

St. Margaret's Zoom Bible Study
Dr. Fr. Benjamin Speare-Hardy II
Wednesday, August 21, 2024

6:30 PM

Genesis

Background

Genesis Chapter 23 records Sarah's death and Abraham's investment in her eternal inheritance with a cave in Hebron. From this chapter, God reveals seven lessons about placing your hope and investments in your eternal inheritance in heaven. First, God records that Sarah was blessed with a long life, dying at age 127. God also promises to bless those who honor Him with a prolonged life. This could be a day, a month, a year, or a decade. He will reveal your blessing in heaven. Like Sarah, He will also remember and celebrate your faith while blotting out your sins. Second, Abraham mourned the loss of his lifelong love. But he did not grieve without hope. Instead, He had the faith and hope that she was destined for a better place with God. God also wants believers to mourn the loss of loved ones. But He does not want you to grieve without hope. Third, when looking for a place to bury Sarah, Abraham revealed to a local Hittite that he had lived in the Promised Land as a sojourner without any actual land possessions. Many of the great leaders of the Old Testament lived the same way.

Jesus also lived without a permanent home. He also wants you to live on Earth as a sojourner, with the faith and conviction that heaven is your natural home. Fourth, because of Abraham's reputation before the Philistine King Abimelech, the Hittites feared Abraham as under God's protection. From this, God reveals that you must also live your life as a light to the lost. Fifth, Abraham refused to accept any gifts from the Hittites. From this, God reveals that you are not to be unequally yoked by the things of this world. Sixth, Abraham then paid the Hittites' inflated demand of 400 shekels of silver without haggling. Jesus also wants you to place your investments in the Kingdom of Heaven, no matter the cost. Finally, Abraham trusted God's promises, even though the only investment he ever owned was a tomb. God also wants you to trust in His eternal promises, even though you cannot see many of them.

Genesis Chapter 24 recounts Abraham's faith in sending his most trusted servant to find a bride for his son Isaac. This is also the longest chapter in the book of Genesis. Every chapter in the Bible is essential and should be studied. However, the relative length of this chapter compared to others establishes that God cares more about establishing proper relationships with Him and other people than He does in explaining scientific matters like the origins of mankind. This account should be read on at least three levels. First, it documents the union of the second patriarch and matriarch of Israel. Second, it reveals seven truths for any believer to find a godly spouse. Third, it foreshadows the future marriage between the Church (symbolized by Rebekah) and Jesus (symbolized by Isaac). The faithful servant who guides Rebekah and Isaac together foreshadows the significant role of the Holy Spirit in guiding believers.

The seven truths for a person of faith to find a godly spouse revealed in this chapter include (1) faith in God; (2) purity in yourself and your spouse; (3) prayer for a spouse of virtue; (4) trust in God's provision; (5) gratitude and joy; (6) praise for God; and (7) obedience and submission.

First, because of his faith, God blessed Abraham in every way. This included his family. From this, God reveals that faith is the first and most crucial step before He can bless you. This includes (but is not limited to) finding a godly spouse. Second, Abraham sent his trusted (but nameless) servant to find a spouse for Isaac. However, the servant could not look for a spouse in Canaan, where idol worship was rampant. He allowed his servant to return to Abraham's extended family in Haran briefly. But Isaac could not leave the Promised Land to return to a place where he might be corrupted because his family in Haran were also idol worshippers.

The Holy Spirit carefully selected one woman who would rise above her family's idolatry and accept the one true God in faith. From this, God reveals that the second most crucial step for finding a godly spouse is ensuring purity in your spouse and yourself. You and your spouse must be careful not to become unequally yoked in your walk. Third, while in Haran, Abraham's servant prayed for God to reveal Isaac's future wife through tests of hospitality that would show her virtue. He did not ask God to bring a woman of beauty. From this, God reveals that you should pray for God to bring you a spouse of godly virtue. He wants you to focus on a person's inner beauty and godly virtue, not outward appearance.

Fourth, because the servant did not ask for someone with external beauty, God rewarded his faith and wisdom by bringing a spouse of exceptional beauty to Isaac. From this, God reveals that He will provide for your needs when you trust Him in faith. Fifth, after finding Rebekah, the servant showed gratitude toward God. Rebekah, in turn, ran to her family's tent with joy. From this, God wants you to respond when He provides for you and your spouse with a life filled with gratitude and joy. Sixth, the servant carefully recounted for Rebekah's family God's provision in guiding him to Rebekah. From this, God reveals that you can honor Him and help others come to faith by sharing His praise and your testimony of God's provision in your life. Finally, Rebekah showed complete obedience and prompt submission to God's will. From this, God reveals that you must also give Him complete obedience and prompt submission. You and your spouse must also submit to each other in love.

Genesis Chapter 21 & 22

Topics for Discussion

Chapter 23:1-20 **Sarah's Death and Burial**

Chapter 24:1-67- **The Marriage of Issac and Rebekah**