

Genesis 23-25

THE ROAD AHEAD

Opening Thoughts

- * We come now to the end of Abraham's life
- * Focus of these next few chapters is Abraham "setting things in order"
- * He addresses three major items ...
 - ◆ Family burial site - Gen 23
 - ◆ Wife for Isaac - Gen 24
- * Thereafter his death, God's promises fulfilled ... and the transition of power to Isaac - Gen 25:1-18

Opening Thoughts

- * These final chapters are about closure and narrowing the focus
 - ◆ Abraham “finishes well” and passes the ball to Isaac
 - ◆ Ishmael fades from the picture — God having fulfilled His promises to Hagar
 - ◆ The “Nations” diminish and THE NATION takes center stage ... and more-so with Jacob
 - ◆ AND Isaac becomes the carrier of God’s covenant

Structure of Gen 23

- * The parting — vv. 1-2
- * The procurement — vv. 3-18
- * The placing (interment) — vv. 19-20
- * **What is the main point of this chapter?**
 - ◆ In ANE culture you were buried in the place that you considered to be your “ancestral home”
 - ◆ So ... Abraham’s actions show he acknowledged Canaan as his temporal HOME, revealing his faith in God’s promises

The Parting

- * Sarah is 127 years old at her death - v. 1
 - ◆ Placing Isaac's age at 37-38 (she was 90-91 when he was born ... cf. Gen 17:17)
- * Abraham mourns her death - v. 2
 - ◆ Sarah died in Hebron ... in the "land of Canaan"
 - Repeated for emphasis in v. 19
 - ◆ We see Abraham's genuine ... and customary ... grief expressed in mourning her death
 - ◆ But he doesn't linger in self pity, proceeding to make her burial arrangements

The Parting

- * Like Isaac's birth ... the reporting of Sarah's death is brief - almost to point of seeming cold
- * But it's not ... And a good lesson for us
- 👤 We rightly grieve over the death of a loved one ... but, as believers, we also recognize that they have gone on eternal life and we continue on with temporal life.

The Procurement

- * From here we now turn to this elaborate account of Abraham's procuring a burial site
- * There are two parts to the process
 - ◆ The preamble — vv. 3-7
 - ◆ The procurement proper — vv. 8-18
- * The process is ...
 - ◆ Formal, Elaborate, High-Context, and Wise

The Procurement

- * Why does the procurement proceed in two parts?
 - ◆ Abraham wants BOTH general and specific "buy-in"
- * The preamble — vv. 3-7
 - ◆ In this first part, Abraham speaks to the "people of the land" ... the sons of Heth
 - Possibly the line of Ham and his son Canaan - cf Gen 10:15
 - Most commentators trace the sons of Heth to the Hittites ... a people group first identified in Gen 15:20
 - ◆ He starts with a general appeal — because he wants full buy-in from "the community"

The Procurement

- * Abraham emphasizes his status in v. 4
- * Why does he mention this?
 - ◆ To emphasize he is subject to their mercy - he has no "legal" standing in the land
- * His request in v. 4 is a little tricky
- * What does it look like Abraham is asking for?
 - ◆ It looks like he is asking for a gift ... "a freebie" (give me)
- * How do we know this is not his intent?
 - ◆ The narrative dispels this ... need to read ahead to a v. 9 makes explicit, AND
 - ◆ You have to know some Hebrew — BDB definition 1 "o" ... "to give for money"

The Procurement

- ◆ The idea in this preamble is to establish whether they will allow Abraham to have land at all ...
- ◆ Still in many countries today, foreigners cannot "have or buy" land ... "dirt" is important
- * Verses 5-6 affirm their willingness, noting
 - ◆ Abraham's prominence, and ...
 - ◆ Their full endorsement
 - Take the choicest grave from among us
 - None of us will refuse

The Procurement

- * That said, it is possible the offer is a disingenuous attempt to block “land acquisition” or keep Abraham “indebted” to them ... some commentators think so — I don’t
- * Abraham closes the “preamble” in v. 7 with a sign of respect — got up and bowed
- * Now the procurement proper begins in v. 8
 - ◆ Abraham asks for the “people” to approach a specific land owner (Ephron) on his behalf
- * In v. 9, Abraham proffers four terms — **what are they?**

The Procurement

- ◆ A particular burial site
- ◆ A price - “full value”
- ◆ A public witness to the transaction
- ◆ A purpose - for a burial site — **Why is this important?**
 - ▶ To allay any fears he wants to “assemble land”
- * Verses 10-16 then record “the art of the deal”
 - ◆ Ephron was already sitting at the gate ... **so why didn’t Abraham address him directly?**
 - ▶ This was the custom so as to allow both parties to “save face” if a deal was not forthcoming!

