

“Isaac and Rebekah”
Genesis 23:1-24:67
For the week of March 28, 2021

Sarah's Death and Burial

Read Genesis 23:1-20. After reading this story of the death and burial of Abraham's wife Sarah let's jump in! What problem is presented (Genesis 23:1-4) and what puts Abraham at a disadvantage in this passage?

Why is it important for Abraham to have a burial plot for Sarah and why does he reject the deal to have the cave given to him?

In Abraham's culture, people thought it important to be buried with their ancestors. Yet Abraham wanted to be buried with Sarah (read Genesis 25:7-10) in Canaan rather than his birthplace. Why? What is the “long-term” impact from this decision?

Abraham's life of being a stranger in the promised land points ahead to followers of Jesus Christ being strangers on this earth (read Hebrews 11:13-16; 1 Peter 2:9-12). Do you consider yourself a stranger on this earth? How so? How should you live your life knowing this fact?

Isaac and Rebekah

As chapter 24 begins, Abraham was 140 years old and would live another 35 years. Before he dies his focus was on finding a wife for his son Isaac. Only then could God fulfill His covenant promises to bless Abraham with many descendants and give them Canaan for their inheritance. This is the only chapter in the Bible that deals directly with finding one's lifelong companion.

A Faithful Servant

Read Genesis 24:1-11. Why would Abraham not want his son Isaac to marry a Canaanite (read Genesis 9:26)? How would you apply this principle today in determining whom to marry?

“Under my thigh”

This odd oath is different than raising your hand or placing your hand over your heart or on a Bible. The thigh (or loins) was considered the source of posterity in the ancient world. The Hebrew custom was to swear on circumcision, the mark of God's covenant. Jewish tradition also interpreted this oath as a sign of submission to authority. For example, Joseph showed his obedience to his father Jacob by placing his hand under Jacob's thigh (Genesis 47:29). In the New Testament, believers are not to make oaths, but rather to let their “yes” mean “yes” and “no” mean “no” (James 5:12).

The Servant Meets Rebekah

Read Genesis 24:12-28. How does the servant show faith in the Lord? What do you notice about his prayer (see verses 12-14)?

How did Rebekah's actions answer the servant's prayer request? Give an example where you gave a specific request in prayer. How was it answered?

Introducing Rebekah's Brother Laban

Read Genesis 24:29-33. When considering someone as a potential spouse, the family is important. Here are six things to observe about a person's immediate family:

1. Look for respect for parents and harmony with the siblings.
2. Watch for open communication, especially around the table.
3. Look for fun and freedom within family gatherings.
4. See how much hospitality they show.
5. Look for sensitivity to one another's needs.
6. Determine if they have a mutual interest in spiritual things.

Are there other things you would add to this list? What are they? Discuss in your community group.

Now describe Laban and his interaction with Abraham's servant.

The Story Retold

Read Genesis 24:34-49. Let's look at how the servant in our story illustrates the work of the Holy Spirit in the world today as He uses us to witness about Jesus Christ (read Acts 1:8). Notice, he did not speak about himself but about his master and his riches (read John 15:26; 16:13-14). He gave tokens of his master's wealth just as the Spirit gives us the "first fruits" and "down payment" of our spiritual riches in Christ (read Ephesians 1:13-14).

What are examples of the work of the Holy Spirit in your life?

A Short Delay

Read Genesis 24:50-61. Why would Laban and her mother want to wait 10 days (verse 55) before sending Rebekah?

What motivated Rebekah to make the right decision (verses 56-57)? Remember, she is going far away to marry a man she has never seen! Or let's ask it this way: Was there any conflict between divine sovereignty (God's plan) and human responsibility (man's choice)? Why or why not?

Camels traveled about 25 miles a day while the average person walked about 20 miles per day. A group of 10 camels with attendants and guards could easily make the trip from Hebron to Mesopotamia and back (about 900 miles) in less than two months.

Isaac Meets Rebekah

Read Genesis 24:62-67. What positive traits are mentioned about Isaac? Why are these traits important for a strong daily walk with the Lord?

Our story ends wonderfully in verse 67. How was this marriage a fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham?