



The Book of Genesis

Lesson Number 35



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED =Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV =English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT =Goodspeed (1923), GWN =God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862)

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, LEH = LEH Lexicon, GINGRICH = Gingrich Lexicon

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

A WIFE FOR ISAAC, #1

Gen 24¹¹ "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. 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 show 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 showed 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 hastened, 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 water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. ²⁰ And she hastened, 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." (Genesis 24:1-21)

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT | a firm persuasion of the truth of God's | based upon his assurance that his
Being stricken with age, and with | promise, Abraham makes a decision | offspring would possess the land of

With the promises of God as his reference point, Abraham takes measures to find a wife for Isaac – a particular kind of wife – Given O. Blakely

CONTENTS

- ▶ INTRODUCTION
- ▶ THE LORD BLESSED ABRAHAM IN ALL THINGS (24:1)
- ▶ THOU SHALT NOT TAKE A WIFE OF THE CANAANITES (24:2-3)
- ▶ G INTO MY COUNTRY, AND TO MY KINDRED (23:4)
- ▶ SHOULD I BRING YOUR SON TO THAT COUNTRY? (24:5-6)
- ▶ ABRAHAM APPEALS TO THE PROMISE OF GOD (24:7)
- ▶ IF THE WOMAN IS NOT WILLING TO FOLLOW (24:8-9)
- ▶ THE SERVANT DEPARTS WITH ALL THE GOODS OF HIS MASTER (24:10-11)
- ▶ THE SERVANT PRAYS TO GOD (24:12-14)
- ▶ BEFORE HE FINISHED SPEAKING, REBEKAH CAME OUT (24:15-16)
- ▶ THE SERVANT RAN TO MEET HER (24:17-20).
- ▶ AND THE SERVANT WONDERED (24:21)
- ▶ CONCLUSION

Canaan. **He knows there cannot be a mingling of his seed with that of the nations who were to be supplanted.** He therefore sends his oldest servant on a mission to find a wife for Isaac. He demands that he search for this wife among his kindred who had remained behind. He sends an extensive dowry to help persuade the woman, promising the servant that the angel of the Lord will direct him in the way. The servant then went to the city of Nahor, which was in Mesopotamia. After he arrived, he asked for Divine direction to insure he chose the right woman. He positioned himself by a well. He asked for a sign – an unusual sign. Then, in reliance upon the Lord he waited. Almost immediately, a woman appeared to draw water from the well. She was very beautiful, and was a virgin. The servant made his approach to her, making allowance for the sign which he had asked to be fulfilled.

As a man of faith does, Abraham always reasoned according to the revelation he received. The more revelation he was given, the more precise his reasoning became. Any limitations he had were not found in what he had received from God, or doubting what the Lord had told him.

It is good to once again review what the Lord had actually said to Abraham from the time of his calling, until this present time (Genesis 24).

GENESIS 12:1-3, AGE 70-75

- 1 The Lord would make of him a great nation.
- 2 The Lord would bless him.
- 3 The Lord would make his name great.
- 4 Abraham would be a blessing.
- 5 God would bless them that blessed Abraham.
- 6 God would curse those who cursed Abraham.
- 7 In Abraham all families of the earth would be blessed.

GENESIS 12:7, AGE 75

- 8 The land would be given to Abraham's seed.

GENESIS 13:14-17, AGE ?

- 9 God would give all the land he saw to him and his seed.
- 10 God would make his seed as the dust of the earth.

GENESIS 15:1-21, AGE ?

- 12 God was his Shield.
- 13 Go was his Exceeding Great Reward.
- 14 He servant Eliezer would not be his heir.
- 15 His heir would come from his own bowels.
- 16 His seed would be as the stars of heaven.
- 17 The Lord brought him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees.
- 18 Abraham was to know of a surety that his seed would be strangers in a land that was not theirs, and would be afflicted for four hundred years.
- 19 God would judge the nation that afflicted Abraham's seed.
- 20 Abraham would be buried in a good old age.
- 21 In the fourth generation, his seed would come again to Canaan, for the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full.
- 22 God would give Abraham the land from the River of Egypt to the River Euphrates.
- 23 The displaced nations would be "*The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and*

He knows there cannot be a mingling of his seed with that of the nations who were to be supplanted. He therefore sends his oldest servant on a mission to find a wife for Isaac.

- 11 He was to walk through the land, knowing the Lord would give it to him.

the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

GENESIS 17:1-22, AGE 99

- 24 God was “*God Almighty*.”
- 25 He would make His covenant with Abraham.
- 26 He would multiply Abraham exceedingly.
- 27 His covenant would be with Abraham, and he would be the father of many nations.
- 28 His name was changed to Abraham.
- 29 God had made him the father of many nations.
- 30 God would make him exceedingly fruitful.
- 31 He would make nations of Abraham.
- 32 Kings would come out of him.
- 33 He would establish His covenant with Abraham and His seed after them, to be their God.
- 34 He gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision, as a token of the covenant.
- 35 Sarai’s name was changed to Sarah.
- 36 He would bless Sarah.
- 37 He would give Sarah a son.
- 38 Sarah would be a mother of nations.
- 39 Kings would come from Sarah.
- 40 Sarah’s son was to be named Isaac.
- 41 God would establish his covenant with Isaac, and his seed after him.
- 42 God had blessed Ishmael.
- 43 God would make Ishmael fruitful, and multiply him exceedingly.
- 44 Twelve princes would be begotten by Ishmael.
- 45 He would make Ishmael a great nation.

46 His covenant would be established with Isaac.

GENESIS 18:1-33 , AGE 99

- 47 God would return, and Sarah would have a son.
- 48 God would not destroy the righteous with the wicked.

GENESIS 21:12-13, AGE 102

- 49 Abraham was to cast Hagar and her son Ishmael out of the house.
- 50 In Isaac Abraham’s seed would be called.
- 51 God would make a great nation of Ishmael, because he was Abraham’s seed.

GENESIS 22:1-18, AGE 130-137 (?)

- 52 God tries Abraham, commanding him to offer Isaac as a burnt offering to Him.
- 53 In blessing He would bless Abraham.
- 54 He would multiply Abraham’s seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand upon the seashore.

- 55 Abraham’s seed would possess the gate of their enemies.
- 56 In his Seed, all nations of the earth would be blessed.

THE NATURE OF THESE PROMISES

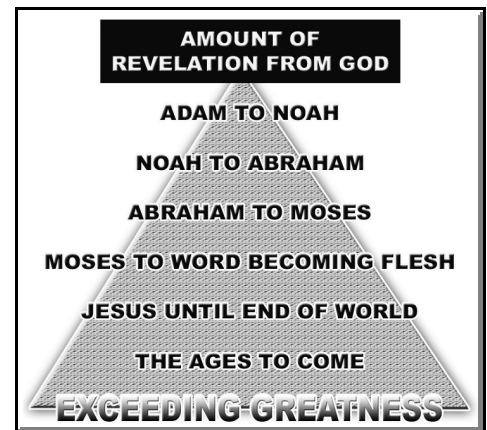
Aside from allusions to the coming Messiah (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18), **all of the promises given to Abraham pertained to things taking place in this world.** He received no promises pertaining to the world to come, eternal life, heaven, an eternal inheritance, the remission of sins, or reconciliation to God. With the exception of the references to a superior “*Seed*” (which were few), all of the promises vouchsafed to Abraham had to do with the nation of Israel and the land they were to possess.

WHY WAS THIS SO?

We know from the Lord’s approval and acceptance of Abraham that the

lack of revelation about salvation was not owing to any moral or spiritual defect in Abraham himself. Yet, a condition existed that prohibited the divulgence of God’s “*eternal purpose*.”

Sin had not yet been “*put away*” (Heb 9:26), and therefore the “*new and living way*” had not yet been opened (Heb 10:20). **That “*new and living way*” was not only the means of men traveling to glory, it was also the means through which revelation came to men concerning God’s eternal purpose and the world to come.** Sin not only kept men from coming to God, it also kept God from revealing His secret to men.



The amount of revelation revealed by God from Adam until Jesus came into the world – as period of 4,000 years – was proportionately very small. Adam and Eve, for example, only overheard one thing pertaining to God’s “*eternal purpose*” – that the Seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent, and the serpent would bruise His heel (Gen 3:15). There is no record they were ever told what that meant. It was revealed to Enoch that the Lord would judge the world. However, from his perspective this may very well have applied only to the flood. **There is no record that Noah was ever told anything pertaining to God’s eternal purpose, the removal of sin, reconciliation to God, or an eternal inheritance.** At the time of Moses some few things were revealed about what was to come – namely, that God would send a Prophet to whom the people would hearken (Deut 18:15,18). At this point it had been approximately 2,500 years since the mankind had

been created. The time from Moses to Jesus – about 1,500 years – yielded considerable revelation about the coming Messiah and what He would do. For the first time, the appointed passing away of the heavens and the earth were made known (Psa 102:25-27; Isa 24:19-20; 51:6). The relationship of the coming “Seed” to the removal of sin was revealed in measure (Isa 53; Dan 9:24,26; John 1:29). It was made known through the prophets that God was going to change the nature of those upon whom His favor rested (Ezek 11:19; 36:26). **However, all of this was shrouded with an element of mystery.** Yet, it produced a longing in the hearts of those with faith.

- ➔ What God had **prepared** for those who love Him was revealed (1 Cor 2:9-10).
- ➔ An “*eternal inheritance*” was made known (Heb 9:15).
- ➔ Now there was teaching about reigning with Christ (2 Tim 2:12), being heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ (Rom 8:17), and being “ever with the Lord” (1 Thess 4:17).
- ➔ The fact that the saints will, judge the world and angels was made known (2 Cor 6:2-3).

to the will of God” (Rom 8:26-27).

These and other such benefits may be familiar to you, **but they were not known by those of prior ages – particular by the father of the faithful, Abraham himself.** That is why no man should dare to stand in criticism of Abraham as though these things were familiar to them.

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Those in spiritually primitive times were responsible for believing God, and doing what He said. That is why Adam and Eve were thrust from the Garden, and Cain was cursed. The whole world, refusing to retain God in their knowledge (Rom 1:29), was destroyed with a flood. It is why the builders in Shinar were scattered, and Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. It is why Pharaoh’s house was plagued by God (Gen 12:17), and Abimelech’s entire household had the capacity to have children removed (Gen 20:18). These are all matters of revelation.

In spite of the charges of foolish men, there is not a syllable in Scripture that declares Abraham was unbelieving, presumptuous, or disobedient – not a single word!

However, with the commencement of Jesus’ ministry, when He “went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil” (Acts 10:38), **truth came in staggering new measures.** People were taught about God Himself, His will, the devil, his appointment to destruction, and the potency of faith. Still, however, very few had any cogent idea of what He was talking about.

But, when Jesus was “made to be sin for us” (2 Cor 5:21), sin was “condemned in the flesh” (Rom 8:3), God was satisfied (Isa 53:11), the devil was “destroyed” (Heb 2:14), principalities and powers were plundered (Col 2:15), the world was reconciled (2 Cor 5:18-20), a “new and living way” was opened (Heb 10:20), and the Holy Spirit was poured out “upon all flesh” as promised (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17-18). **Truth was then made known in hitherto unknown measures.**

- ➔ The formerly mysterious purpose of God was delineated (Eph 1:10-11; 3:11; 2 Tim 1:9; 1 John 3:8).

- ➔ Now unprecedented resources were announced—i.e. “*all spiritual blessings in heavenly place*” (Eph 1:3), and “*all things that pertain to life and godliness*” (2 Pet 1:3).
- ➔ Now there were expressions like, “*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*” (Phil 4:13), and “*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure*” (Phil 2:13).
- ➔ Now believers were told of One who “*is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them*” (Heb 7:25).
- ➔ They were also told they had One within them who also “*helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according*”

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A CONCLUDING THOUGHT

With these facts before us, and with the consideration of the abundance of revelation that has been given since Jesus returned to heaven, how will God regard unbelief and disobedience in the what is called “the church?” **If men could live in a God-pleasing manner with such a small amount of revelation, how is it that men are not able to do so with an abundance of it?** It seems to me that some of the professed experts in human behavior need to step forward and give some kind of well thought-out answer to that question! The kind of church that exists in the Western World is simply not the kind of church Jesus is building!

That leads to the question, “What is the origin of the modern church?” If it cannot be traced back to the Lord, it ought to be obvious that this is nothing less than the working of the wicked one.

THE LORD BLESSED ABRAHAM IN ALL THINGS

Gen 24 ***"And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things."***

The continued focus of Abraham upon the promises of God continues to surface. **Age has not dulled his spiritual perception.** This is because the spirit, the essential part of man, is not impacted by age. Such things as understanding and discernment can actually increase with age, though there are times when, because of the frailty of the body, they may be difficult to express.

It is in this manner – by the aptitude of the unseen part of man – that the insightful person is sustained.

OLD AND WELL STRICKEN IN AGE

"And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age . . ." Other versions read "well advanced in age,"^{NKJV} "well advanced in years,"^{NIV} "old and far on in years,"^{BBE} "had now reached a ripe old age,"^{NAB} and "was a very old man."^{LIVING}

At this time Abraham was 137-140 years old. Sarah has recently died at the age of one hundred and twenty-seven, and Abraham, being ten years older, was then one hundred and thirty-seven years of age. A short time later, when Isaac is married, he will be forty years old – and he was born when Abraham was new hundred years of age. Add to this the fact that Abraham will live at least thirty-eight years longer, dying at the age of one hundred and seventy-five (Gen 25:7). Again, the patriarch will yet marry Keturah, having six sons by her (Gen 25:1-2).

Yet, our text states that Abraham *"was old and well stricken in age."* **This, however, was from the human point of view.** According to Divine purpose and the will and strength of the Lord, he would still be productive. The Psalmist wrote, *"They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing"* (Psa 92:14). Again, the Psalmist prayed, *"Now also when I*

am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have showed Thy strength unto this generation, and Thy power to every one that is to come" (Psa 71:18). Jeremiah also spoke of the godly in this way: *"For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit"* (Jer 17:8).

With the advent of advanced education, professionalism, and career management, religious men have lost a sense of the value of godly age and the wisdom that can come with it. As a consequence one of the largest untapped resources in the Western church is, what is called, its believing senior citizens. When considering this pool of heavenly citizens men think of senior trips of leisure, entertainment, and the likes. There is no question about it, Abraham would have been retired by the religious generation in which we are living – **but that is not what God did.**

I feel compelled to say something

When it comes to the announcement and assessment of the working of the Lord, age is not the point, either in qualification or in assignment. The same is true of gender and social status. This has proved a very difficult thing for some to comprehend.

more on this matter. **Today we are being exposed to an inappropriate emphasis of youth and young age.** Although ignorance and a lack of insight is characteristic of youthfulness, the modern church is shaping its entire program to appeal to the young. In doing so, it is turning its back on the

aged who are keeping the faith.

For example, no one of this generation would have had a hundred year-old man and a ninety year-old woman bring forth Abraham's most significant child (Gen 17:17; 21:5). Who would have had aged Eli raise Samuel from his youth – the last and most productive Judge of Israel (1 Sam 2:18-21). No one from the American church would have had Zecharias and Elizabeth bring John the Baptist into the world, and raise him in a manner that would yield the most significant personality in centuries (Lk 1:5-25). No church board, Bible College, or Seminary would have had aged Simeon dedicate the Christ child, and elderly Anna announce His coming to all who were looking for redemption in Jerusalem (Lk 2:25-38).

All of this means that, for the most part, the nominal church simply does not think like God. I can hardly think of anything that is a greater disadvantage.

When God Is In the Equation

When God is in the equation, age is not a significant factor – either old or

and certain disciples from Caesarea lodged (Acts 21:6). Paul entrusted much to Timothy when he was a “youth” (1 Tim 4:12).

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THE LORD BLESSED ABRAHAM

“. . . and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.” Other versions read, “blessed Abraham in every way,”^{NASB} “given him everything in full measure,”^{BEBE} “made him rich, and he was successful in everything he did.”^{CEV}

As is indicated in the box below (labeled “The Word ‘Bless’”), defining what it means to be blessed by God is not as straightforward as it may seem.

THE WORD “BLESS”

“WHEN GOD IS SAID TO BLESS HIS PEOPLE. WITHOUT DOUBT THE INFERIOR IS BLESSED BY THE SUPERIOR. WHEN GOD BLESSES, HE BESTOWS THAT VIRTUE, THAT EFFICACY, WHICH RENDERS HIS BLESSING EFFECTUAL, AND WHICH HIS BLESSING EXPRESSES. HIS BLESSINGS ARE EITHER TEMPORAL OR SPIRITUAL, BODILY OR MENTAL; BUT IN EVERY THING THEY ARE PRODUCTIVE OF THAT WHICH THEY IMPORT. GOD’S BLESSINGS EXTEND INTO THE FUTURE LIFE, AS HIS PEOPLE ARE MADE PARTAKERS OF THAT BLESSEDNESS WHICH, IN INFINITE FULLNESS, DWELLS IN HIMSELF (GENESIS 1:22; 24:35; JOB 42:12; PSALM 45:2; 104:24, 28; LUKE 1:9-13; JAMES 1:17).”^{MCLINTOK & STRONG’S}

“(1.) GOD BLESSES HIS PEOPLE WHEN HE BESTOWS ON THEM SOME GIFT TEMPORAL OR SPIRITUAL (GENESIS 1:22; 24:35; JOB 42:12; PSALM 45:2; 104:24, 35).”^{EASTON BIBLE DICTIONARY}

“FAVORS OR BENEFITS SPECIALLY GIVEN BY GOD.”^{SMITH’S BIBLE DICTIONARY}

“. . . AND THE LORD HAD BLESSED ABRAHAM IN ALL THINGS; WITH ALL KIND OF BLESSINGS, WITH TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS; THE FORMER SEEMS CHIEFLY DESIGNED HERE, BECAUSE OF WHAT FOLLOWS; GOD HAD BLESSED HIM, AS ABEN EZRA OBSERVES, WITH LONG LIFE, AND RICHES, AND HONOR, AND CHILDREN, THINGS DESIRABLE BY MEN.”^{JOHN GILL}

It appears that what is intended here is drawing attention to the special favor that God had extended to Abraham, distinguishing him from other

people. The point is not the details of the blessing, but the fact and scope of it. **There was no part of Abraham’s life that was not touched by the blessing of the Lord.** Of course, the fact that he was chosen and called by God confirmed Divine favor was upon him, for he had no natural qualities that qualified him for such distinction.

There is no record of Abraham’s life prior to his call, except that he was Terah’s son, and married Sarai.

In several of His appearances to Abraham, God declared He would “bless” him (Gen 12:2,3; 17:16; 22:17). He promised he would “become a great and mighty nation” (Gen 12:2; 18:18), and that He would make his name “great” (Gen 12:2). He said He would “multiply” Abraham “exceedingly” (Gen 17:2), and make him “exceedingly fruitful” (Gen 17:6). He would “make nations” of him, and “kings” would come out of him (Gen 17:6).

All of the revealed benefits he realized attended or followed that call.

➔ Commensurate with his calling, Abraham’s future was blessed. “**And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed**” (Gen 12:2-3).

➔ Abraham gained “substance” and “souls” in Haran. “**And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came**” (Gen 12:5).

➔ Pharaoh also gave gifts to Abraham. “**Therefore he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels.**”^{NASB} (Gen 12:16)

➔ When Abraham went up out of Egypt, it is written, “**And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold**” (Gen 13:2).

➔ Melchizedek declared Abram “**blessed . . . of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth**” (Gen 14:19).

➔ Melchizedek affirmed that God has blessed Abram by **delivering his enemies into his hand** (Gen 14:20).

➔ God declared Abraham would “**surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him**” (Gen 18:18).

➔ Abimelech also contributed to Abraham’s wealth. “**And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife**” (Gen 20:14).

Now, when Abraham is “old and well stricken in age,” he is able to say much the same thing Joshua would say when Abraham’s offspring entered the promised land, “**There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass**” (Josh 21:45). Centuries later Solomon would say, “**Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto His people Israel, according to all that He promised: there hath not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised by the hand of Moses His servant**” (1 Kgs 8:56).

This is the nature of God, and particularly of the covenant He has made in Christ Jesus: “**God is faithful**” (1 Cor 1:9; 10:13). The New Covenant is so arranged that if one lived by faith and walks in the Spirit, he will at least be able to say, “**There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken.**” For this reason, no informed person should be lacking in faith, but should rather be strong in it. There is no valid reason for anyone in Christ to be living in spiritual squalor.

THOU SHALT NOT TAKE A WIFE OF THE CANAANITES

“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.”

Abraham is living with a dominating awareness of what the Lord has declared and promised to him. He has not adopted a personal agenda for his life, but has embraced the one assigned to him. Now, he is thinking of the coming generations – generations that would inherit the land of promise, and out of which all nations would be blessed. He is intent upon making proper arrangements for this to happen. He does not simply bank on the Lord doing what He has promised, but shapes his own life around those promises. He has been called into God’s purpose, and he intends to be faithful to that call.

This, of course, is the manner of faith. It compels persons to order their lives in strict compliance with the promises of God. People who live only for self do not have faith – that is precisely why they are self-centered.

HIS ELDEST SERVANT

“And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had . . .”

At least sixty years prior to this, “*Eliezer of Damascus*” was the “*steward*” of Abraham’s house. Most commentators assume he was the “*eldest servant*” that “*ruled over all*” that Abraham had, although the text does not say so. It is certainly not a subject worthy of extensive perusal, for we have only a single mention of Eliezer (Gen 15:2). He had been born in Abraham’s house, but we have no idea when this occurred. It is possible that he is the steward of reference. If that is so, he also lived to be very aged.

The point here is that Abraham chose one who was familiar with the manner of his household, and no doubt with many, if not all, of the promises God had made to Abraham. The assignment that will be made will require someone who is both knowledgeable and faithful.

I WILL MAKE THEE SWEAR

“ . . . Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth . . .”

Years later, when Jacob was dying, he called for his son Joseph, and asked him to do the same thing: “*And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt*” (Gen 47:29).

PUTTING THE HAND UNDER THE THIGH

“The strange practice alluded to here has been found also in the culture of the Babylonians. The “thigh” (yarek, Heb.), or “loins,” was viewed as the seat of the procreative powers. The action enjoined upon the servant was one which affected all of Abraham’s posterity, and hence, the messianic line. The placing of the hand beneath the procreative area of the body was a symbol of the solemnity of the oath and its far-reaching effects.” BELIEVER’S STUDY BIBLE

“This custom, which is only mentioned here and in Genesis 47:29, the so-called bodily oath, Was no doubt connected with the significance of the hip as the part from which the posterity issued (46:26), and the seat of vital power; but the early Jewish commentators supposed it to be especially connected with the rite of circumcision.” C.F. Keil & F. Delitzsch

There is not enough information available on this subject to draw any detailed conclusions. It is enough to note that this was an act that solemnized what follows. It was an act of confirmation.

The oath that Abraham requires will be made “*by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth.*”

When Melchizedek blessed Abraham, He did so in behalf of “*the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth*” (Gen 14:19). When Abraham rejected the suggestion of the king of Sodom, he referred to “*the Most High God, the Possessor of heaven and earth*” (Gen 14:22).

As phenomenal as it may appear, this rather elementary fact is largely denied in our time. Since the 1970’s, America has viewed the earth as an independent entity, honoring “*mother earth,*” and celebrating “*earth day.*” It simply is not viewed by the general populous as belonging to “*the God of heaven*” – “*the Most High God.*” **The point here is that what is done in the earth is to be done with God in mind.**

NOT FROM THE CANAANITES

“ . . . that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell.”

Abraham was living among the Canaanites, but he was not himself a Canaanite, nor would he allow his son to marry one of them. Mind you, this land had been promised to him, but it was not yet his. **He was sojourning in the promised land as a stranger.**

He knows that God has promised much concerning his “*seed*” (Gen 12:7; 13:15-16; 13:3,5,13,18; 17:7,8,10,12,19; 21:12; 22:17,18). Although God has not yet revealed the unlawfulness of mingling the holy seed with the seed of the heathen, **Abraham perceives the truth of this.** He therefore solemnly instructs his servant not take a wife to Isaac from among the Canaanites. He may have agreed to live peaceably among them, but he will not allow Isaac to marry one of them.

We have already been introduced in Genesis to the fact of an unequal

yoke. It was found in the young men pledged to marry Lot's daughters. They were warned of the coming destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by Lot himself. "And Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, and said, "Up, get out of this place, for the LORD will destroy the city. But he appeared to his sons-in-law to be jesting"^{NASB} (Gen 19:14). They did not escape, being destroyed in the holocaust that followed.

About five hundred years later, after Israel would come out of Egypt as the Lord promised (Gen 15:14), the Lord spoke clearly about marrying the heathen – those who did not know God:

➔ "And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods" (Ex 34:16).

➔ "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly" (Deut 7:3-4).

In Christ, the same requirement applies. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion

hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the

temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (2 Cor 6:15-16).

This very transgression was the reason for the fall of Solomon. During Nehemiah's day, the children of Israel had intermingled with the heathen, and Nehemiah reminded them of Solomon's sin. "And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. **Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among**

many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin" (Neh 13:24-26).

Even before these statements were recorded, Abraham had a sense of them. He knew that it would be improper to mingle the people identified with God with those who were not – to attempt to join together those who had been called by God with those who had not.

Even before these statements were recorded, Abraham had a sense of them. **He knew that it would be improper to mingle the people identified with God with those who were not** – to attempt to join together those who had been called by God with those who had not. This highlighted how sound thinking has deteriorated during a time when it should have been honed to a fine edge. It also accentuates the inferiority of fleshly relationships to spiritual ones.

Even though this subject has been developed extensively in Scripture, it is largely ignored by the modern church. The people simply are not being taught properly, so they are incapable of forming proper judgments. They are more easily influenced by the wicked.

GO UNTO MY COUNTRY, AND TO MY KINDRED

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

GO TO MY COUNTRY

"But thou shalt go unto my country . . ." Other versions read, "my homeland,"^{CJB} "my land,"^{CSB} "my own land,"^{NAB} "my native land,"^{NJB} "The land of my birth."^{TNK}

We are told later that the land, or country, was "Mesopotamia" (Gen 24:10). Stephen says Abraham was dwelling in the land of "Mesopotamia" before he dwelt in Haran (Acts 7:2). The land of Mesopotamia was rather large, bounded on the south by the Euphrates River. Ur was in the southern part of the country, and Haran in the northwest. This was a journey of

significant length – at least seven hundred miles.

GO TO MY KINDRED

". . . and to my kindred . . ." Other versions read, "my family,"^{NKJV} "my relatives,"^{NASB} and "my relations."^{BBE}

The point was not the country, but Abraham's kindred which were in

With the promises of God as his reference point, Abraham takes measures to find a wife for Isaac – a particular kind of wife – Given O. Blakely

that country. This would narrow down to Nahor and his progeny. His other brother, Haran, died in Ur the Chaldees before the entourage left for Canaan (Gen 11:28). Haran did have a daughter, Milcah, who married Nahor (Gen 11:29). Lot was also the son of Haran (Gen 11:31).

We do not know how many daughters were among Abraham's kinfolk. It had been at least sixty-four years since he left Haran.

TAKE A WIFE UNTO MY SON ISAAC

" . . . and take a wife unto my son Isaac." Other versions read, *"take a wife for my son,"* NKJV *"Get a wife for my son,"* NIV *"choose a wife for my son,"* CJB *"find a wife for my son,"* NET *"acquire a wife for my son."* ISV

It was often the manner of godly people to select a wife for their son. Ungodly people generally chose their own wives – like Cain (Gen 4:16-17), and Lamech (Lam 4:18).

Of course, this is not the manner of the Western world, although it is still the general custom in the Eastern world. This may be one reason why many professing Christians from this part of the world have such difficulty with God choosing – our society has placed such an emphasis on the individual, and the supposed freedom that has been given to them by their Creator, that the thought of someone else making a choice that supercedes theirs is unthinkable. This is an inherent weakness in the current social structure and values of our country.

The truth of the matter is that God does the primary choosing. He chose Seth, Noah, and Abraham. He chose Shem as the primary son of Noah, and Isaac as the primary offspring of Abraham. He chose Israel as the nation into which the Messiah would be born. He chose the country they would occupy, and chose to drive out the peoples that were inhabiting it. He also chose Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt, and Joshua to lead them into Canaan.

It should not surprise us,

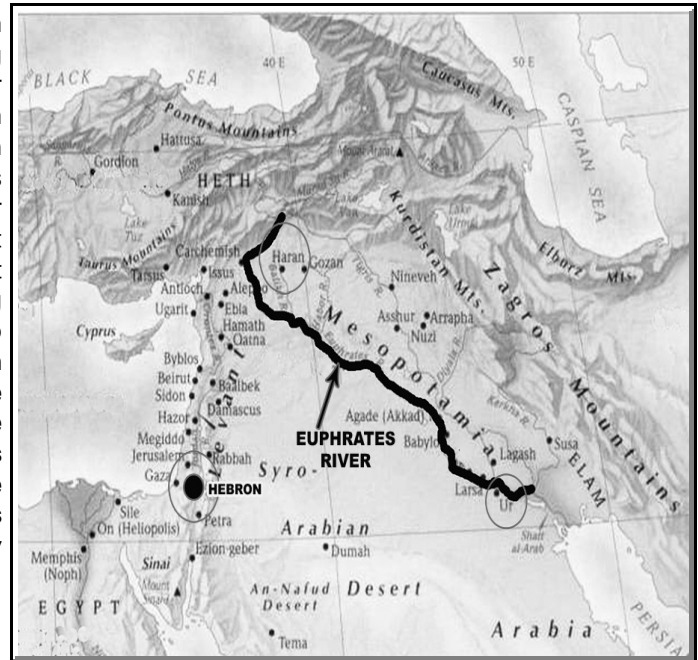
therefore, that Abraham is set forth as managing the choice of a wife for Isaac. It is not that I am attempting to establish the necessity of parents choosing wives for their sons. I am saying that such a manner is not wrong of itself. Among men, this may be tied to custom. **However, in matters pertaining to the execution of the purpose of God, this is the manner of the Kingdom. Abraham was doubtless moved by God to take this action.**

A TYPE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In this matter, the eldest servant is a type of the Holy Spirit, who plays a critical role in the obtaining of a wife for the Lord Jesus Christ. The church, which is the bride of Christ, is developed by means of the Holy Spirit. Thus it is written, *"In whom [Jesus Christ] ye also are builded [are being built AMPLIFIED] together for an habitation of God through the Spirit"* (Eph 2:22). Other versions read, *"a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit,"* NIV *a dwelling place for God by the Spirit,"* ESV *"being built in the Spirit,"* GWN *and "a fixed abode (dwelling place) of God in (by, through) the Spirit."* AMPLIFIED

The thought here is that the church is currently being built up for a habitation of God, and it is being done by the Holy Spirit. In the world to come, God will not inhabit His people *"by the Spirit."* Then, *"God Himself shall be with them, and be their God"* (Rev 21:3), for the people individually and in the aggregate, will be perfected.

Until then, the Spirit, as directed by Jesus Christ the Head, is assembling the church, enduing each member appropriately, and preparing the building for God Himself to occupy. Paul referred to this process in his dissertation about spiritual gifts. *"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the*



same Spirit . . . "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will . . . For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor 12:4,7-11,13).

Add to this the preparatory work of the Holy Spirit, convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:8-11). Then there is the matter of the new birth, which is facilitated by the Holy Spirit: *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"* (John 3:6). The truth was *"obeyed through the Spirit"* (1 Pet 1:22). The whole process involved in setting us aside for God within the body of Christ is referred to as *"the sanctification of the Spirit"* (1 Pet 1:2).

You might say that the Holy Spirit is on a mission to get the bride ready to be presented to Christ, and indwelt by God Himself. As Abraham instructed his

eldest servant, so the Holy Spirit is doing His work according to the will, of God and the direction of Christ. He will not assemble a people who do not meet

the Divine criterion. In the end, the people will be thoroughly suitable. It is no wonder we are admonished, *“Quench not the Spirit”* (Eph 4:30).

SHOULD I BRING YOUR SON TO THAT COUNTRY?

“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.”

