

## Genesis 23-24

(We'll just highlight Ch 23 & then dive right into Ch 24)

### "Will You Go With Him?"

How many of you have stopped to realize that pertaining to this life, we're just passing through? The bible makes clear in no uncertain terms that, "...the wages of sin is death," Rom 6:23 Coupled w/*that* it states that, "...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"<sup>1</sup> Therefore it's not too difficult to deduct that if the wages of sin (or the price to be paid for sin) is death, & all have sinned, than death will come for us all. It's really not a matter of "If" it's only a matter (barring the rapture [which is another study altogether]) of "when".

There are no guarantees of tomorrow; all we have is right now. How much differently might we lead our lives if we *really believed* that our life could end today? That's why Moses cried, "So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom."<sup>2</sup> That we might learn to maintain the *eternal perspective*, for what is your life? It's even a vapor that appears for a little time & then vanishes away...

Ch's 23-24 begin a generational transition in the plan of God to bring salvation to the nations, Sarah (Abraham's wife) will be *buried* & Isaac (his son) will be *married*. So both sides of the emotional spectrum are before us today; *sadness & celebration, mourning & consummation*, as the only begotten son of the father receives his bride unto himself.

### Vs 1-4

Just a few things we want to touch on here real quick. #1 (For what it's worth), Sarah is the only woman in the bible whose age is recorded at her death, which gives us some measure of *how highly* she's regarded in the scripture.

Understand that nowhere in your bible are you told to look to Mary (the mother of Jesus) as an example of a godly woman (though certainly she was). Yet twice we're told (both in Isaiah 51 & 1 Pet 3) to look to Sarah as such an example. She was a woman of faith who *believed* God, received the promise of God & was instrumental in the *plan* of God to bring salvation to the world! Therefore it's shouldn't be a surprise to find the *word* of God honoring her & encouraging us to look to her as a model (not of sinless perfection) of what a godly woman's life looks like.

She lived 127 yrs & died in Hebron (that is the land of Canaan, the Promised Land). ...& Abraham came to mourn for her & to weep for her. Listen, I want you to realize that even the giants of faith mourn over the loss of a loved one.

<sup>1</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (Ro 3:23). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>2</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). (Ps 90:12). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Perhaps you've heard people encourage others not to cry when their loved one dies because they're in a better place... that's horrible advice; death is an enemy that has entered the equation through sin & it brings separation, & heartache, & pain. Abraham (the friend of God) was not afraid to weep & to mourn over the loss of his wife.

Now we don't sorrow as those who have no hope, do we? (Write it down, look it up 1 Thess 4:13-18), sorrow is real, but we are not w/out hope. We know that in Christ, to be absent from the body is to be present w/the Lord (2 Cor 5:8) & the bible teaches that though sin/death bring separation, Christ is all about reconciliation. Reunion is on the way. When Christ returns those of us who are alive & remain will be caught up together w/them (w/who, those who've died b4 us in Christ) in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; & thus we shall always be w/the Lord! Praise God?

Now for the unbeliever it's a different story altogether, the unbeliever is w/out hope being w/out God in the world. The bible likens the death of the unbeliever to that of putting out a light, or trapping an animal, like catching a criminal or uprooting a tree (Job 18), it's dark, it's dismal & disparaging (to be separated forever from God).

That's why it's so critical that we settle the "sin dilemma" now through faith in J.C. who was made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Jesus said, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"*<sup>3</sup> Everlasting life weighs in the balance of how we respond to that question...

Christ has overcome the grave, He's defeated death. Paul the apostle said, *"O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*<sup>4</sup> Don't attach yourself to the things of this world, as a believer you're like Abraham, a visitor, a pilgrim & a sojourner (just passing through), you're *in* this world but not *of* this world.

It's interesting that though God promised him all the land of Canaan the only part he ever owned was a burial plot (& at that he purchased it himself, [you can read the rest of this Ch to see how he secured the tomb]), how then can God fulfill His promise? The bible teaches that Abraham & Sarah died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them & confessed that they were strangers & pilgrims on the earth (Heb 11:13). In other words, if God promised Abraham all the land & he's yet to receive it, what does that require?

<sup>3</sup> The New King James Version, (1982). (Jn 11:25-26) Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>4</sup> The New King James Version, (1982). (1 Co 15:55-57) Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

A resurrection! As a matter of fact when Jesus was speaking to the Sadducees of the reality of the resurrection He used Abraham as His example demonstrating that it was a principle alluded to even in the OT. He said, *But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.*"<sup>5</sup> The promises of God demand a resurrection & Abraham died in faith being assured of the promises afar off. Be assured of the promises of God's word today (if He has said it, He will do it), amen?

