

THE SELECTION OF THE BRIDE

BIBLE TEXT: Genesis 24:1-33.

LESSON 12 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Genesis 24:1-33.

1 And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.

2 And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:

3 And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:

4 But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

5 And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?

6 And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.

7 The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.

8 And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again.

9 And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.

Bible References:

I Abraham's Charge to His Servant

1. Abraham is prospered by God, Genesis 24 1;

Psalm 1:1-3.

1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

2. He is concerned for Isaac's welfare, Genesis 24:2-4.

3. He is confident that God will completely fulfil His promise, Genesis 24:5-7;

Philippians 1:6.

6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

4. Having left the land of sin and idolatry, he realises there is danger in returning, Genesis 24:6, 8;

I Peter 2:20;

20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

1 Peter 3:17.

17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

5. The oath is taken, Genesis 24:9.

II Abraham's Servant Faithful to His Master

1. He is a trusted man, obedient in every detail, Genesis 24:10;

I Samuel 15:22;

22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

Matthew 7:21;

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Revelation 22:14.

14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

2. He is a man of prayer, acknowledging God, expecting God to direct, Genesis 24:11-14;

Proverbs 3-6.

Proverbs 3.

1 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:

2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:

4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

10 And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.

11 And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.

12 And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.

13 Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:

14 And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.

15 And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.

16 And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.

17 And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.

18 And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.

19 And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw

8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.

9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

11 My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:

12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

14 For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

15 She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

16 Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.

17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

18 She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.

19 The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.

20 By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.

21 My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion:

22 So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck.

23 Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.

24 When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.

25 Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh.

26 For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.

27 Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.

28 Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.

29 Devise not evil against thy neighbour, seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.

30 Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm.

31 Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.

32 For the froward is abomination to the LORD: but his secret is with the righteous.

33 The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.

34 Surely he scorneth the scornors: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

35 The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.

Proverbs 4.

1 Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.

2 For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.

3 For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother.

4 He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live.

5 Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

6 Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee.

7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

8 Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.

water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.

20 And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.

21 And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.

22 And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold;

23 And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?

24 And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor.

25 She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.

26 And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD.

27 And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren.

28 And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother's house these things.

29 And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well.

30 And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the

9 She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

10 Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.

11 I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths.

12 When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.

13 Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life.

14 Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

16 For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.

17 For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.

18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

19 The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

20 My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.

21 Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.

22 For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

24 Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.

25 Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.

26 Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

27 Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

Proverbs 5.

1 My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding:

2 That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge.

3 For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil:

4 But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword.

5 Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.

6 Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them.

7 Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth.

8 Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house:

9 Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel:

10 Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours be in the house of a stranger;

11 And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed,

12 And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof;

13 And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!

14 I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly.

15 Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.

16 Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets.

17 Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee.

camels at the well.

31 And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels.

32 And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him.

33 And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on.

18 Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth.

19 Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.

20 And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?

21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.

22 His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins.

23 He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

Proverbs 6.

1 My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger,

2 Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.

3 Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend.

4 Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids.

5 Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.

6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:

7 Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler,

8 Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.

9 How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?

10 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

11 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

12 A naughty person, a wicked man, walketh with a froward mouth.

13 He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers;

14 Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth mischief continually; he soweth discord.

15 Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy.

16 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:

17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,

19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

20 My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

21 Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.

22 When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.

23 For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life:

24 To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman.

25 Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids.

26 For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life.

27 Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?

28 Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?

29 So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent.
 30 Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry;
 31 But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house.
 32 But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.
 33 A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.
 34 For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.
 35 He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.

3. His dependence upon God is rewarded, Genesis 24:15-21;
Psalm 73:24.

24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

III His Reception at the Home of Abraham's Relatives

1. Jewels are presented to Rebekah, Genesis 24:22;

Revelation 21:2, 9, 10.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

2. Abraham's servant learns Rebekah's identity. She discovers his identity through his worship and praise, Genesis 24:23-28.
3. A hearty welcome is given the servant of Abraham, Genesis 24: 29-32.
4. The business of his master is given pre-eminence over everything else, Genesis 24:33;

John 17:13,14.

13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Notes:

Isaac, the Son of Abraham

"In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Genesis 21:12). Isaac was a son of promise, given to Abraham by faith after 25 years of waiting. Isaac was conceived through faith by the power of God. He was heir to the promise that the world should be blessed through him. He was offered as a sacrifice unto God, and, in a figure, was raised from the dead. He was the beloved son of his father, and heir to all he possessed. Where could Abraham find a wife for his son Isaac?