IF THE WOMAN IS NOT WILLING

“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?”

Notice how thorough the servant is in seeking to understand what is

“Be careful that you don't do that under any circumstance,” ^{LIVING} and “Don't ever do that, no matter what.” ^{CEV}

Why did Abraham say not to take Isaac back to Mesopotamia *“again?”* Isaac had never been to that area, but had lived all of his life, now nearing forty years, in Canaan.

This was a figure of speech denoting **returning to the starting point** – i.e. where Abraham received his call, and from which he journeyed to Canaan.

The Hebrew word from which the word *“again”* is translated is *“shuwb,”*

and he never did!

A LESSON TO BE LEARNED

When Israel left Egypt, God did not intend for them to return to it again – not even to obtain help (Isa 31:1). When Judah left Babylon, after spending seventy years there for their disobedience, they were not to return to it again, but take up permanent residency in Canaan.

The Life of Faith

So it is in the life of faith. When Jesus spoke of a man forsaking all that he had to follow Him, He made no allowance for returning to what was left (Lk 14:33). When believers are told to *“leave”* the *“first principles,”* the Lord does not intend for them to have to return to them again because they did not *“go on to perfection”* (Geb 6:1-3). When we *“lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily besets us,”* we are not to pick them up again (Heb 12:1).

This contradicts the principles that undergird every humanly devised recovery program. All of them allow for returning to old manners, conveniently underplaying the seriousness of such a return. Life is thus managed by a discipline, rather than deliberately and consistently walking in newness of life.

The Mindset of Faith

The mindset of Abraham is characteristic of faith. Once the call of God is heeded, there comes an obstinate refusal to return again to beginning places. The objective now is pressing *“toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”* (Phil 3:14). The saints have neither heart nor mind for repeated recovery. They have been called to *“perfect holiness”* (2 Cor 7:1).

The mindset of Abraham is characteristic of faith. Once the call of God is heeded, there comes an obstinate refusal to return again to beginning places.

required of him. What if he finds a suitable woman, yet she is unwilling to come to Canaan? In deference to her beauty and comeliness, will this requirement be abandoned? In such a case, Isaac would have to come to her, adapt to her dwelling, and take up residence outside of Canaan. Is such an arrangement acceptable? Is having, what appears to be, a good wife, worthy of such a compromise?

BEWARE – DO NOT BRING MY SON THITHER AGAIN!

“And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.” Other versions read, *“Beware that you do not take my son back there.”* ^{NKJV} *Take care that you do not let my son go back to that land,”* ^{BBE}

and has the following lexical meaning: *“TO TURN BACK (HENCE, AWAY . . . TO RETREAT . . . DRAW BACK, FETCH HOME AGAIN . . . GO AGAIN (BACK, HOME), . . . SLIDE BACK . . .”* ^{STRONG'S}

The idea is that of going back to the starting point again, or starting all over again. Abraham's words were not referring to taking Isaac himself again to Abraham's former home, but of starting out again in that place to further advance the revealed purpose of God. **Having left Ur of the Chaldees, and that general territory, Abraham had no intention of himself or any of his seed returning to that place.** He knew that when God said, *“Get thee out of thy country”* (Gen 12:1), it was not a temporary departure. **He was never to take up residency in that land again –**

With the promises of God as his reference point, Abraham takes measures to find a wife for Isaac – a particular kind of wife – Given O. Blakely

ABRAHAM APPEALS TO THE PROMISE OF GOD

" 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 swore 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."

Abraham is not ambiguous about this matter, nor does he buttress his response with carnal reasoning. **He appeals to what God has said, and states that it is imperative that what is done comply perfectly with that revelation.**

THE LORD GOD OF HEAVEN TOOK ME

"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 . . ."

Abraham leaving his father's house, kindred, and land, is expressed in a variety of ways in Scripture.

➔ **HE LEFT WITH TERAH AND LOT.** *"And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there."* (Gen 11:31)

➔ **HE DEPARTED AS THE LORD HAD SAID.** *"So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him . . ."* (Gen 12:4).

➔ **GOD SAID HE BROUGHT HIM OUT.** *"And He said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it."* (Gen 15:7)

➔ **LATER, THE PEOPLE CONFESSED GOD HAD BROUGHT HIM OUT.** *"Thou art the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham."* (Neh 9:7)

➔ **THEN HE CAME OUT.** *"And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, He removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell."* (Acts 7:2-4).

➔ **HE OBEYED AND WENT OUT.** *"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."* (Heb 11:8).

GOD AT WORK

GOD BROUGHT HIM OUT

ALL THINGS ARE OF GOD

ABRAHAM OBEYED

WORKING TO WILL AND TO DO

LEFT WITH TERAH AND LOT

ACCORDING TO APPEARANCE

These accounts give a full depiction of what took place. Abraham did come out of Ur, but it was by the able direction of God. His willing response was the result of God working in him, both to do and to will of His own good pleasure. The record Terah leaving with Lot, with Abraham and Sarah was the report according to appearance.

Those who affirm that Abraham did not obey God as he was told, but lingered in Ur, then disobeyed God by going out with Terah and with Lot, have not told the truth. They have judged the whole matter according to appearance,

and ignored what God Himself said: ***I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees.*** They have also ignored what those of Nehemiah's day knew: ***"Thou art the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham."***

In addition, they have chosen to not consider what Stephen said: *The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, He removed him* ["God removed him" NASB] *into this land, wherein ye now dwell.* Then, as final evidence of their lack of perception, they trample on the words of the Holy Spirit: *"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."*

And what shall we say to such things? Simply this: **the church has no need for proclaimers who speak in such a manner, ignoring what God has revealed.**

HE SWARE UNTO ME

" . . . and that swore unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land . . ."

The focus here is on Abraham's seed receiving the land of Canaan. It view of that, it made no sense to have Isaac move to another land – whether temporary or not. It was needful to become accustomed with the land that would be given to Abraham and his seed. God had told Abraham to *"walk through the land"* (Gen 13:17), and it would be necessary for his seed to do so also.

God had frequently reminded the patriarch that this land would be given to his seed (Gen 12:7; 13:15; 15:18;17:8). In view of that, it was absolutely unreasonable for any of his progeny to locate in another land.

A TYPE, AND A COMMON ERROR IN JUDGMENT

There is a principle unveiled here that exposes an error in judgment that is common in our day.

First, permit me to establish that spiritual life is the most significant life, and requires the most attention. The Word of God makes this very clear.

➔ **FIRST OBJECTIVE.** *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."* (Matt 6:33).

➔ **THE ACQUISITION TO TRUE RICHES.** *"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal"* (Mat 6:20)

➔ **FUNDAMENTAL QUEST.** *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."* (Col 3:1)

➔ **PRIMARY APPETITE.** *"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."* (Col 3:2)

➔ **USE OF THE BODY.** *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."* (Rom 12:1)

➔ **OBLIGATION TO GLORIFY GOD.** *"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."* (1 Cor 6:20)

➔ **PURPOSE FOR LIFE.** *"And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."* (2 Cor 5:15).

To assist us in this remarkable focus, whatever we do is to be done for the glory of God – and that is from the most menial involvements (eating and drinking), to the most significant ones (1 Cor 10:3; Col 3:17,23,24). Even slaves were told, *"Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."* (Col 3:22-24).

These requirements were typified in Abraham going to Canaan, remaining there, and walking through the land. He himself would not leave the land, and

world" (1 John 2:15).

I realize this is a sensitive area, and is one in which no person can legislate to another. **Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of every child of God to so order their life that fellowship with Christ is not reduced, and the Lord does not become the recipient of wearied minds and bodies.** Believer, stay in the place where God placed you when you were joined to the Lord – the *"heavenly places"* (Eph 2:6).

HE WILL SEND HIS ANGEL

" . . . He shall send His angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence."

➔ Angels are not mentioned in Scripture until Genesis 16:7-11, where one visited Hagar.

This suggests to us that faith has a powerful effect upon the way a person thinks, and how he assesses situations. It also indicates that the person who has "obtained" faith eventually associates God Himself with every facet of life.

he made it clear that his seed were not to leave it in preference of another land.

The Error in Judgment

Many professing Christians allow themselves to get caught up in secondary things – involvements that bleed off their energies, and require too much of their persons. Perhaps it is seeking financial security, maximum future provisions for their children, the development of a career, or the acquisition of unnecessary luxuries. In order to do this, they must put to the back of their thinking such words as, *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"* (Heb 13:5), and *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the*

➔ The next place they are mentioned is when two of them came to destroy Sodom (Gen 19:1,15).

➔ Next, an angel again appeared to Hagar after she and Ishmael had been cast out of Abraham's house (Gen 21:17).

➔ Then, one appeared to Abraham when he was about to offer Isaac as a burnt offering, as he was commanded to do (Gen 22:11-15).

The point is that Abraham had not been taught about angels and what they are assigned to do. So far as the record is concerned, what he knew was by personal experience.

Yet, Abraham speaks with an

obvious confidence about the ministry of angels. Here is a mission concerning which Abraham was confident an angel of God would play a prominent role of direction and guidance.

Keep in mind, there has been no word about angels going before an individual and preparing the way, or

effectively directing a person. Yet, Abraham's faith and his subjection to the working of the Lord has obviously led him to this conclusion. It is possible that a special revelation was given to Abraham concerning this, but there is no record of such as revelation.

A Powerful Suggestion

This suggests to us that faith has a powerful effect upon the way a person thinks, and how he assesses situations. It also indicates that the person who has "obtained" faith eventually associates God Himself with every facet of life. I suggest one cannot live "unto the Lord" without deliberately and consciously doing so.

IF THE WOMAN IS NOT WILLING TO FOLLOW

"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 swore to him concerning that matter."

It is most unfortunate that

as to have no unanswered questions when the servant arrives at his destination. Suffice I to say, this is a most excellent example of our approach to faith's trek to glory.

IF THE WOMAN IS NOT WILLING TO FOLLOW

"And if the woman will not be

leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen 2:24).

However, this was not the case with Isaac, because the context was not marriage itself, but the seed of Abraham inheriting the land of Canaan. Further, this was associated with God culturing a people and land into which the coming Messiah would be born. Therefore the marriage of Isaac, which was the lesser, must yield to the purpose of God, which was the superior. That is always the case, whether we are speaking of family or social life.

Why is it that Abraham did not tell the servant to continue his search elsewhere? Why terminate it so abruptly?

First, there was only a relatively small number of people among whom the servant could search. Secondly, the requirements were such as to guarantee that when a woman was found, she would, in all probability, be the only available woman at that time.

Therefore, the patriarch affirms that the unwillingness of the prospect to come to Canaan freed the servant from his oath. Under such a condition, he was no longer obligated to find a wife – at least not at that time.

ONLY DO NOT TAKE MY SON BACK THERE

" . . . only you must not take my son back there." ^{AMPLIFIES} Again Abraham states strongly that under no conditions

The conditions of being a wife to Isaac must be met, and met willingly. The requirement is clear: the woman will have to leave her family and homeland.

modern-day "Christians" are rarely noted for precision of thought. Thinking is not generally considered a strong facet of life in Christ. However, this is an incorrect appraisal that has been produced by the manner and content the preaching and teaching of our time. The truth of the matter is that too often listeners can put their brain in "park" mode when they, as they say, "go to church." Without jaunting down a detour of thought, I will simply, say that activities of the mind are brought to their highest capacity and involvement in through faith.

We have a demonstration of this in the thoroughness of the dialog between Abraham and his servant concerning the mission on which he is being sent. It is quite arresting to see how the conversation is conducted so

willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again. . ."

First, a suitable woman must be found. Second, she must be willing to come to Isaac in Canaan. **There can be no compromise in either of these requirements.**

Abraham clearly says, *"If the woman is unwilling to come back with you, then you will be released from this oath of mine."* ^{NIV}

The conditions of being a wife to Isaac must be met, and met willingly. The requirement is clear: the woman will have to leave her family and homeland. This seems to contradict the word that Adam spoke when he received Eve: *"Therefore shall a man*

is Isaac to be brought back to Mesopotamia.

CONCERNING THAT MATTER

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

The servant agrees to the stipulations, and swears to abide by them. **All of this was done BEFORE the journey ever started.** He will not be released for the journey until he has agreed to all of the stipulations.

THE PARALLEL IN SALVATION

Remember, it is still true: the servant of God is directed as he proceeds on the sanctified way. **However, the journey does not begin until the person has agreed to the preconditions laid down by the Lord.** Some of them are as follows.

- ➔ *"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." (Matt 16:24)*
- ➔ *"If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:26)*
- ➔ *"And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:27)*
- ➔ *"So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:33)*

Let there be no mistake about this, **if a person does not agree to these terms, he will not be allowed through the strait gate, or on the narrow that leads to life** (Matt 7:13-14). For many, these are hard sayings. Nevertheless, He who is *"the Truth"* (John 14:6) has spoken them, and they will not be called back as though they were no longer valid.

Also, the Holy Spirit is under no

obligation to continue to work with those who insist on quenching (1Thess 5:19), **grieving** (Eph 4:30), or **resisting Him** (Acts 7:51). This is confirmed in Stephen's reply to the opposing Sanhedrin (Acts 7:51-53), and Paul's words to those in that hostile synagogue gathering in Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:46).

It is true that *"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son"* (John 3:6). It is also true that *"God our Savior . . . will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim 2:3-4). **However, this does not mean He will relax His revealed requirements, or save those who are unwilling to be saved.** If, in the day of His power, they are not made willing (Psa 110:3), here is no further obligation for them to be saved. Should that circumstance persist, the Spirit is under no further obligation to convict them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. The following precise and strong pronouncements are made concerning those who consistently refuse the message of the Gospel.

➔ *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth*

for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." (Eph 5:3-6)

➔ *"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, **In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;**" (2 Thess 1:7-9)*

➔ *"And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: **That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.**" (2 Thess 2:10-12).*

➔ *"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, **shall have their part in the lake which burneth***

Whether or not a person can fit this into their theology, God has nowhere obligated Himself to save those who are unwilling to believe the Gospel, and submit to all of Christ's requirements.

not shall be damned." (Mark 16:16)

➔ *"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words:*

with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Rev 21:8)

Whether or not a person can fit this into their theology, **God has nowhere obligated Himself to save those who are unwilling to believe the Gospel, and submit to all of Christ's requirements.** Any view of election that requires God to do this cannot be true.

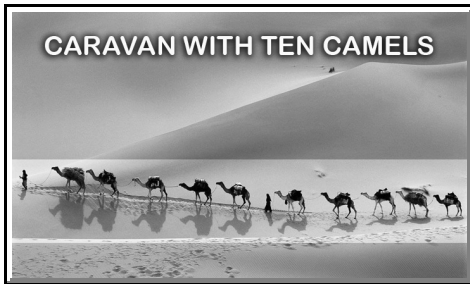
In this respect, Abraham's servant was a type of the kind of things that take place in the arena of salvation.

THE SERVANT DEPARTS WITH ALL THE GOODS OF HIS MASTER

"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."

THE SERVANT TOOK TEN CAMELS

"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 . . ." Other versions read, "set out with a variety of good things of his master's in his hand . . ." NASB "taking with him all kinds of good things from his master," NIV and "taking some of all his master's treasures with him." AMPLIFIED



CARAVAN WITH TEN CAMELS

The idea is that the servant had charge of all of Abraham's house, including his belongings and treasures. It is said of him, *"he ruled over all that he had"* (Gen 24:1). He therefore made selections of some appropriate gifts. The fact that he carried the goods on a caravan of ten camels gives you some idea of the plentitude of the gifts he carried. Later we will find that he gave gifts to a number of people in the name of Abraham. *"And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things."* (Gen 24:53).

ANOTHER TYPE

In this record we have another

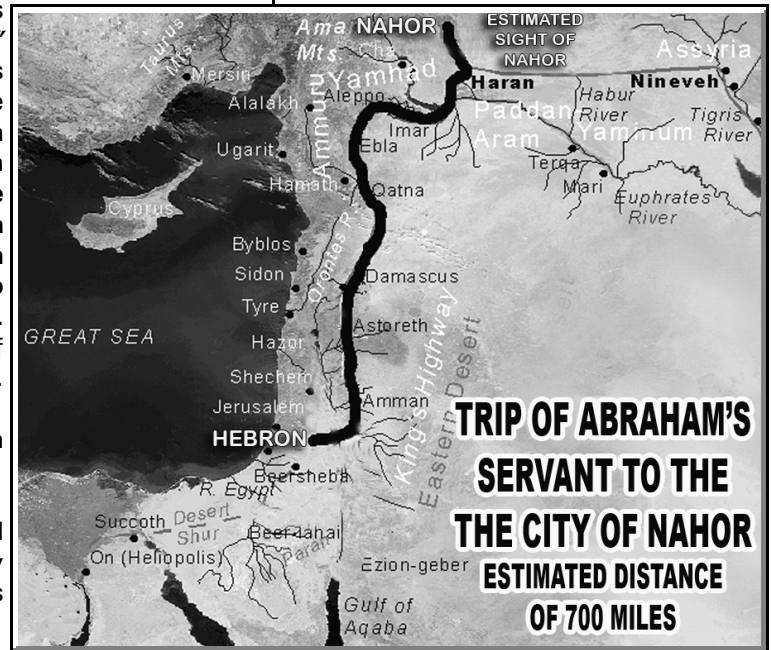
type of God's "great salvation." When the Gospel is preached, it is like the servant with a caravan of ten camels. There is the announcement of a salvation rich with gifts for those who will accept it. Ponder some of those precious gifts.

- ➔ Remission of sin (Acts 2:38).
- ➔ The promised gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).
- ➔ Eternal life (John 3:15; John 3:36).
- ➔ Reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18-19).
- ➔ Justification from all things (Acts 13:39).
- ➔ Peace with God (Eph 2:17).
- ➔ Shall never thirst (John 6:35).
- ➔ Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water (John 7:38).
- ➔ Shall not be confounded (1 Pet 2:6).
- ➔ The promise of blessing (Acts 3:26).
- ➔ Be turned away from iniquities (Acts 3:26).
- ➔ Jesus has been exalted to give repentance (Acts 5:31).
- ➔ Not condemned (John 3:18).

HE WENT TO MESOPOTAMIA

" . . . and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor."

The trip to Nahor was about seven



hundred miles. Historical documents say that a camel caravan traveled at the rate of about thirty-five miles a day. That would make the trip to Nahor twenty days, or about three weeks.

There is little information concerning the location of the city of Nahor. It is supposed to be near to Haran, which would make it in the northwestern part of Mesopotamia. It is also assumed that the city was named after Abraham's brother, Nahor, who is thought to have settled in that region. The fact that Laban, at whose home the servant will finally arrive, referred to *"the God of Nahor"* (Gen 31:53) suggests Laban had some familiarity with Nahor, and therefore seems to support that supposition.

BY A WELL OF WATER AT EVENING

"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."

Writers tell us that from when they are young of age, camels are taught to kneel. THOMSON, 'LAND AND BOOK,' P. 592)

Here, the purpose was apparently for the servant to remain here until he came in contact with the type of woman he sought. He did not go to an entertainment center, or a place where people simply stood idling the time away. He went to a well, where a needed resource was gathered, and where a woman who was not too proud to serve the interests of others could be found. He went to the right place, and at the right time.

Looking In The Wrong Places

Many people never find what they inwardly desire, because they are looking in the wrong places. Sometimes they even go to the wrong churches, where people are really not gathered to get *"the water of life"* (Rev 21:6). Others make friends of those who tend to distract the soul to lesser things.

THE MANNER OF JESUS

Even when Jesus walked among men, **He was found where people had an interest a predisposition toward the things of God** – whether by mere curiosity, or genuine interest. He could always be found in the synagogues of the land (Matt 4:23; 9:35; 12:9; 13:54; Mk 1:21; 3:1; 6:2; Lk 4:15,44; 6:6; 13:10; John 6:59).

Jesus said of His ministry, *"I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing"* (John 18:20). When He went to someone's house, it was generally because He was invited (Lk 5:29; John 12:2). When He said He was going to the house of Zacchaeus, it was because that man had demonstrated an interest in Him (Lk

➤ *"And Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst"* (John 6:35).

➤ *"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."* (John 7:37-38)

➤ *"All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out"* (John 6:37).

➤ *"I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."* (John 10:9)

➤ *"If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honor."* (John 12:26)

The candor with which Jesus spoke sounds strange in our religious culture. Purported "seeker friendly" churches simply do not speak in this manner. This is glaringly apparent, and will not be questioned by any person of integrity.

SEEKING A BRIDE FOR CHRIST

The quest for a bride for Christ was initiated at the right place, and during the right time.

John the Baptist first publically introduced the concept of Jesus being a Bridegroom and having a bride. *"He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom: but the friend of the Bridegroom, which standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled."* (John 3:29).

The time was right – *"when the fulness of the time was come"* (Gal 4:4). John the Baptist boldly announced, *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel"* (Mark 1:15). The place was the

The quest for a bride for Christ was initiated at the right place, and during the right time.

When Paul and those traveling with him came to a city, they went where it was more possible to find people with an interest in Deity and things pertaining to God. If there was a synagogue in the city, you would be sure to find Paul there (Acts 13:5,14; 14:1; 17:1,10,17; 18:4,19; 19:8). If he was in Athene, he went where the thinkers gathered (Acts 17:18-31). When he went to Philippi, he went where certain women gathered for prayer (Acts 16:13). Even the time Paul is said to have gone to the *"market,"* it was because of the intellectual commerce that went on there, as well as the selling of goods. *"Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him"* (Acts 17:17). The *"market"* of those days is defined as follows: *"MARKET-PLACE, WHERE GOODS WERE EXPOSED FOR SALE, AND ASSEMBLIES OR PUBLIC TRIALS HELD (ACTS 16:19; 17:17).* ^{MCKNIGHT & STRONG'S} This place was not like a modern shopping center.