Ok... the remainder of this Ch involves the process through which Abraham procures the property & buries Sarah his wife in the cave on the property that he purchased.

## Ch 24

Now Ch 24 is the longest Ch in the book of Genesis, & it's interesting that it's devoted to the story of how a man obtained his wife. There are 31 Vs devoted to the entire Creation account & 67 Vs are given to relate to us how it is that Rebekah became Isaac's wife.

Why is that? Couple of reasons, #1 this Ch emphasizes *separation*. Meaning that Abraham made it very clear whom Isaac *was* allowed to marry & who he *was not* allowed to marry. He was *not* to marry a Canaanite woman, but he *was* to marry from Abraham's country & from Abraham's family. In other words he wasn't to be unequally yoked w/an unbeliever, he was to marry from "w/in the family". **Even so today you & me as believers we are not to intermarry w/the unbeliever, we're to marry w/in the family (that is w/in the body of Christ). So if you're interested in God's will in the discovery of your spouse, Genesis 24 will offer some great guidelines. #1 We've got to desire God's will for our life, #2 we've got to pray & seek His leading, #3 we've got to be willing to obey His direction & #4 we need to be sensitive & alert to what He's doing, how He's moving.**

But beyond history Ch 24 moves into theology. It gives us a picture of the Heavenly Father obtaining a bride for His Son. We've already seen Abraham as a type of the Father & Isaac as a type of Christ who was obedient to the will of the Father, even unto death (in the sacrifice of Himself) & how he was delivered from death on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day.

After the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross we see the birth of the church in Acts Ch 2. Even so we noted the birth of Rebekah after the sacrifice of Isaac back in Gen 22. & Now we see the father sending out his servant to obtain a bride for his son. Even as the Holy Spirit has been sent during this present age to seek a "bride" for the Son of God.

<sup>5</sup> The New King James Version, (1982). (Mt 22:31-32). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

You (as the *body* of Christ) make up what the bible refers to as “the bride” of Christ. & The Holy Spirit is calling people to leave this world behind to trust in J.C. & enter into a relationship, a “marriage bond” w/Him... notice.

### Vs 1-9

So Abraham binds his servant to an oath & sends him out to find a bride for his son. According to Gen 15 this servant's name is Eliezer, which means, “God is help”. He’s the servant, “the helper” in this situation. It’s interesting that he never introduces himself or draws attention to himself at all in this Ch. His commission is to do the will of the father in seeking to draw attention to the son. Of course one of the names that Jesus gives to the Holy Spirit in Jhn 14:16 is “the Helper”, we’re never given a proper name for the Holy Spirit because His commission isn’t to testify of Himself, He’s here to draw attention *to* & testify *of* the Son, to seek to convince you to leave this world behind & come *to* Him even though you’ve never *seen* Him. Jesus said, *“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.”*<sup>6</sup>

So when a man, or a certain group of people’s attention is primarily given over to the Person of the Holy Spirit, you can rest assured that, that is not being led *of* the Holy Spirit. Because the Spirit of God (John 16:14) will not draw attention to Himself, but will glorify Christ! He’s seeking to woo you, to draw you *not* to Himself, He’s seeking a bride for the Son. Even so in this Ch the servant draws no attention to himself, he’s all about the will of the father in drawing attention to the son.

As mentioned a minute ago 3 things were to be adhered to in finding a bride for Isaac. #1 She couldn’t be Canaanite (couldn’t be an unbeliever) #2 she had to come from his family (equally yoked), & #3 at all costs he was *not* to take Isaac back to the place they were called out of.

Eliezer is all, “What if she won’t come back w/me? Should I take him back to the land from which you came?” Abraham says, “Beware that you *do not* take my son back there.” Or to understand that another way, “God is going to make a way, I *believe* He’s going to do it *this way*, but even if He doesn’t you’re not to go *back the way* from which we came.”

Jesus said that like this, *“No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”*<sup>7</sup> When God calls you out of the world & you put your hand to the plow, there’s no going back, there’s no looking back.

<sup>6</sup> The New King James Version, (1982). (Jn 15:26). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>7</sup> The New King James Version, (1982). (Lk 9:62). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

We're to keep our eyes on Christ & press toward the mark of the upward call of God which is in Christ Jesus. Abraham says, "She may not come *w/you*, but you're definitely not to take him back *to her*."

