

Introduction

This week we come to the last scene in the life of Abraham before his death that is recorded in [Genesis 25](#). One of the interesting things about [Genesis 24](#) that I've mentioned before is the fact that this is one of the longest united stories in all of Genesis. This long account of finding Rebekah for Isaac is sandwiched in between the death of Sarah and the death of Abraham. This is a very important account in Genesis and today we come to the conclusion of this account from [Genesis 24](#).

I want to draw three things from the passage this morning:

1. God wants His people to protect the weak (vv. 52-54)
2. God's people should not delay in their service to God (vv. 55-61)
3. God's people should carry the baton of the covenant forward (vv. 62-67)

Protect the Weak (vv. 52-54)

One of the things that I've already covered from [Gen 24](#) is the great wealth of Abraham's household. Abraham sends Eliezar away by giving him control over all his possessions and Eliezar has already given jewelry to Rebekah. This trend continues in verses 52-53 as more jewelry is brought out and given to Rebekah. But not only to Rebekah but also to her brother Laban and her mother.

Why is Eliezar giving such things to Rebekah, Laban, and their mother? The answer is that Eliezar is providing insurance to Rebekah and to her family regarding her status as a bride to Isaac. This practice was one of the means by which women were protected in the ancient world. Women were given jewelry that was considered their own property (not the property of their husbands). This personal wealth could be used as an insurance policy if a woman was divorced by her husband or her husband died and there was no one to support her. This insurance would be given to a woman and her family.

In short, these types of gifts were to assure both Rebekah and her household that she was not becoming a concubine to Isaac but a wife with full privileges. Rebekah was to become the new matriarch of the covenantal line. As she consents to marry Isaac, she does so as a woman of honor and will hold a position of honor in the covenant community.

Throughout the Bible there is a big concern that the weak and the poor are protected. For various reasons, women are more vulnerable than men. Thus, the Bible is filled with laws and admonitions that protect women and other members of society who could find themselves in a vulnerable position.

God desires His people to have an eye toward the weaker members of society and protect them. The prophets derided the oppression of the weak in Israel by the hands of the strong. Jesus does the same as He speaks against the plundering of widows houses. The apostles continue this trend. Paul tells the Romans to take consider weaker brothers and James warns against practicing partiality.

Indeed, in a way that relates to our passage, Peter explicitly writes to husbands saying: [1 Peter 3:7](#) *“Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”*

So while these first verses in our passage certainly show the wealth of Abraham, they also show the righteousness of Abraham’s household. His house seeks to protect and provide for those who are vulnerable.

As Christians, you are called to do likewise. Consider the needs of the weaker members of our community and how they might be aided.

The opening section concludes Eliezar breaking his fast and he staying the night. On the following morning he says, **“Send me away to my master.”** Eliezar is a servant on a mission. He is ready to pack up and head back to Abraham and Isaac with Rebekah. But there is pushback which leads to the next item.

Do Not Delay (vv. 55-61)

In verse 55 Laban and Rebekah mother say, **“Let the young woman remain with us a while, at least ten days; after that she may go.”** The ESV does a faithful job

literally translating the Hebrew but there is something lost in translation. The phrase, “**at least ten days**” likely *means* something more like, “at least ten *months*” or even *a year*. So when Laban wants to delay Rebekah departure he is likely envisioning something much longer than 10 days.

We are given some foreshadowing here that you may have picked up on from the title of this sermon. Tarrying in Laban’s house is not a good thing. In [Genesis 27-28](#) Jacob is sent to Laban until the fury of Esau subsides. In [Gen 29-30](#) Jacob ends up staying in Laban’s house for over a decade. There Laban is displayed as a trickster that Jacob needs to flee from.

Eliezar refuses to tarry in Laban’s house and he responds, “**Do not delay me, since the LORD has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master.**” We see a similar attitude from Rebekah. In verse 57-58 Laban and Rebekah’s mother ask Rebekah “**Will you go with this man?**” and Rebekah responds, “**I will go.**”

Throughout this account, Eliezar is portrayed as an ideal servant and Rebekah is portrayed as an ideal bride for Isaac. Like Eliezar, she is eager to take action, to move forward with what is at hand and not delay.

The Bible speaks a lot about the need for patience and it is good for us to hear those admonitions. But while you are likely familiar with the Bible’s teaching on patience, the Bible also admonishes God’s people toward industry and decisiveness.