19:2-8).

When Jesus invited people to Himself, He did so in a certain manner. He said things like:

➤ *"Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"* (Matt 11:28).

➤ *"Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."* (Matt 16:24)

➤ *"And He said to them all, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."* (Luke 9:23)

➤ *"If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."* (Luke 14:26)

right one – in Galilee. It is said of the commencement of Christ’s ministry, *“And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up”* (Matt 4:13-16).

On the day of Pentecost, when it was *“fully come”* (Acts 2:1), the quest for the bride of Christ was launched in a fuller sense, and continues to this day. In every recorded proclamation of the Gospel, there was absolute candor, with no attempt to water down the message,

God has not embarked on a new approach to sinners or saints. His definition of preaching and teaching has not changed.

or appeal to the disinterested (Acts 2:14-40; 3:12-26; 4:8-12; 5:29-32; 7:2-53; 10:34-43; 13:16-41; 14:14-17; 17:2-3; 17:22-31; 22:1-21; 23:1-8; 24:10-21,25; 26:1-29; 28:17-31).

If you will examine these inspired records of the content of preaching, you will find a sharp contrast between those examples and what is represented as preaching, evangelism, and missions during our time. This contemporary

circumstance is grievous because it is not one in which the Father works. It is not one in which He draws people to Jesus, or the Holy Spirit convicts and persuades. **God has not embarked on a new approach to sinners or saints.** His definition of preaching and teaching has not changed.

What was effective in the first century is also effective in the twenty-first century.

THE SERVANT PRAYS TO GOD

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

We will learn from this text how to approach matters concerning which we have little or no understanding. The servant of Abraham knows why he has been sent out – **to find a wife for Isaac.** He knows the vicinity in which this wife is to be found – **in Abraham’s native land.** He knows the specific part of the land in which the search is to be made – **where Abraham’s kindred are dwelling.** He knows how to know the prospective bride is to be identified – **if she is willing to come to and dwell with**

Isaac.

The choice the servant makes must be within those parameters. None of them can be violated. It will not suffice to fulfill most of them, but omit one or more. Now, having arrived in the proper land, where Abraham’s kindred dwell, let us behold how he proceeds.

HE PRAYS:

LORD GOD OF MY MASTER ABRAHAM
“And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham . . .”

The servant does not assume that he has access to God of himself. He comes to God as the One who has appeared to and directed Abraham, making promises to him. So far as the record is concerned, God had never spoken to this servant. Any understanding he had of God probably came from the one with whom God had dealings. The point is that this is something the servant perceived, and thus he came to the Lord as one who was himself subject to the one to whom God had made the promises. He is not seeking his own interests, but

those of his master.

The Rarity of Prayer At This Time

To this point in human history, there have not been many records of anyone praying.

- Cain had spoken to God, although I do not think what he said qualified as a prayer (Gen 4:13-16).
- Abraham had *“called upon the name of the Lord”* (Gen 12:8; 13:4; 21:33).
- Abraham reasoned with God about who would be his heir (Gen 15:2-3).
- Abraham had reasoned with God concerning not destroying the righteous with the wicked (Gen 18:23-32).

The first time *“prayer”* to God, in any of its forms (pray, prayed, praying, prayer) is mentioned is Genesis 20:7, where God told Abimelech Abraham would pray for him. The next time is when Abraham did pray for him (Gen 20:17). Prayer is not specifically

mentioned again until centuries later when Moses “prayed” to the Lord in behalf of wayward Israel (Num 11:2). The next time it is mention is when Moses again prayed for the people (Num 21:7). Two more instances of Moses praying are when he said he had prayed for Aaron (Deut 9:20,26). Prayer or praying is not mentioned again until the time of the Judges (Judges 9:38).

What This Indicates Suggests

All of this suggests that men had to learn how to pray, and that this learning extended over a significant period of time. David is the first man to speak extensively about prayer in his Psalms (Psa 4:1; 5:2,3; 6:9; 17:1; 32:6; 35:13; 39:12; 42:8; 54:2; 55:1,17; 61:1; 64:1; 65:2; 66:19,20; 69:13; 72:15,20; 80:4; 84:8; 86:1,6; 88:2,13; 90:1; 102:1,17; 109:4,7; 122:6; 141:2,5; 142:1; 143:1).

obviously paid close attention to Abraham, and listened well when he spoke of his experiences with the Lord. **He had concluded that this was a God who directed the affairs of men, and was inclined to reveal His choices.**

Something Else to be Seen

Where did this servant learn about prayer, or about asking the Lord for direction? It was from Abraham! **Those who live by faith instruct those in their care concerning the Lord.**

SEND ME GOOD SPEED

“ . . . I pray thee, send me good speed this day . . . ” Other versions read, “give me success,” ^{NKJV} “let me do well in what I have undertaken,” ^{BBE} “let me succeed,” ^{CJB} “meet me, I pray, with Thy blessing,” ^{DARBY} “make me successful,” ^{GWN} “prosper my way,” ^{SEPTUAGINT} “let it turn out favorably for

time when there had not been much revelation, this insightful prayer was spoken – and that it was spoken by someone to whom there is no record that God ever appeared. Yet, because he had been with Abraham for many years, and had learned from him, he raised up a prayer that would even be unusual in our time – at least within the nominal church.

SHOW KINDNESS TO MY MASTER

“ . . . and show kindness unto my master Abraham. . . ” Other versions read “loving kindness,” ^{NASB} “steadfast love,” ^{NRSV} “give your mercy,” ^{BBE} “show your grace,” ^{CJB} “deal kindly,” ^{DARBY} “deal mercifully,” ^{SEPTUAGINT} “deal graciously,” ^{NAB} “faithful,” ^{NET} “show faithful love,” ^{NJB} “do kindness,” ^{YLT} and “treat my master Abraham well.” ^{MESSAGE}

The meaning of the word translated “kindness” is as follows: **קִנְיָן, CHECED {KHEH'-SED} MEANING: 1) GOODNESS, KINDNESS, FAITHFULNESS.”** ^{STRONG'S}

The word translated “grace,” in the only usage of that word prior to Abraham (Gen 6:8), means **חֶסֶד NCHEN {KHANE} MEANING: 1) FAVOR, GRACE, CHARM 1A) FAVOR, GRACE, ELEGANCE 1B) FAVOR, ACCEPTANCE.”** ^{STRONG'S}

This is not at all the same meaning as “kindness,” even though some versions represent the servant as referring to God’s grace (CJB, NAB). While it may seem a small thing, there was not sufficient understanding of God’s grace to allow for an appeal for it during that time. “Mercy” would be an appropriate word, as it means the expression of kindness and faithfulness. The servant was asking the Lord to show favor toward Abraham as a token of His faithfulness to him. **While this kind of consideration is certainly within the framework of grace as we have been given to see it in Christ, that was not the perspective of the servant.** Although our understanding of grace may well be appropriate in the understanding of the incident, it is **the servant’s perception** that is being reflected in this text, and this “kindness” is a more appropriate term in this setting.

The Lack of Self-Centeredness

Men no longer felt comfortable in the presence of God. This condition required a Divine initiative, without which man would have no extensive dialog with the Living God.

This circumstance confirms that spiritual death did occur when Adam and Eve sinned. Men no longer felt comfortable in the presence of God. **This condition required a Divine initiative, without which man would have no extensive dialog with the Living God.**

The Day of Salvation

Now that “the day of salvation” and the “accepted time” have come (2 Cor 6:20, the heavens have been, so to speak, opened to those in Christ. Prayers can be addressed to God freely and frequently. However, it has not always been so. Under Moses, the Judges, and the Prophets, people generally asked some man of God to pray for them (Num 21:7; Jer 42:2).

All of this accentuates the remarkable awareness of the Lord that was possessed by this servant. He had

me,” ^{NAB} “guide me today,” ^{NET} “grant me good fortune,” ^{TNK} “help me to accomplish the purpose of my journey,” ^{LIVING} and “make things go smoothly this day.” ^{MESSAGE}

The words “good speed” are similar in meaning to an expression John uses: “God speed” (2 John 1:10-11). The Hebrew word from which “speed” is translated means “TO ENCOUNTER, MEET, BEFALL, HAPPEN, COME TO MEET . . . TO ENCOUNTER, MEET (WITHOUT PRE-ARRANGEMENT) . . . TO CAUSE TO MEET, APPOINT . . . CAUSATIVELY, TO BRING ABOUT; . . . SEND GOOD SPEED” ^{STRONG'S}

If God does not cause things to happen, as some falsely allege, then this word was out of order. Of course, the fact that the Holy Spirit dictated that this be written without an editorial comment confirms that this prayer was in concert with the character and will of God. The remarkable thing is that at the

While the servant did ask the Lord to give him success in his journey, the reason for his petition is especially noteworthy. **He did not make his request for his own sake, but for the sake of his master Abraham.**

A Type

Here is a type of the kind of reasoning that is prevalent in salvation. Paul besought the brethren at Rome *“for Christ’s sake”* (Rom 15:30). He confessed, *“We are fools for Christ’s sake”* (1 Cor 4:10). Paul took pleasure in the hardships he endured *“for Christ’s sake”* (2 Cor 12:10). Even God forgave us *“for Christ’s sake”* (Eph 4:32). Paul was a servant of the saints *“for Jesus’ sake”* (2 Cor 4:5). He acknowledged that he had been *“delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake”* (2 Cor 4:11).

This selfless spirit pervades every aspect of the Kingdom of God. Here we are introduced to this manner of thinking in its intellectual embryonic stage.

LET IT COME TO PASS

“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 . . .”

I continue to be blessed with the perception, boldness, and expression of this servant. He sets before the Lord a possible means by which he can be assured he is making the right choice.

The request is made after he has positioned himself where this confirmation can be accomplished. His request is twofold, and remarkably

I am impressed with, from a human point of view, what an arduous task it was to familiarize men with God Himself.

precise.

- When he asks the woman to especially let down her pitcher to give him a drink, she will do so.
- She will respond by saying she would also give his camels (ten of them) to drink *“also.”*

Considering that the servant is a stranger, and even from another country, how likely is it that this would happen. The answer is that it was not likely at all, and the servant knew so. That is why he asked the Lord to superintend the matter.

This was a clear request for the Lord to do something special, that would not otherwise be done.

To this point in human history, there had been very few requests made of God, or of angelic representatives of God.

- Abraham asked God that Ishmael might live before Him, and received an affirmative response (Gen 17:18-20).
- Abraham had asked God if He would destroy the righteous with the wicked, and received the answer that He would not (Gen 18:23-32).
- Lot had asked for permission to flee to the city of Zoar for safety from the coming destruction of the cities of the plan, and was granted his request (Gen 19:18-21).