Jesus, the Son of God

However great the honour might be to be the bride of one so miraculously born into this world, greater far is the privilege of being joined with the promised Seed, who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and "who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:15-17). Where can a Bride be found for the royal Son of God who tasted death for all men, and came

forth the Conqueror of death, and the power of the grave?

Eliezer, the Servant of Abraham

Before the birth of Isaac, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant born in Abraham's house, was his heir. A trusted servant he was, for he ruled over all that Abraham possessed. Now, to some people this man might seem to be but a slave, but let us consider that at one time Abraham armed his trained servants, numbering 318, and subdued four kings. Thus Eliezer must have been a mighty leader and warrior as well as a steward. It was to this eldest servant that Abraham called when he wanted a bride selected for Isaac. "Thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: but thou shalt go unto my country and to my kindred."

The Holy Ghost

After Christ was received into the heavens above, the Holy Ghost descended upon the 120 in the upper room. These were the disciples of Christ, and they were sanctified in heart, for they were all of one accord. The Holy Ghost was not sent unto the world, but unto the kindred of Christ -- those who were born of God and sanctified wholly. Jesus said: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:16, 17). It is true that the Spirit of God is in the world, convicting men of sin; but He dwells with believers, and in those who have received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. To those whose temple He fills, He is a Comforter, Teacher, and Guide. He is not taking a Bride from the worldly-minded throng, but from the Church, the ecclesia, or "called-out" ones.

Voluntary Obedience

"And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest? And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again." Christ is not coming again in person to this earth to prepare the Bride for Himself. God sent the Holy Spirit for that office work. He speaks to hearts not yielded to Him, bringing the words of Christ to their attention. When Christ comes to meet His Bride, it will not be to walk the earth as once He did, but the Bride will rise to meet Him in the air. Only those who are willing to walk softly, and follow voice of the Spirit will be ready in that day. "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30).

"And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath." The Spirit of God calls to a life of self-denial, daily consecration, and holiness, but the Bride must be willing. "My spirit shall not always strive . . ." (Genesis 6:3). One has but to say, "Go thy way," and He will be clear from His oath. But what is this that you so lightly reject? Have you counted the cost?

Abraham's Kindred

With the solemnity of his oath upon his mind, and knowing that he must induce a bride to journey a long distance from Mesopotamia back to Canaan, the servant loaded ten camels with choice gifts from his master's store. His master was rich, and well loved, and the bride for his son should not be just any maiden, but the fairest and best he could obtain. The servant's heart communed with God and proposed that God guide him in the selection of a bride from Abraham's kindred, on the basis of willing service. He took the steps that were clear, and did that which he could, then left the rest to God. Before his prayer was ended the answer came, and a damsel appeared at the well. She was a virgin, fair to look upon and willing to serve -- but he asked, "Whose daughter art thou?"

The New Birth

One may be willing to the extent of giving his body to be burned, and still not be of the kindred of Christ. Works alone cannot suffice; only by the new birth can one belong to Christ. A ruler you may be; but to enter His Kingdom, "ye must be born again." Many will say in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not . . . in thy name done many wonderful works?" only to hear, "I never knew you: depart from me" (Matthew 7:22, 33). Whose son or daughter art thou? To whom do you belong?

Room

The next thing the servant would know, "Is there room . . .?" Would we invite another guest when our house is already filled? Solomon said: "Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!" (II Chronicles 6:18). Thus it is with this temple made of clay -- at best it is far too small. The holy Spirit is willing to come into a very humble abode, but it must be clean and empty. Jesus died that He might sanctify and cleanse His Church. The least we can do is to get our self-life out of the way, that the Holy Ghost might have room in which to dwell. Let us empty ourselves of our own ambitions that He may be the Guide. Let us humble ourselves that He may be the Teacher. Let us forget ourselves that He may take the things of Christ and show them unto us.

The earnestness of Abraham's servant to fulfil his mission would not permit him to eat until he had told his errand. Do you today realise the earnestness of the Spirit's call, and the necessity for the Bride to make herself ready?

QUESTIONS

1. What form of worship was customary in the land where Abraham lived?
2. Why did Abraham not want Isaac to go to Haran to secure a wife?
3. What was Abraham's servant's attitude toward God?
4. Why do we say this servant is a type of the Holy Spirit?
5. How did Rebekah find out whose servant he was?
6. What authority did Abraham give the servant? and to what extent was he limited as to Abraham's possessions?
7. Who was Laban?
8. Did Abraham's servant go alone on his errand?
9. What provisions did the family of Rebekah make for their comfort?
10. What are some similarities between Isaac and Christ?