



## TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

### Talk Genesis 24:1-9: Abraham Commissions His Servant to Go On a Journey

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#### Lesson 51

*"Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. 2 So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, "Please, put your hand under my thigh, 3 and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; 4 but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac."*

*5 And the servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you came?"*

*6 But Abraham said to him, "Beware that you do not take my son back there. 7 The LORD God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land,' He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. 8 And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be released from this oath; only do not take my son back there." 9 So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter."*

#### Background Notes

Let's begin our study of this longest chapter in Genesis with a few background notes. Verse 1 tells us that Abraham was old, well advanced in age. In fact, he was 140 years old. We know that he was a 100 years old when Isaac was born, and Genesis 25:20 says that Isaac was 40 years old when he took Rebekah as wife, so Abraham was 140 at this point. Sarah had died, and now Abraham wanted to find a wife for his son Isaac. Both father and a son trusted the Lord to bring the right woman into Isaac's life. This is a great lesson for us on trusting God, isn't it?

Abraham commissioned his servant to go back to the area of Haran and find a wife for Isaac. Haran was about 500 miles away, not too far from where northeast Syria and northwest Iraq come together today, at the top of the "Fertile Crescent." Why go so far away for a wife? Why not marry a Canaanite? Perhaps Abraham wanted Isaac to marry someone from his extended family living in Haran. But more importantly, Abraham must have known that God had declared that blessing would not come through the Canaanites. Noah was speaking in Genesis 9:25-26, *"Then he said: "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brethren." 26 And he said: "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant."*

We believe that Abraham knew this blessing and curse from the time of Noah. The fact that Abraham had his servant take an oath concerning this matter indicates its importance. To "place the hand under the thigh" was a euphemistic way of saying that the hand was placed near the genital area. The oath had to do with Isaac's progeny, the promise of the seed of Abraham that would now be carried on through Isaac. The blessing

would be preserved by the offspring of Isaac and his wife. So you can see the importance of the oath that was made.

## **Doctrinal Points**

### **1. In Genesis 24, Isaac is a picture or *type* of Christ at the present time.**

Let's review what the word *type* means. Here is a brief and broad definition of the word *type*. A type is an Old Testament person, place, event, or other item, which illustrates or pictures New Testament truth. In Genesis 22 we looked at the beautiful *type* of the sacrifice of Christ, seen through the account of Abraham and Isaac at Mount Moriah. Abraham, a *type* of God the Father, was willing to sacrifice his beloved son. Isaac, a *type* of God the Son, went willingly to the place of sacrifice. What a great picture of God's love for us!

In Hebrews 11:19, Scripture indicates that in the sacrifice of Isaac at Mount Moriah, we also have a picture or *type* of the resurrection of Christ. Let's read Hebrews 11:17-19: *"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called,"<sup>[a]</sup> 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense."* There it is – it's not just our imagination! The New Testament says that Isaac, at Mount Moriah, being received back to Abraham, is a *type* of the resurrection of Christ.

So in Genesis 24, Isaac continues to be a *type* of Christ, but he is particularly a picture of Christ at the present time -- not during His earthly ministry, but after His resurrection. Our Lord is now resurrected and He is now with the Father. Meanwhile, a bride for Christ is being called out of this world -- the church is being formed at the present time.

So Rebekah in this chapter represents the church. As Abraham arranged for a bride to be found for Isaac, so God, as pictured here in Abraham's strategy, is ensuring in His sovereign plans that a bride for Christ be found and made ready for the future "Marriage Supper of the Lamb." What a great picture! In Genesis 24, Isaac is a picture or *type* of Christ at the present time.

### **2. In Genesis 24, the unnamed servant is a picture or *type* of the Holy Spirit at the present time.**

The unnamed servant was probably Eliezer (Genesis 15). The fact that he had been with Abraham from the beginning, and is unnamed here, enhances his portrayal of the Holy Spirit. At the present time, the Holy Spirit is carrying out God's plans to search out a bride for Christ. The Holy Spirit is at work forming the church. Now we'll see later in this chapter that the unnamed servant does not speak of himself, but only of Abraham the Father, and Isaac the son and heir. In the same way, the Holy Spirit today does not speak of himself, but draws our attention to the love and wealth of the Father, and to the glories of the Son. The Lord Jesus said about the Holy Spirit in John 16:14-15: *He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you."*

As Isaac was not to go with the servant, but remain home with Abraham, so the Lord Jesus is not here bodily on earth today, but is with the Father in heaven. The Holy Spirit, like the unnamed servant, is here and is actively calling out of this world a people to come by faith to become the bride of Christ. Notice from verse 8 that the servant was not to force the woman to come -- she was to come of her own free will. In the same way, although the sovereignty of God is involved in every conversion, the Holy Spirit does not manipulate our "wills" if we refuse to come. In Genesis 24 the unnamed servant is a picture or type of the Holy Spirit at the present time.

## **Practical Application**

### **1. The Holy Spirit will not manipulate your will and force you to become a Christian if you do not want to.**

The doctrines of predestination and election and the sovereignty of God are quite clear in Scripture, but still the Bible would teach that the Holy Spirit will not manipulate your will and force you to become a Christian if you don't want to. That is certainly a practical application from this chapter.

Maybe you are here today, and you're not a Christian. You can become a Christian today by receiving Christ as your personal Savior. He died for your sins! God wants you to enter His family, and He would like you to make that decision this morning -- but He will not force you. The Holy Spirit will not manipulate your will and force you to become a Christian if you don't want to.

### **2. The more biblical counseling you get before marriage, the better your marriage will be later.**

I notice that there are a number of young adults here today. How would you feel if you were in Isaac's situation or in Rebekah's situation, with your marriage being arranged? You haven't even seen the person you're going to marry! That is certainly not the American way! Well, believe it or not, many cultures around the world have arranged marriages -- and far fewer divorces, by the way.

The western idea is that you fall in love and then marry. The eastern thought is that the marriage is arranged and the couple falls in love after marriage. Margie and I know a Christian couple from India whose marriage was arranged by their parents. We asked them whether they were in love when they got married, and they said, No, they didn't even know each other! They told us they learned to love one another after their marriage, and they are happily married today. Their parents had arranged a good marriage!

Now I'm not suggesting that the American way has got to go, but I am suggesting that the more godly, biblical counseling a person gets about their particular gifts and strengths and weaknesses, and what kind of spouse would best suit your personality and compliment your strengths and weaknesses, etc., the better off you'll be when start falling in love. Do you agree? I'm glad to see those single people nodding their heads!

So take to heart all the help and advice you can get from parents, from friends who are strong Christians, from godly people who know you and care about you. Remember, the more biblical counseling you get before marriage, the better your marriage will be later!