

Quick Recap

- * Last week we looked at parts 1 and 2 of the “[bride project](#)”
 - * In vv. 1-9, Abraham commissions his “senior servant” to seek a suitable bride for Isaac
 - * Then in vv. 10-21, we learned how the servant went about carrying out his task
 - * Reflecting on last week, I think it’s interesting to note ...
 - ◆ That Abraham was specific about the objective ...
 - ◆ But gave wide latitude to the servant w/r/t the implementation
- 👉 Which is, in my estimation, a pretty good leadership principle

Recap

- * This week we will look at the final four stages
 - ◆ The ceremony including - vv. 22-54a
 - ▶ An elaborate proposal
 - ▶ The gracious acceptance
 - ▶ “Paying for the wedding”
 - ◆ The conniving - vv. 54b-57
 - ◆ The consent - vv. 58-61
 - ◆ The consummation - vv. 62-67

The Ceremony

- * There is a clear sense of urgency to the ceremony, which proceeds in deliberate stages
 - ◆ Stage 1: The “engagement” — vv. 22-27
 - ◆ Stage 2: The family meeting — vv. 28-33
 - ◆ Stage 3: The marriage proposal — vv. 34-49
 - ◆ Stage 4: The “ready” response — vv. 50-51
 - ◆ Stage 5: The bride-price — vv. 52-54a

The Ceremony

- * Stage 1: The Engagement
 - ◆ Satisfied with Rebekah ... the “engagement ring” is presented - v. 22
 - Note ... only a “token” of commitment at this point
 - More needs to be vetted before the deal is done
 - ◆ The servant inquires about Rebekah’s lineage and potential lodging - v. 23
 - ◆ To which he receives two delightful replies in vv. 24-25

The Ceremony

- ◆ **What are they?**
 - Rebekah is from the right family!!!! - Nahor's line
 - Not only lodging, but also straw and feed for his animals
 - ◆ Again noting Rebekah's "excessive" kindness
- ◆ **How does the servant respond to this news?**
 - With respect and worship
- ◆ **Note the progression**
 - Bows with respect toward Rebekah, and
 - Acknowledges the source of his success with worship

The Ceremony

- ◆ **What does the servant acknowledge about God?**
 - His lovingkindness .. cf. 24:12, 14
 - His TRUTH — **What does this refer to?**
 - ◆ God's promises of a seed ... which requires a wife, and
 - ◆ Abraham's confidence in God's provision .. cf. 24:7
- ◆ The servant's first thought is for God, his second for his master, and lastly for himself ...
 - "The LORD has guided me ..."
- 📖 Which should remind us that — **Success, which inflates the normal man, should instead humble the man of God**

The Ceremony

* Stage 2: The Family Meeting

- ◆ A whole lot of “runnin’” going on!
- ◆ Rebekah reports the encounter and Laban hurries to meet the unknown benefactor to extend hospitality
- ◆ What do you think motivates Laban?
 - Probably a “payday” more than the family connection ... based on the order reported
- ◆ Why does Laban call the servant “blessed of the LORD”?
 - Probably from Rebekah’s report — recounting vv. 26-27
 - Or his knowledge of Abraham ... NOT because he “believes”

The Ceremony

- ◆ Laban provides the customary courtesy .. to some degree of excess by doing it himself ...
 - Fed the animals
 - A foot bath for the servant and his men
 - A meal
- ◆ But the servant, contrary to custom, is all about the business at hand!
- ◆ He will not permit himself rest until he has successfully fulfilled his commission

The Ceremony

* Stage 3: The Marriage Proposal — itself a multi-stage process

- ◆ First the “bona fides” - vv. 34-36
 - ▶ I'm an ambassador for Abraham
 - ▶ Who has been blessed by God ... *exceedingly*
 - ▶ And given it ALL to his son — born to he and Sarah in their old age
- ◆ Second his “commission” - vv. 37-38

The Ceremony

* Third, his reservations — yet Abraham's confidence & grace - vv. 39-41

* Fourth, his plan and God's response - vv. 42-48 ... this is how God chose Rebekah

* AND FINALLY, the request in v. 49

- ◆ SO, will you accept my masters proposal — tell me now ... *yes or no* ... so I can determine my next move

The Ceremony

* Why do you think the servant presses the demand for an immediate response?

- ◆ Because if it's NO, he ain't stayin'
- ◆ He will not become indebted if the proposal is not accepted ... seems he learned from Abraham

* Stage Four: The Acceptance - vv. 50-51

- ◆ Their "ready" response: "All is from the LORD, who are we to object ... Take her!"

