

Genesis 24:1-67  
Part 1

Introduction

1. Today I am going to attempt something that I don't believe I've ever done before:
  - a. A common technique used by preachers and teachers when putting together an outline is something called alliteration
  - b. Alliteration is when you use words that all begin with the same letter or sound in each of the main points of a message
  - c. It's designed to help the listener remember the main points, and Dustin and I have occasionally done this
  - d. However, today I am going to do something few pastors have ever attempted it; in fact, it's so rare and dangerous that those who have attempted it and failed, have been forced out of the ministry in disgrace
  - e. Today, I'm going to use double alliteration—two alliterated words in each main point, the first beginning with a "C" and the second beginning with a "P"
  - f. And, to make it even more challenging, rather than the normal three or four main points, there are six (OOOO! AAAAH!)
2. All kidding aside, our passage today is a large one—67 verses—so I am going to cover half this week and half next week
3. Today we're going to look at the first three points:
  - a. Abraham's COMMISSION regarding God's PROMISE (24:1-9)
  - b. The servant's CONFIDENCE in God's PROVISION (24:10-14)
  - c. God's CONSISTENCY in upholding His PATTERN (24:15-27)
4. Next week we'll cover the final three points:
  - a. Abraham's servants COMMUNICATION of God's PLAN (24:28-54a)
  - b. Rebecca's COMMITMENT to God's PROPOSAL (24:54b-61)
  - c. Isaac's COMFORT in God's PROVISION (24:62-67)

A. Abraham's COMMISSION regarding God's PROMISE (READ 24:1-9)

1. V. 1 tell us that Abraham was old, advanced in age, and that the Lord had blessed him "**in every way**":
  - a. More precisely, Abraham at this point was somewhere between 137 years of age (he was 10 years older than Sarah and she died at 127) and 140 (Isaac was 40 when he married Rebecca)
  - b. And, he had indeed been blessed by God:
    - 1) He was living in the land God had promised him and his descendants
    - 2) God had prospered him financially with huge flocks, a large number of servants, gold, silver, and many other possessions
    - 3) He had made his name great among the inhabitants of the land
    - 4) And, the LORD fulfilled His promise of a son in Isaac

2. After Sarah's death in the previous chapter, we saw Abraham demonstrate his faith in God's future promises regarding the land:
  - a. Rather than return to his native homeland to bury Sarah, which was the normal practice in the ANE, he bought a new burial site in the land of Canaan and buried Sarah there
  - b. This cave served as the burial site for not just Sarah, but Abraham himself, Isaac, Jacob, Rebecca and Leah
  - c. And it ultimately served as a demonstration of Abraham's faith in God's promise to give the land of Canaan to him and his descendants
  - d. We might look at Abraham's initial leaving of Ur, and his burying of Sarah in Canaan, as bookends to God's call to leave Mesopotamia for Canaan; it made the move permanent
  
3. We see something similar here with the commission Abraham gave to his oldest and most trusted servant:
  - a. The LORD's promise to Abraham was that through Isaac he would have descendants as numerous as the stars of the sky and the dust of the earth, and they would inherit the land
  - b. However, Isaac was 40 years old at this point (or close to it), but without a wife or children
  - c. So, Abraham sent his servant on a mission to find Isaac a wife, but there are two conditions:
    - 1) The first condition is that his servant must swear an oath not to find Isaac a wife among the Canaanites, but from Abraham's own relatives back in Mesopotamia (RE-READ 2-4):
      - a) The text doesn't tell us why Abraham prohibited the servant from finding a wife among the Canaanites, but it's not hard to guess: they were pagans who worshipped false Gods
      - b) On the other hand, we learn later in the passage that his relatives back in Mesopotamia at least recognized and possibly worshipped Yahweh (though Laban Rebecca's brother appears to have worshipped other gods as well)
    - 2) The second condition is that his servant must not, under any circumstances, take Isaac back to Mesopotamia (5-9):
      - a) The servant asks a legitimate question (and I'll paraphrase), "What if the woman I find who is willing to marry Isaac isn't willing to come back to Canaan?"
      - b) Abraham's response is tied directly to God's promise regarding the land (RE-READ 7-8):
        - God took Abraham from Mesopotamia, brought him into Canaan, and promised to give his descendants the land
        - This same God would send His angel to guide the servant in finding the woman who would be willing to marry Isaac and come back to Canaan
        - If not, the servant would be under no obligation
        - And, to make it absolutely clear, Abraham repeated his prohibition that the servant was not, under any circumstances, to bring Isaac back to Mesopotamia
  
4. Takeaway: Abraham's COMMISSION to his servant showed not only faith and trust in the LORD to provide a wife for Isaac, but a COMMITMENT to the LORD's PROMISE:
  - a. Abraham buried his wife in Canaan instead of back in his homeland of Mesopotamia because he expected God to fulfill all of His promises, including his descendants posing the land
  - b. We see something similar here: he believed God would provide a bride for Isaac from among his own people, but one who would be willing to come back to Canaan and live in the land

- c. He not only believed God could and would do what He promised, but was committed to doing his part to see that what God promised would be fulfilled
- d. How about us? It is one thing for us to believe God will do what He promised, but are we committed to do our part to see that it comes to pass?
- e. God has given us a COMMISSION (the Great Commission) to fulfill His PROMISE of preaching the Gospel to all nations but are we COMMITTED to see His PROMISE fulfilled?