The above covers a period of over

2,100 years – a period in which three recorded requests were made of God. All of this confirms that the concept of God that had been entertained by Abraham, and passed along to his servant, was in strict keeping with the nature of God. He was not like the gods of the heathen – even the gods that were served by Terah and his clan before the call of Abraham (Josh 24:2).

I am impressed with, from a human point of view, what an arduous task it was to familiarize men with God Himself. Even in our day, there is an inordinate amount of confusion concerning God, His nature, and His will within the professing church. **However, where faithfulness in passing along the truth of God is found, as demonstrated in our text, improper views of God will not be entertained.**

THEREBY SHALL I KNOW

“ . . . and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master.”

Notice how the servant states what he will know. He does **not** say, *“By this I will know I am making the right choice.”* Or, *“By this I will know you have made me successful in my journey.”* **He thinks in terms of the larger picture, stating that this is how he will know God has known kindness to Abraham.**

Again, this is the manner of the Kingdom. This is how people with faith think. Their perceptions do not center in themselves, but in their Master, and the fulfillment of His will.

BEFORE HE FINISHED SPEAKING, REBEKAH CAME OUT

“ 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."

BEFORE HE HAD FINISHED SPEAKING

"And it came to pass, before he had done speaking . . ." Other versions read, "before he had finished speaking," ^{NKJV} "before he had finished praying," ^{NIV} "before his words were ended," ^{BBE} "had not yet ended these words within himself," ^{DARBY} "had scarcely finished these words," ^{NAB} and "As he was still speaking to the Lord about this." ^{LIVING}

Here is an example of the swiftness of communication between heaven and earth. Before the servant had finished praying, what he had requested was set in motion. That is confirmation that the affairs of men are managed from heaven. As it is written, "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan 4:35).

Faith can easily take hold of the subservience of men to the Living God. The wisdom of man, however, cannot grasp it. That kind of wisdom would say what took place in our text was a coincidence. However, the whole point of the record is to report the working of the Lord, not the experience of the servant of Abraham.

A Good Way to Pray

However impractical it may appear, it is good to seek grace to believe that when you pray in faith to the Lord, the answer can come before you are finished speaking. Jesus referred to this kind of faith when He said, "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24).

REBEKAH CAME OUT

. . . 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 . . ."

The Holy Spirit has already introduced us to this woman. "And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor; Huz¹ his firstborn, and Buz² his brother, and Kemuel³ the father of Aram, And Chesed⁴, and Hazo⁵, and Pildash⁶, and Jidlap⁷, and Bethuel.⁸ And Bethuel begat Rebekah: these eight Milcah did bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother." (Gen 22:20-23).

The servant had asked that the woman be one who came to draw water, and had specified that he would ask her to let down her pitcher to give him some water. Now, Rebekah approaches "with her pitcher upon her shoulder." Immediately the servant would know she met the qualification he had specified, and would be able to do what he would request.

well, and filled her pitcher, and came up."

A Damsel and Was Very Fair to Look Upon

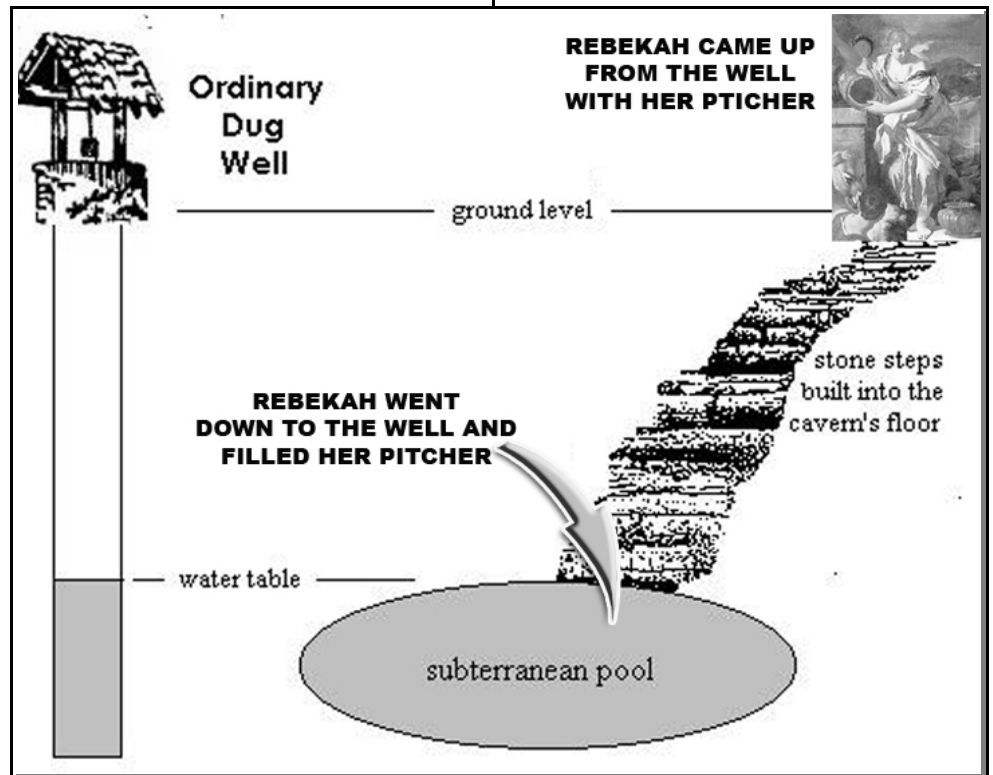
The word "damsel" means "A YOUNG UNMARRIED WOMAN." ^{ISBE}

Other versions read, "very beautiful to behold," ^{NKJV} "very fair in countenance," ^{DARBY} "very attractive in appearance," ^{ESV} "of very good appearance," ^{YLT} and "very beautiful and attractive." ^{AMPLIFIED}

The word "fair" carries the idea of "GOOD, PLEASANT, EXCELLENT, AND VALUABLE IN ESTIMATION." ^{STRONG'S} Rebekah was very attractive, but not in a sensual way. Her attractiveness was joined to dignity, and, we will find, to purity as well.

A Virgin, Neither Had Any Man Known Her

Other versions read, "a virgin, who had never been touched by a man," ^{BBE} "a maiden whom no man had known," ^{ESV} and "chaste and modest, and unmarried." ^{AMPLIFIED}



SHE WAS FAIR TO LOOK UPON

"And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the

Some of the versions contain language that is too explicit. I think the Amplified Bible stated the case well: "chaste and modest, and unmarried."

This was true even though she was of marriable age – “A YOUNG WOMAN UNMARRIED, BUT OF MARRIAGEABLE AGE.” MCCLINTOK & STRONG’S

If it is true that God was directing this whole matter, and answering the servant’s prayer, then Rebekah is the woman He had chosen. **For a woman of her age, this is the kind of woman that meets with Divine approval – especially in the matter of morality.**

These days, chaste and pure young ladies are exceedingly rare. After sensuous music was imported into our country, a trend toward moral

defilement was elevated. Today, chaste young ladies are a growing rarity.

She Went Down, Filled Her Pitcher and Came Up

As the servant waits for the answer to his prayer, he beholds the Lord’s response being worked out before his eyes. The woman appears, she is a chaste and beautiful woman, and has her pitcher with her. She now proceeds to go down into the well, draw some water, and return.

The well of reference was one illustrated on the previous page. The

well was dug to the point where it reached water. Then adjacent to the well shaft, a subterranean pool was made where the water collected, being refreshed from the well as needed. Steps led down to this lower part, allowing the drawers of water to descend to the pool, draw their water, and return.

Now that the servant is assured that the kind of woman has been found, and that she is in a position to answer his petition, he proceeds. He is determined to find out if this is the right woman or not.

THE SERVANT RAN TO MEET HER

*“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 hastened, 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 water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.** ²⁰ And she hastened, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.”*

THE SERVANT RAN TO MEET HER

“And the servant ran to meet her. . .”

Even though there were apparently others at the well, Rebekah has caught the eye of the servant, and he is quick to proceed with the test.

Hasting to “Prove All Things”

Solemnly, the saints are admonished, “*Prove all things*” (1 Thess 5:21). Other versions read, “*Test all things,*” NKJV “*examine everything carefully,*” NASB and “*“But test and prove all things [until you can recognize] what is good; [to that] hold fast.”* AMPLIFIED

Quite often, this text is considered to be the means of discovering error

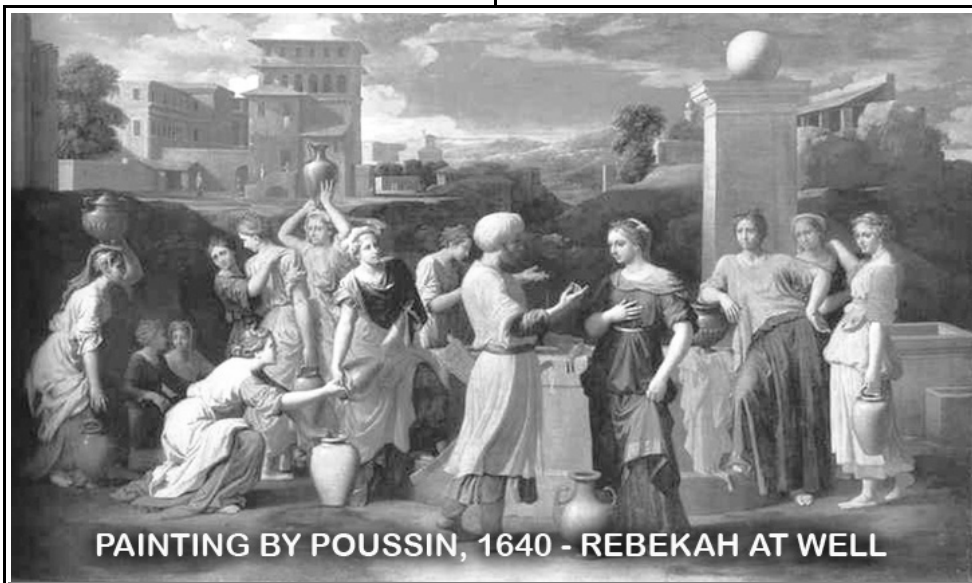
and falsehood, so that it may be avoided. Technically, however, that is really the secondary thing, not the primary one. Abraham’s servant was not seeking to find who was NOT qualified to be Isaac’s wife – although that would probably be discovered in the process. **He was looking for the qualified one, not the unqualified one.**

As simplistic as it may appear, if our aim is not to find and lay hold on the truth, there really is no purpose to discovering what is wrong. It is a life-changing occasion when the quest of the people, of God is to take hold of the truth. When that is their ambition, the truth will be found more quickly, as is illustrated in this text.

LET ME DRINK

*“ . . . and said, **Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.** And she said, **Drink, my lord: and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink . . .”***

Remember, the servant’s prayer was, “*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 . . .”*** (Gen 24:14). The woman has already drawn some water, and thus the servant proceeds to ask that he might drink a little water from her pitcher.