* Stage Five: The Bride-Price - vv. 52-54a

- ◆ The servant acknowledges God's providence and pays the dowry

The Ceremony

* What are the big lessons here?

- ◆ Propose quickly or the food will get cold!
- ◆ Complete reliance on the LORD, and
- ◆ Things will work out as God intends them to when we remain faithful to and focused on the task

The Conniving

- * The servant wishes to be “on his way” first thing the next day ... and asks his “leave”
- * Which meets with an entreaty to “stay for a while” - say 10 days
 - ◆ Ostensibly for a time of celebration
- * Yet the servant is adamant to complete his task w/o delay
 - ◆ I like his stated reason — **What is it?**
 - ◆ “Don’t stand in God’s way!”
- * **Why do you the family proposes the delay?**
 - ◆ I believe to extract more “loot” (greed) from Abraham, **not to celebrate**
 - ◆ Which we will see more clearly when we get to the Jacob narrative ...

The Conniving

- ◆ **But what is our clue from this context?**
 - Note v. 57 ... Seems odd
 - Had they “consulted” Rebekah’s wishes up to this point?
- * The family obviously expected Rebekah to back them up ... and it may have been customary to seek her consent at this point
- * Nevertheless, she probably surprises them with her simple reply ... **Which is?**
 - ◆ “I WILL GO”

The Consent

* What and who does this remind you of?

- ◆ Abraham, and his response to God's call to leave Ur

* What does this tell us about Rebekah?

- ◆ In addition to being kind and a hard worker ... she seems to have a resolute faith — and courage

* Where do you think this came from?

- ◆ I'm speculating — but I think it came from her observing the servant's faith in the LORD

📖 Again reminding us how much our witness matters!

The Consent

* Rebekah is sent away with her nurse and a blessing ...

* What is interesting about the blessing?

- ◆ It is “unknowingly” prophetic on two points

* First, expressing wishes for many children is common ... but “thousands of ten thousands” is hyperbolic

- ◆ This is how the Hebrew language would express the idea of “infinite” in number
- ◆ Perhaps drawing our attention to the Abrahamic Covenant
 - ▶ Stars of the heavens, sands of the seashore

The Consent

- * Second — same deal on possessing the gates of his enemies
 - ◆ “Your (sg) seed (sg) possess (3rd masc. sg.) the gate of the ones who hate (pl.) him (3rd masc. sg.)
 - ◆ Exact same thing we unravelled two weeks ago in Gen 22:17b-18a
- * Velllly interesting ...
- * And the journey “home” begins

The Consummation

- * What had Isaac been doing all this time?
 - ◆ Living in the wilderness waiting patiently for God’s will to be made known
 - ◆ Makes me think of Ps 46:10a ... “Be still and know that I am God”
- * Where was he waiting?
 - ◆ Same place where Hagar had her encounter with the pre-incarnate Christ ... cf Gen 16:14
 - ◆ So this had seemingly become a “spiritual place”

The Consummation

- * Upon finishing his “meditation” he looks up and sees the caravan returning
 - ◆ Hebrew word translated meditation only occurs here in the OT ... so meaning is uncertain
 - ◆ Some assert it means ... “wandering about”
- * In any event, he was either praying or reflectively walking about — probably anticipating what the LORD might do in securing a wife
 - ◆ So in some sense, as the servant was doing his part, Isaac was doing what he could do ... pray

The Consummation

- * Rebekah spots Isaac and inquires as to his personage
- * Upon learning it was her husband to be, she covers herself in chastity
- * Isaac then gets the full report from the servant ...
 - ◆ Obviously more involved than reported
- * That Isaac was content with the “transaction” is seen by the consummation of the marriage in v. 67

Opening Thoughts

- * Having secured the family burial site .. and buried Sarah
- * And securing a wife for his heir — Isaac
- * There was nothing left for Abraham to do but be “gathered to his people”
- * Gen 25:1-18 records Abraham’s legacy ...
- * Then the baton passes to Isaac in 25:19ff

Structure of Gen. 25

- * The legacy of Abraham ... Gen 25:1-18
 - ◆ The father of many nations - Part 1 — w. 1-4
 - ◆ The last will & testament — w. 5-6
 - ◆ The obituary — w. 7-11
 - ◆ The father of many nations - Part 2 — w. 12-18
- * On to Isaac ... Gen 25:19-28:9
 - ◆ Not much time is spent on Isaac — almost seems he is just a genealogical bridge to Jacob and Joseph

The Legacy of Abraham

* The Father of many nations Part 1 - vv. 1-4

- ◆ Abraham is recorded here as taking another **wife**
- ◆ In a parallel genealogy (1 Chron 1:32-33) Keturah is called his **concubine**
- ◆ And then in v. 6 we have "**concubines**"
- ◆ There are several ways to reconcile this ... most easily is to recognize that "wife" is an interpretive decision
 - Hebrew only has one word for "wife" or "woman"
 - It is the Hebrew word אִשָּׁה
 - So if in v. 1 the word is translated woman — the difficulty disappears

The Legacy ...