**B. The servant's CONFIDENCE in God's PROVISION (READ 24:10-14)**

1. One of the things that seems clear later in the passage is that the servant didn't know any of Abraham's relatives and he knew he needed to rely on God's guidance and provision
2. So, when he arrived in the city of Nahor he immediately went to the well just outside the city—this was a very smart strategic move because it's where the women of the city came to draw water
3. He then began to pray for God's help:
  - a. I say "began" to pray because as we'll see in a moment, God answered his prayer before he even finished praying!
  - b. Notice how he began (RE-READ 12):
    - 1) Even though he referred to God as "**the God of my master**", he spoke to God by name, Yahweh, which generally indicated more than just a cognitive knowledge of God
    - 2) He asked God to make his mission a success, but not for his own benefit but as an expression of God's "**lovingkindness**" (e.g. loyalty and faithfulness) toward Abraham
  - c. He then presents God with a scenario in which God could reveal HIS choice of a bride for Isaac (RE-READ 13-14):
    - 1) The servant's CONFIDENCE in God's PROVISION here was outstanding; he was convinced that God had already chosen and appointed a bride for Isaac: "**may she be the one whom You have appointed for Your servant Isaac...**"
    - 2) He recognized that the success of his mission had more to do with God's PROVISION than his own ability
4. Takeaway: we can be CONFIDENT in God's PROVISION:
  - a. Jesus promised us that God would care for all our needs (READ Matthew 6:31-34)
  - b. Paul wrote in Philippians 4:19: "**And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.**"
  - c. 2 Corinthians 9:8: "**And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed.**"
  - d. Probably the greatest statement in the Bible regarding God's provision for us is found in Romans 8:32: "**He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?**"
  - e. Just as Abraham's servant could be CONFIDENT in God's PROVISION because of His lovingkindness toward Abraham, we too can be CONFIDENT in God's PROVISION because of His lovingkindness toward us
  - f. This leads us to our third and final point

**C. God's CONSISTENCY in upholding His PATTERN (24:15-27)**

1. One of the great themes of the Bible is God's PATTERN of lovingkindness, and we've talked about the Hebrew word behind this before:
  - a. It's the word hesed and English translations render it in a variety of ways including lovingkindness, kindness, goodness, and even mercy
  - b. However, some scholars believe that when it comes to God, hesed represents more than just kindness, goodness, or mercy; represents His covenant loyalty or faithfulness to His people
  - c. This is the view I hold, and it's reflected in the NET translation; we see this if we go back to the servant's prayer in 24:12: "**He prayed, 'O LORD, God of my master Abraham, guide me today. Be faithful to my master Abraham.'**"
  
2. God CONSISTANTLY upholds this PATTERN of faithfulness and loyalty to his people throughout the Bible and that's exactly what we see here (READ 24:15-25):
  - a. Notice what v. 15 says: "**even before he had finished speaking**" God answered the servant's prayer!
    - 1) Rebekah shows up at the well and she just so happens to be the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor (for those keeping score at home that would make her Abraham's great niece and Isaac's first cousin once removed)
    - 2) And, as a bonus she "**was very beautiful**" and a virgin (16)
  - b. All these details are for our benefit; the servant doesn't yet know God has answered his prayer but it soon becomes apparent:
    - 1) So he approached her with the plan he laid out before the LORD, asked her for a drink, and lo and behold she not only agreed but offered to provide water for his camels (17-20)
    - 2) The servant had 12 camels so this likely took a while, and v. 21 tells us that he stood there gazing at her without saying a word while he determined whether God had made his journey a success or not
    - 3) He ultimately realized God's answer to his prayer because he took out a gold nose ring and two gold wrists bracelets to place upon her and asked to lodge at her family's home—and this was even before she confirmed who she was (22-26)
  
3. In response to God's provision, the servant began to worship (READ 24:26-27):
  - a. This is the first of two instances where we see the servant physically bow down and worship the LORD; the second comes after Rebekah's father and brother gave permission for Rebecca to become Isaac's wife (v. 52)
  - b. His worship was a response to what God had done:
    - 1) God had not "**forsaken His lovingkindness and His truth**" toward Abraham:
      - a) Notice that the servant didn't simply praise God for his lovingkindness and truth here
      - b) Rather, he praised God for not having forsaken these things which means to depart or abandon something
      - c) In essence, he praised God for His CONSISTENCY in upholding his PATTERN of faithfulness and loyalty
    - 2) God did this by guiding him to the house of Abraham's brothers and the woman He had appointed to be Isaac's wife

4. Takeaway: God deserves to be worshipped and praised for His CONSISTENCY in upholding His pattern of faithfulness and loyalty to us:
  - a. God's lovingkindness is a major theme of the Psalms occurring in over 1/3 of the Psalms (53 out of 150) and over 120 verses
  - b. In fact, it is one of the primary reasons given in the Psalms for thanking and praising God:
    - 1) Psalm 106:1: **"Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks for the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting."**
    - 2) Psalm 136:1-3: **"Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, For His lovingkindness is everlasting. Give thanks to the God of gods, for His lovingkindness is everlasting. Give thanks to the Lord of Lords, for His lovingkindness is everlasting..."**
  - c. You may have noticed there in Psalm 136 that all 26 of the verses describe God's lovingkindness as **"everlasting"**; His lovingkindness never ends; He is CONSISTENTLY faithful and loyal to us
  - d. This is why in his letter to the Philippians Paul was able to write, **"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."** (Philippians 1:6)
  - e. It's also why he was able to write 2 Timothy 2:11-13 (READ and explain)