PAINTING BY POUSSIN, 1640 - REBEKAH AT WELL

The response of Rebekah was immediate: "And she said, *"Drink, my lord"; and she quickly lowered her jar to her hand, and gave him a drink.*" ^{NASB}

Remember, this is not a request from a member of her family, or from a friend. It came from a total stranger. According to men, this would not be a good circumstance – but it is God who is orchestrating the event. This is the God of heaven answering the prayer of Abraham's servant. However, only the servant will be able to recognize that this is happening.

The Privacy of the Saints

There are certain matters that are known only to the saints of God. They have the capacity to recognize such things, while others do not. The greatest example of this was the Lord Jesus, who always saw what the Father was doing. He said, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise"* (John 5:19). **In the most perfect and complete sense, Jesus was able to enter into what God was doing because He saw it.**

The same is true of those who are in Christ Jesus. They are able to enter into what God is doing, **but only if they see it.** Just as the servant could have proceeded no further if he did not see what was happening up to that point, so those who are in Christ Jesus cannot become involved in the good and acceptable and perfect will of God until they can see it being accomplished.

The things that are seen, and in which we can become involved are the "pearls" of which Jesus spoke – and they are never to be cast before the swine (Matt 7:6). That would be like Abraham's servant attempting to explain to a heathen how God answered his prayer.

WHEN SHE WAS DONE GIVING HIM A DRINK

" . . . And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they

have done drinking . . ."

Abraham's servant had prayed, *"And let it come to pass . . . 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 showed kindness unto my master"* (Gen 24:14).

Now, that is precisely what Rebekah says. After the servant has finished drinking, and without any kind of hint or coercion on the part of the servant, she responds, *"I will draw water for your camels also, until they finish drinking."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Remember, the servant has brought ten camels, and they are all at the well with him. Yet, Rebekah says she will continue drawing water for them, descending into the well, and ascending from it, until the camels have all finished drinking.

A camel stores water in its hump, which holds an average of fifty-two gallons of water. On the average they drink a minimum of twenty gallons of water at a time, and can drink as much as fifty gallons at a single time.

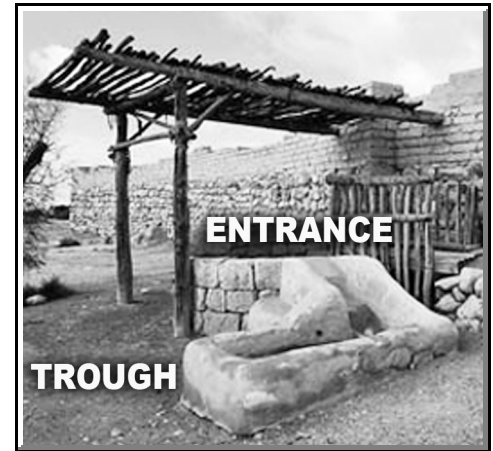
That means Rebekah drew from 200-500 gallons of water, drawing it out with a pitcher that held about 2-^{1/2} gallons – filling four to nine 55 gallon drums. That would require from 80-200 trips up and down the stairs into the well. It appears that the servant watched Rebekah for a significant period of time, and I do not doubt that his wonder grew greater and greater as the time passed.

SHE HASTED, DRAWING WATER FOR ALL HIS CAMELS

" . . . 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."

Other versions read, *"Then she quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran back to the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels"* ^{NKJV}

The kindness and diligence of



Rebekah is most remarkable. This was no small task, and she was doing it for a total stranger. However, we must not look at this event in that manner.

This is God at work, fulfilling His will in a manner that will bring glory to him.

An Introduction to How God Works to Will and to Do

In the exhortation to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, solemnly we are reminded, *"FOR it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure"* (Phil 2:13). The manner in which He works is seen in the response of Rebekah to Abraham's servant.

The truth of the matter is that God does not work through slothful and disinterested people. Those who seek the way that requires the least effort, will not find themselves involved in the *"good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God"* (Rom 12:1-2).

When professing Christians are more zealous in their earthly duties that in working out their own salvation, a most dangerous condition exists. In such a posture, they are actually closer to Hell than to Heaven! For those who pour themselves out in extracurricular activities, but only give a modicum of themselves to living by faith, they are putting themselves in a very precarious position. **Salvation cannot be "worked out" on a part time basis, with cyclical spiritual activity.** O, that more people were able to see this!

This is why God requires the love of man for Him to be *“with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment”* (Mark 12:30). It is why the saints are

exhorted, *“be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”* (1 Cor 15:58). It is why we are admonished to glorify God in

everything we do (1 Cor 10:31; Col 3:17,23). Of course, it is one thing to admit these words are in the Bible. It is quite another to heartily embrace them, and live them out. However, and be sure about this, all of the heart is required

AND THE SERVANT WONDERED

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

When God works with His people, their response is very important. He does not work for good in an environment where responses are often retarded, and sometimes totally lacking. It is most unfortunate that the religion of our day has actually cultivated spiritual retardation. It has literally taught people to live so they cannot detect the *“still small voice”* that often attends Divine workings (1 Kgs 19:12). Behold the contemplative response of the servant of Abraham.

a word, but he watched everything Rebekah did.” ^{CEV}

The word *“wondering”* means *“TO GAZE, BE ASTONISHED.”* ^{STRONG'S} The word from which it is translated occurs twenty-six times in Scripture. It is translated in a variety of ways.

- *“Respect”* – to have a preference for, and therefore receive. (Gen 4:4-5; Psa 119:17).
- *“Wondering”* – Beholding something extraordinary, and for which there is no natural explanation. (Gen 24:21).
- *“Regard”* – To choose to ponder and

In matters pertaining to life and godliness, there is a certain requirement to behold what is happening, think upon it, and correlate it, if possible, with the revealed and known will of God. **Many a poor soul has missed Divine provision because they have not considered what was happening before their very eyes.**

Here we see the unsettling nature of an entertainment-centered society. In entertainment itself, there is no appeal to the purpose of God, His direction, or finding out the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Because of this, it disarms the soul, causing the individual to be spiritually obtuse and unalert. It is of great concern that we are now in the fourth generation of young people who have been cultivated for entertainment – games, music, movies, etc. These are not the means of developing wholesome manners of thought, and that certainly is not what they have yielded.

The whole arrangement has brought a staggering financial investment, and salaries that are beyond all rational explanation. This has spilled over into the church. No one is able to provide a reasonable estimation of the amount of money that has been poured into religious youth-work. And yet, the result of this investment is by no means acceptable.

This generation is nor producing Samuel’s, David’s, Timothy’s, or Titus’. Because of this, there are signs of judgment looming on the horizon that are not seen and pondered. There are open doors that not perceived. Things that ought to be pondered are not being considered.

This generation is nor producing Samuel’s, David’s, Timothy’s, or Titus’. Because of this, there are signs of judgment looming on the horizon that are not seen and pondered. There are open doors that not perceived. Things that ought to be pondered are not being considered.

THE MAN HELD HIS PEACE

“And the man wondering at her held his peace . . .” Other versions read, *“And the man, wondering at her, remained silent,”* ^{NKJV} *“Meanwhile, the man was gazing at her in silence,”* ^{NASB} *“Without saying a word, the man watched her closely,”* ^{NIV} *“And the man looked steadfastly on her, holding his peace,”* ^{ASV} *“The servant said no more, but watched her carefully,”* ^{LIVING} *“the man studied her, and remained silent,”* ^{ABP} and *“Abraham’s servant did not say*

consider. (Ex 5:9).

- *“Looked”* – A matter of visual focus, paying close attention to. (2 Sam 22:42; Isa 17:7-8; 22:4; 31:1).

As Rebekah went about watering the camels, the servant set his eyes upon her, observing her manners, and not wanting to miss anything deemed pertinent to his mission.

The Manner of the Kingdom

Those who imagine that God will

work for His glory in such a generation have been deceived. He did not do so before the Law. He did not do so during the Law. And, He did not do so during the ministry of Jesus. Where people were found who did not pay attention to what was going on, choosing to ponder the works of God, they were simply left behind to wallow in their iniquity. There is such a consistency in this that it is mind-boggling!

WHETHER THE LORD HAD MADE HIS JOURNEY PROSPEROUS OR NOT

“ . . . to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or

not.” Other versions read, “ so as to know whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not,”^{NKJV} “to know whether the LORD had made his journey successful or not,”^{NASB} “ to learn whether or not the LORD had made his journey successful,”^{NIV} “ to see if she would finish the job, so that he would know whether she was the one,”^{LIVING} “ and because he wanted to know for certain if this was the woman the LORD had chosen.”^{CEV}

The servant does not leap to conclusions, but carefully observes Rebekah with a mind to determine if

she is the answer to his prayer. **Like Elijah, he will wait for the still small voice, and not be satisfied with mere outward appearance.** He will see if Rebekah is consistent, if she finishes the work she said she would do, and how she will respond to what he will address to her following the watering of the camels.

A person will learn wonderful things about the Person, purpose, and will of God if they will pay attention to what He is doing. There really is no substitute for an sensitive, alert, and pondering spirit.

CONCLUSION

The remarkable parallel of this whole event with the obtaining of a bride for Christ is not coincidental. **Sound theology recognizes that God did not behold what took place among men, and after that determine to work in a like manner.** Proper reasoning does not begin with men and proceed toward God. The human history that is recorded in Scripture is a **planned** history. Even the creation itself was bent around God’s eternal purpose. The sequence of creation – darkness, light, then life – was intentionally parallel to spiritual life and the new creation.

Adam as the progenitor of the human race was the intentional prefigurement of Jesus, the Progenitor of the new creation. Eve as the wife of Adam was the purposeful type of the church as Christ’s wife. Noah building an ark was the intentional type of Jesus building His church for safety. The flood was the deliberate prefigurement of the second coming of Christ and the day of judgment. In Abraham we have precise depiction of faith. In Isaac we have a type of both Christ and the redeemed – chosen to be the Heir and heirs. Cain and Esau were types of the flesh. Hagar

and Ishmael were types of the Law. Melchizedek was a type of Christ.

Now we are seeing the choosing of a wife for Isaac, and it is following the predetermined purpose of God to have a bride for His Son.

All of this as was planned – laid out on the board of eternal purpose before the world was created. This means we can learn much from the report of these events. They were tailored for our learning, and *“happened,”* and are written, for our learning for (1 Cor 10:11).

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 6/29/12. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The thirty-sixth lesson will cover verses 22 through 48 of chapter twenty-four: “A WIFE FOR ISAAC, #2.” After inquiring if there was room enough in her father’s house for them to dwell, and receiving assurance there was enough room and provision for them, Abraham’s “oldest servant” blessed the Lord, confessing He had led him to this place. Having entered the house, the servant then told them of the mission on which his master, Abraham, had sent him. The meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.