- ◆ Adding to the confusion is the timing of the "taking"
 - The number of "generations" (3) by Keturah and only 48 years since Sarah's death suggests that Keturah was not a new arrival
 - If timing is an issue the verb can be translated "had taken"
- ◆ **All of which, in the end, is much to do about nothing**
- ◆ Just wanted to show how commentators get crazy 😊
- * Because Keturah is not the main point of vv. 1-4 - **What is?**
 - ◆ The genealogy of "the nations" issuing from Abraham

The Legacy ...

- * Abraham's last will & testament — vv. 5-6
 - ◆ His entire inheritance went to Isaac - v. 5
 - ◆ But he provided “grub-stakes” (gifts) to his others sons during his lifetime - v. 6
 - ▶ Before sending them away to other lands
- * Abraham's Obituary — vv. 7-11
 - ◆ Abraham lived 100 yrs. in the promised land - Gen 12:4
 - ◆ His obituary bears witness to covenant promises fulfilled

The Legacy ...

- ◆ Promise #1: “You shall be buried at a good old age” .. Gen 15:15b
 - ▶ Fulfillment: “All the years ... 175 years ... he breathed his last and died at a good old age”
- ◆ Promise #2: “You shall go to your fathers in peace” .. Gen 15:15a
 - ▶ Fulfillment: “... an old man and satisfied with life”
 - ▶ Fulfillment: “... and he was gathered to his people”
- ◆ Abraham lived a long and peaceful life ... Just as God had promised him!

The Legacy ...

- ◆ What does the phrase “gathered to his people” imply?
 - Some rudimentary sense of an after-life
 - Which is confirmed by God Himself in Exod 3:6 and cited by Christ in Matt 22:31-33
- ◆ Abraham was buried with Sarah by his two sons - Isaac and Ishmael
 - In the cave of Machpelah that he had purchased as a burial site for the family

The Legacy ...

- ◆ After which God blesses Isaac
 - Interesting to note that both Abraham AND God “pass the torch” to Isaac
- ◆ And Isaac settles at Beer-lahai-roi
- * Ishmael’s genealogy is the last order of business in Abraham’s “wrap-up”
 - ◆ As with Keturah’s progeny, those playing no part in the history of salvation are presented & bow out — giving way to focus on the redemptive line

The Legacy ..

* What is the purpose of Ishmael's genealogy?

- ◆ Certainly to preserve a genealogical record
- ◆ But more importantly to record God's faithfulness in his promises to Hagar ...

* In this regard, what in particular is noted?

- ◆ Many descendants - Gen 16:10; 17:20
- ◆ A great nation - Gen 17:20; 21:13, 18
- ◆ Twelve princes - Gen 17:20

The Legacy ..

- ◆ He lived "East" of Isaac - Gen 16:12; 21:20-21
- ◆ Lived in contention with his relatives - Gen 16:12

* Now, beginning in v. 19 we move on to the "seed" legacy and the life of Isaac ... [Next week](#) 😊

* But before we close this week let's reflect on the man Abraham

Reflections on Abraham

- * His belief and relationship with God
 - ◆ Monotheistic in his belief and worship
 - ◆ God's justice - Gen 18:25
 - ◆ God' provision - Gen 22:8
 - ◆ Friend of God - 2 Chron 20:7; Isa 41:8; Jas 2:23
- * Abraham's "personal testimony"
 - ◆ Obedient - Gen 12:4; 22:3

Reflections on Abraham

- ◆ Believed God & Declared Righteous - Gen 15:6
- ◆ Discerning & Wise - Gen 14:22-23; 23:9
- ◆ Generous - Gen 13:8-9
- ◆ Loyal & Forgiving - Gen 14:1ff; 19:12-22
- ◆ Courageous - Gen 14:14
- ◆ Flawed - Gen 12:13, 16:2; 20:2
- ◆ FAITHFUL - Gen 12-24!