See, he wasn't to force the situation. He would seek to persuade her, to woo her, & convince her of how great it would be to go w/him, but he wasn't to force her. Just like the Holy Spirit will seek to persuade you, to woo you & convince you of how great it will be (ultimately) if you would just give your heart to the Son (J.C.) but He won't force you to make that decision, if you don't want to that's up to you.

But notice how Abraham encourages his servant. He says, "Listen, God has made me a promise, & He has been faithful to me for the past 65 yrs that I've known Him, He won't forsake me now." He says, "God's angel will go before you & you will take a wife for my son from there." He's moving in faith, trusting in the word of God. He's not being foolish, He's not taking a gamble, it's not a leap in the dark, it's resting upon the promise of the word of God... that's faith.

Now some of you are going through some tough times, perhaps something that seems insurmountable, but be encouraged in the fact that God is faithful, & He hasn't brought you this far to forsake you now. He will *never* leave you, *never* forsake you, but He will fulfill His word *to you*. Now it may not always be through the specific means that *we* thought, but if God makes a promise, He will always bring it to pass. Amen?

#### Vs10-14

You might note that this servant refers to Abraham as "my master" some 19 times in this narrative. Not only is he a great "type" of the Holy Spirit who remains nameless & draws attention to the Son, but he's also a great example to you & me of the type of servants we need to be! Completely devoted to his master "the father & the son" & he lived to *serve* them & be found pleasing *to* them.

This was an arduous task to say the least, it was hundreds of miles he had to travel, he was looking for a needle in a haystack, he was an old man... but he didn't complain, he wasn't bitter about it, he just wanted to serve w/excellence and be found pleasing in his master's sight.

How often we serve, but we grumble, we gripe, we become bitter; it's not pleasing to our Master. The bible tells us to do all things w/out complaining & disputing (Phil 2:14), to serve heartily as unto the Lord & not to men, for we serve the Lord Christ.

Ok, how is he to go about finding “the one”? He began by being obedient to the word, he’s followed Abraham’s direction, he’s rolled up in Abraham’s old stomping ground near to a well & now he doesn’t know what to do next, so what *does* he do? He prays.

He begins to ask God to guide him, to give success to him (even that day) & to show him through providential circumstances who it is he’s to approach. Now I hesitate to say “categorically”, however generally, asking God to meet certain stipulations to show you His will is *not* recommended. Though we certainly see this a few times through out the OT (you should note that we don’t see it at all in the NT after the coming of the Holy Spirit, the NT believer is to be led of the *Spirit* of God, in a manner that will always accord w/the *word* of God).

But 1<sup>st</sup> & foremost he takes the time to pray, & then he watched to see what God would do. We’ll see that he wasn’t impulsive but he waited to see what the Lord was doing. Isaiah 28 (16) tells us that whoever believes will not act hastily. So he watched & he waited. But he prayed very specifically didn’t he? He says, “God would You give me success *today?*”

& Notice the type of woman he’s looking for, he doesn’t ask for a model (though I’m sure nice looking would be an added bonus), but he’s looking for a woman of character. He’s looking for a woman who is *kind*, who will not only give him something to drink but will water all of his camels 10-20 gallons apiece (it’ll take a minute [or 60] ☺). *W/that he’s looking for a woman who’s willing to work hard, a woman who has a servant’s heart, who is pure before the Lord. These are the characteristics you should be looking for in a “would be” spouse, one who is kind, is diligent, who has a servant’s heart & seeks to honor the Lord w/their life. They need to come from the right “family” ....*

### Vs 15

We love this; Jesus said that your Father knows the things you have need of before you even ask Him. Isaiah says, *“It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear.”*<sup>8</sup> Of course it doesn’t always happen like this, but we love it when it does, amen? Now he didn’t know that the prayer was already answered, but he’s about to find out.

### Vs 16-21

Seems kind of weird that he didn’t offer to pitch in & help doesn’t it?

But he wasn't looking for someone who had the words of a *servant*, but one who had the *heart* of a servant, who would do the work w/out grumbling or growing bitter. One has said, "Make every occasion a great occasion, for you can never tell when someone may be taking your measure for a larger place." **This guy was evaluating her to see if she would make a good bride for the father's son. He was observing her, noting her kindness, her humility, how pleasant she was & that she wasn't afraid to work hard if need be...**  
**Vs 22-28**

It was all looking so great, one last thing. "Whose daughter are you?" What a great question. It doesn't matter how hard they work, how kind they are, how humble they may be, if they're not of the right family, if they're an unbeliever they're not for you, you are a child of God & as such you're to marry a fellow believer.

**See this as well, underline it, it's there in Vs 27, "...being on the way, the Lord led me." Listen, it's hard to steer a parked car. If you want God to guide your life, you need to get moving. So many times people want God to guide them but meanwhile they do nothing. This servant was already being obedient to the word he'd been given, & as he was obeying the direction he'd received thus far, God led him to the next step.**

As a believer you know you're to be serving, you know you're to be giving, you're to be sharing the word, you're to put off the old man w/his deeds & put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image Him who created him. Now if we're looking for direction in life, but haven't even obeyed what we *do* know, how is it that we can expect to be led in what we *don't* know? The servant was obedient to direction, he was praying for God's guidance & God led him in the way he should go.

**& Notice he gave Rebekah gifts, what does the Holy Spirit do for the church? He gives us precious gifts (Romans 12, 1 Cor 12 & 14, Eph 4) to aid & beautify the bride of Christ.**  
**Vs 29-40**

& He continues to recite the account down through Vs 48. Couple things here. Notice again that the servant didn't speak of himself, but bore witness to the father & the son. He said, "My master is radically blessed; flocks, herds, silver & gold, male & female servants, livestock, camels & donkeys, & he has a son into whose hands he's given all things & he's looking for a bride for his son."

**It's the wooing of the Holy Spirit Who comes to us & begins to inform us of the riches of the Father, tells us of streets of gold, gates of pearl, foundations & walls of precious gems & many mansions in His house...**

& He has a Son into Who's hands He's given all things & He's looking for a bride for His Son who will share w/Him in the inheritance but it's important that we leave the land from which we come & follow Him.

He's simply sharing the facts & then he's bringing her to a point of decision. We all have a decision to make, this is what God has done, now, "Will you go w/him?"

In Vs 45 he speaks of his prayer & he says that before he'd even finished speaking in his heart God was on the move. It can certainly be helpful to pray out loud but it's by no means necessary, God hears the cry of your heart...

He goes on to share how when he found out that she was of the right family that he knew that God had answered his prayer & had blown his mind 😊.

**Vs 48.**

All I want you to see here is that when God answers your prayer it's an appropriate response to worship Him & to bless Him who has led you in the way of truth....

**Vs 49-60**

You see, it's a personal decision. Will you go w/him? Don't tune out here, this is important. If the world can't persuade you to abide w/them, they will seek to delay your exit. "You wanna follow Jesus, that's great, just don't be too serious, don't get too radical, just hang out w/us for awhile."

Notice he says, "Do not hinder me." You've got to cut the cord, leave it all behind & follow Christ wholeheartedly. One of the most dangerous delusions is that there is plenty of time; today is the day of salvation.

We're blown away & blessed by Rebekah's total willingness to leave all to be w/a bridegroom she'd never seen. "I will go" are words of faith, Peter speaks of Jesus saying, "Whom having not seen, you love." She understood that her loyalty was to be to her new family & she was immediately ready to leave her old life behind.

**Vs 61-67**

It was a long & arduous journey, but the servant led her safely to her new home. Isaac went out to meditate (or pray) of the evening even as Christ is interceding for you & he lifted his eyes & there they were coming to meet him. This is the 1<sup>st</sup> time we've seen Isaac since the sacrifice & here he is, receiving his bride whom he loved.



Listen, the Spirit of God bears witness to the Son of God who loves you, Who's given Himself for you, who has great riches to share with you, but you've got to leave this life behind & come to Him, will you go w/Him?

### Prayer Points:

God Your Word is so good, so rich, so encouraging in so many ways. Jesus how You've conquered death & have given the precious gift of everlasting life to all who believe. Father how You've given the Son that we might know that life & how You've sent Your Spirit to testify of the Son that we might be drawn to Him & adorned by Him until we see Him face to face. Lord though we've never seen You, we love You & we thank You for Your love for us.

If you're here today & you've not surrendered your life to J.C. it's not by accident that you've come here today, God wants you to hear of His great love for you; that He's given His Son for you who has shed His blood & died upon the cross & rose again 3 days later so that through faith in Him you will never perish but have everlasting life. God has given all things into the hands of His Son & you can share in the inheritance, will you go w/Him? Will you turn from your sin & trust in J.C. today, God has a plan for your life, but He won't force you to come, its up to you...