The proverbs are filled with admonitions to avoid idleness and pursue industry. Paul picks this up in [2 Thessalonians 3:10](#) where he states, “If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.” But we also find encouragements not to waver in the Bible. The prophet Jeremiah tells Israel not to waver in their commitment to the LORD ([Jer 4:1-2](#)). Paul writes that Abraham did not waver in his belief concerning the promise of God in [Rom 4:2](#).

Just like Eliezar and Rebekah did not waver or delay in Laban’s house, you too must commit yourself to a similar form of decisiveness and industry. What is the task before you that the Lord has given to you? Commit yourself to it. Do not waver or delay in the task. Rather, commit yourself to the fruitful service of your God.

1 Corinthians 15:58 *ESV*

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

Eliezar and Rebekah did not delay and Rebekah goes out from her home and family with the following blessing: “***Our sister, may you become thousands of ten thousands, and may your offspring possess the gate of those who hate him!***” (v. 60)

This should recall to us the promise God gave to Abraham in [Genesis 22:17](#) “I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies,”

It is through Rebekah that this promise to Abraham will find fulfillment. Rebekah will bear Jacob, and from Jacob will come the twelve sons of Israel that will make up the nation. Israel will possess the gates of its enemies but that is only for a short time.

The true fulfillment of this blessing comes later, when the promised offspring is born to another willing woman; the Virgin Mary. It is Jesus who possess the gates of His enemies. Indeed Jesus is the possessor of heaven and earth.

Rebekah was willing to play her part in this glorious history of the covenant, and that is what we see in the concluding section.

Carry the Baton (vv. 62-67)

Isaac comes into the scene in verses 62-63 as he goes into the field toward the evening to meditate. In verses 63-64 both Isaac and Rebekah are said to “***lift up their eyes***” to see one another. I’ve pointed out before how the “lifting up of the eyes” serves as an important marker all throughout the Abraham accounts in Genesis.

When the three angelic visitors come to Abraham in [Gen 18](#), Abraham “lifts up his eyes.” When Hagar discovers the well of water that will save Ishmael’s life she does so by “lifting up her eyes.” When Abraham is told by the angel *not* to sacrifice his only son Isaac he “lifts up his eyes” to see the ram caught in the thicket.

This is the first scene of the passing of the baton from the generation of Abraham and Sarah to the generation of Isaac and Rebekah. This occurs in the evening which marks the transition from one day to the next. *The marriage of Isaac and Rebekah answers any questions about the integrity and continuation of God's covenant purposes and promises.*

It's important to recall that Sarah's death is the immediate backdrop to the finding of Rebekah for Isaac and the death of Abraham immediately follows this account. Abraham and Sarah are passing the baton to Isaac and Rebekah. This is known as covenant succession it is of vital importance to the story of God's salvation in the Bible, and our own experience of salvation as God's people in the church.

Isaac and Rebekah receive the baton and carry it forward before ultimately passing it on to Jacob and his offspring. God's Word shows that the covenant is passed from one generation to the next. The coming generations are always in view of the covenant promises and purposes of God.

Take a moment to consider the story of your own family. Some of you may be first generation Christians. Or you may be the first generation of parents trying to run your household as a covenant home. Others of you may be enjoying the fruit of generations who have gone before you. Of parents and grandparents who were faithful to their covenantal obligations. Or maybe your experiencing the fruit of parents and grandparents who were in the church *but did not take their covenantal obligations seriously.*

Wherever you are at you have a role to play. Perhaps like Abraham you a building altars in faith. Looking to a future where your children's children will be establishing homes on the foundation you are laying. Or perhaps you are like the generation taking the Promised Land. Entering in to the blessings that stretch back generations to those who were faithful before you.

Your role is to carry that baton forward. Parents, pick up the baton that you received from your parents before you. Perhaps they did poorly, perhaps they did very well. Give thanks for what you've received and forgive what your parents lacked and look forward. Look to the next generation and consider how you can carry the baton forward. Children, consider what your parents are trying to do. They are trying to give to you what they received from their parents *and*

what they did **not** receive. You are called to receive the covenant and carry it forward as well.

Considered the covenant blessings you have received in Christ. Ask God to help you receive all these blessings on and pass them on to those who come after you. For the promises of God are for us and to our children. To a thousand generations.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen!**