 to repeat the story again. The story focuses on the work of Eliezer. In a word-picture sense, Isaac “doesn’t do much to get the bride”, the work is that of Eliezer, just as the “work” of the Holy Spirit is to bring people to Jesus.
  - c) The last part of Verse 66 is another cultural custom of girls covering oneself prior to the wedding. If Rebekah had a big ego, she would have kept the veil off so Isaac could get a good look at her. ☺ It is another example of willing submissiveness to her master.
27. Verse 67: Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.
- a) OK, here we have the happy ending. And not a moment too soon, because I’m running long in my text. ☺
  - b) It ends with a strange comment “Isaac was comforted after his mother's death”
    - i) As best we can tell, it had been a good number of years since Sarah died, yet Isaac naturally still grieved. It took the love of another to replace the love lost for the departed mother. It also completes the word-picture of the “mission” of the parents to have a “Promised Son”, who is part of the Messianic line complete his mission to “keep the Messianic seed” moving through the generations.
    - ii) Some Christian commentators take this word-picture step further. They see Sarah as a model of “Israel” and see the “marriage of Jesus and the bride” being tied in with the end of the “emphasis on the Law/Jewishness”. Personally, I think it is a stretch and other than this brief paragraph, so I won’t go on further.
28. To summarize Chapter 24, this chapter focuses on the “mission” of bringing a bride to Isaac.
- a) The main thing to remember is that it is a word-picture for us to be obedient to the calling to God. Again, the key words is Rebekah saying “I will go”. The rest is commentary. ☺
29. Let’s Pray: Father, help us to be willing servants to you. Give us the boldness, the guidance and the strength to do your will. Further, help us to be good living witnesses for you and be willing to speak boldly on how you have worked in our lives. We do this not only to strengthen our own faith, but to be witnesses so that others might also be willing to say “I will go”. We ask this in Jesus name we pray, amen.