

CGYG & LIFE Bible Study – Genesis 24:1 – 25:18

Read Genesis 24:1-9

-What are some ways that God had blessed Abraham? (v.1, see also vv. 35-36; 12:1-3)

- God had blessed Abraham 'in every way'/in all things'
- God had promised to bless him and to make him a blessing when He called Abraham (12:1-3)
- his name was made great (12:2) – given a new name, Abraham (father of many)
- blessed with great wealth (sheep, cattle, silver, gold, servants, etc.)
- blessed with an heir, Isaac, born to Sarah in their old age, with a promise of many descendants
- blessed with the land of Canaan – his by God's promise, though he had not yet taken possession of it
- blessed through the Lord's protection over him and his household (Egypt; rescuing Lot; Abimelech)
- blessed with God's covenant with him (Gen 15), and with a personal relationship with God – God confided in him

-Why would Abraham not have wanted Isaac to marry a Canaanite wife? (you might also consider Gen. 15:12-16; also, Exodus 34:15-16, Deut. 7:3-6)

- the Canaanites were marked for God's judgment because of their sin (15:16); union with them through marriage would run the risk of exposing Isaac & his descendants to that same judgment
- this thought developed in Exodus 34 & Deut 7 – marriage to daughters of foreign gods would lead God's people away from Him and into idolatry → would bring them under God's judgment
- rather, God's people were to be holy, because He had chosen them out of all peoples on the face of the earth to be His people

-Why wouldn't Abraham allow Isaac to return to his native country (v.6-7, cf. Gen. 13:14-15; 17:8)?

- God had commanded Abraham to leave his country and given the land of Canaan to him and his descendants; thus, didn't want Isaac to return to the country he'd left, but rather to stay with his inheritance
- same reason he chose to bury Sarah in Canaan, rather than sending her to be buried with his fathers

-How could Abraham be so confident of his servant's success in finding a wife for Isaac? (cf. Gen. 17:19; 21:12)

- because he trusted in God's promise that it was through Isaac that his offspring would be reckoned; thus Isaac must have a wife
- knew God's impending judgment on the Canaanites, so knew that Isaac was not to marry a Canaanite woman
- had known God's blessing, provision and leading in his life – v.1 – the Lord had blessed him in every way
- trusted that the Lord would send His angel to prepare the way and ensure success
- not presuming that the Lord would continue doing so – he still did his part to be obedient, by sending his servant to find a wife – but trusting the faithfulness of God

Read Genesis 24:10-67

-What sign did Abraham's servant ask God to give (v.12-14), and why do you think he asked for this? How did God answer his prayer?

- asked the Lord to bring a girl who would not only offer him a drink, but all his camels as well
- wanted to know the Lord's will i.e. the one whom He had chosen to be Isaac's wife
- asked for something that would seem improbable to happen
- 1 camel can drink up to 20 gallons (approx 80 L) in one sitting → 10 camels = 200 gallons (800 L)!! [that's a lot of water to haul by yourself!]
- looking for qualities of a good wife for Isaac (see below, about Rebekah)

-What kind of woman was Rebekah, as portrayed in this passage?

- had outward (v.16) and inward beauty
- pure – a virgin
- kind & hospitable; servant heart, willing to go the extra mile & do more than asked
- diligent, hard-working; a woman of integrity – not just saying she would do it, but did it quickly, and carried through with it to the end
- submissive to the Lord
- Laban & Bethuel recognized this as being from the Lord (v.50-51)
- she agreed to go with the servant, leaving family & home immediately, though not knowing the place she was going, and never having even met Isaac

-Most commentators think the servant mentioned here was probably Eliezer of Damascus (Gen. 15:2). What can we, as servants of Christ, learn about servanthood from his example?

- carried out his master's commands with all diligence and integrity
- selflessness - his desires and life were centered not on his own wishes, but completely on those of his master
- after a long, hard journey, he didn't even want to eat until after his business was done (v.33,54)
- refused to linger around after the Lord had granted him success, but wanted to return immediately to his master
- did this all even though he would have stood to inherit all that belonged to Abraham, had it not been for Isaac
- exercised wisdom and discernment in conducting his master's business; asked Abraham about all the possibilities and what she should do in each event
- trusted in God to lead his steps and grant him success –not for his own benefit, but asked God to show kindness to his master

-Why do you think the events of this chapter are recounted twice?
-to emphasize the Lord's hand in guiding/providing

-What can we learn about sharing our testimonies from the servant's example?

- should be focused on what the Lord has done, not just a recounting of events
- his testimony structured such that God was front and centre
 - resulted in Laban & Bethuel recognizing that this was from God
- his interpretation of events was in accordance with God had already revealed – e.g. God's promise that Abraham's offspring would be reckoned through Isaac; Abraham's knowledge Isaac should not marry a Canaanite and that God would prepare the way through His angel
- God's revelation through His work should be the measuring rod for our experience, not vice versa

Read Genesis 25:1-18

-How do these verses show God beginning to fulfill His promises to Abraham? (cf. Gen 16:11-12; 17:3-7, 17-21)

- beginning to make him a father of many nations, through his various sons (v.1-4; 13-16)
- but God's covenant with Abraham established through Isaac, who inherited God's blessing after Abraham's death (v.11)
- Ishmael – 12 princes promised to Abraham in 17:17-21 now brought to fulfillment
 - also, Ishmael's descendants living in hostility towards brothers – fulfillment of 16:12

-How does the Bible evaluate Abraham's life? (Hebrews 11:8-19; Romans 4:1-12; James 2:20-23) What lessons can we learn from his life to apply to ours today?

- commends him as a man of faith, as one who was looking for the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God
 - admitted that he was an alien and stranger on earth; looking for a better, heavenly country, therefore willing to dwell in tents like a stranger in a foreign country
 - therefore, God is not ashamed to be called his God (Heb 11:16) – has prepared a city for him
- counted as righteous through faith – he believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness; became the father of faith to all who believe (Rom 4)
- his faith resulted in obedience → called God's friend (cf. John 15:14)

Aliens and strangers in the world

Abraham is held up in Scripture as the "father of all who believe" (Rom. 4:11) and the outstanding example of the life of faith that God blesses. By faith, we are told in Hebrews 11, Abraham left his native land – even though he didn't know where he was going – and made his home in the promised land. He obeyed God's call on his life, living in tents like a stranger in a foreign land, because he believed God's promises. By faith, Sarah was enabled to bear Isaac in her old age, and by faith, Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice and received him back from death. As he followed God by faith, he experienced the Lord's provision, guidance and protection, and the Lord blessed him "in every way" as he looked forward to the city with foundations, which God had prepared for him.

The blessings Abraham received are not for him alone, but for all who are of that same faith. As Galatians 3:9 says, "those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith." These promised blessings are found only through faith in Jesus Christ, who is the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham. Just as Abraham was blessed in every way, those who believe in Jesus Christ have been blessed "with every spiritual blessing in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). And as we live by faith in Him, we also experience His provision, guidance and protection until that day when we too will arrive at the Heavenly City. Spend some time evaluating your own life in light of the lessons you've learned in our studies on the life of Abraham. Are you living each day by faith in Jesus Christ?