The Procurement

- ◆ Ephron extends the same offer (not expecting it to be accepted) in vv. 10-11 .. but adds a little twist
- ◆ **What new idea does Ephron introduce?**
 - ▶ He wants Abraham to buy the whole field
- ◆ **Do you know why?**
 - ▶ This was due to the way “taxes” were assessed
- ◆ Abraham again acknowledges the offer by bowing and then addresses Ephron directly in v. 13

The Procurement

- ◆ **What is Abraham doing in v. 13?**
 - ▶ Reaffirming his intention to compensate Ephron
 - ▶ Accepting Ephron's new term ... “I will give the price of the field”
 - ▶ AND ... Asking for the price!
- ◆ Ephron names his price .. 400 shekels of silver .. in v. 15 — which was a princely sum for the mighty prince 😊
 - ▶ Ephron was either extorting a high price or expecting Abraham to make a counter offer ... can't really say
 - ▶ In either event, Abraham lacks any real bargaining power

The Procurement

- * Abraham pays the price with no haggling in v. 16
- * What and how does Abraham display in this process overall and in v. 16?
 - ◆ What = Wisdom
 - ◆ How = Excessive courtesy
 - Pursued public and particular support for the deal,
 - No haggling — and one more BIG one, what is it?
 - Don't be **indebted** to others ... Turn back to Gen 14:21-23

The Procurement

- * Then one more step in vv. 17-18 ... What?
 - ◆ He “recorded” the transaction
 - ◆ Clearly identified the property boundaries - v. 17a
 - ◆ Obtained a **deed** for the property — the transaction was conveyed “legally” - v. 17b-18
- * So at this point, Abraham owns two parcels in the land
 - ◆ The “Well of Seven” ... AKA Beersheba (Gen 21:30ff)
 - ◆ The burial cave and associated field

The Placing (Interment)

- * Abraham buries Sarah - v. 19
 - ◆ Note the repeated emphasis of “in the land of Canaan”
 - ◆ Over time — Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Leah will be buried at this site
- * Reaffirms his possession and legal right to the land - v. 20

Closing Thoughts

- * Death should be a time that genuine believers proclaim their faith most boldly ... *Why?*
 - ◆ Because we have hope in God's promises!
- * Abraham's burial of Sarah in Canaan is proof of his unwavering faith in the future
 - ◆ Remember Gen 15:12-14 [READ]
- * Which brings us to Chapter 24 .. and Abraham's “final order of business” to end well

Genesis 24

A BRIDE FOR ISAAC

Opening Thoughts

- * What is the main theme of chapter 24?
 - ◆ "Faith in Action"
- * There are three examples ... what are they?
 - ◆ Abraham's faith in God and his servant
 - ◆ The servant's faith in God to provide
 - ◆ Rebekah's faith in the unknown (her departing)

Opening Thoughts

- * But there is one more important aspect of faith found in this chapter .. **What is it?**
 - ◆ God's faithfulness
 - ◆ Expressed in a Hebrew word we see for the 1st time
 - ◆ The word **חַסֵּד** which means — Lovingkindness
 - Of God in 24:12, 14, 27 ... in graciously meeting our needs
 - Of men in 24:49 ... toward their fellow-man

Structure of Gen 24

- * The commission — vv. 1-9
- * The courtship — vv. 10-21
- * The confirmation — vv. 22-54a
- * The conniving — vv. 54b-57
- * The consent — vv. 58-61
- * The consummation — vv. 62-67

The Commission

- * Having “buried” Sarah, Abraham turns his attention to his last order of business ...
- * A wife for Isaac
- * What do we learn from v. 1?
 - ◆ Abraham is too old to travel
 - ◆ God had blessed Abraham in every way!
- * So Abraham commissions his servant to carry out the arrangements on his behalf
 - ◆ An oath was requested ... note the “please” of v. 2b
 - ◆ The intimacy of the “mode” is intended to denote solemnity

The Commission

- * What is being sworn upon?
 - ◆ The LORD — the God of heaven & earth in case you are confused by who I mean
- * What are the key details of the commission?
 - ◆ The “wife pool” - vv. 3-4
 - ▶ No Canaanite woman
 - ▶ From my relatives
 - ◆ Isaac shall not accompany you! - v. 5

The Commission

- * What lesson can we learn from the servants question in v. 5?
 - ◆ It's good to clarify terms when you are making a binding agreement with someone ... particularly a spouse!
 - ◆ It's also good to have a fair partner ... see v. 8
- * What does Abraham demonstrate in v.7?
 - ◆ His "continued" faith in God's provision
 - ◆ Note the past tense of "provision" and the future tense of "confidence" ...
 - ◆ Essentially he says ... The God who **did** and swore these things before (past tense) **will do** (present tense) this thing also.

The Commission

- * In v. 8 Abraham relieves the servant of things outside his control, but reaffirms the prohibition to take Isaac out of the land
- * Why do you think Abraham emphasizes this?
 - ◆ He doesn't want Isaac to develop any divided affections
 - ◆ K & S faced this often in the mission field
- * In v. 9, Abraham's servant accepts the commission

The Courtship

- * This next scene plays out in two parts
 - ◆ Part 1 records the servant's "plan of attack" in vv. 10-14
 - ◆ Part 2 records God's response in vv. 15-21
- * Part 1 — The plan of attack
 - ◆ Two verses record the 400 mile journey - vv. 10-11
 - Servant sets out with 10 camels and the "dowry"
 - Setting course for Haran (city of Nahor) in Mesopotamia
 - Upon arrival ... **who knows how many days later** ... he "sets up shop" at a strategic time and place

The Courtship

- ◆ **What is the cornerstone of the servant's plan?**
 - A petition (prayer) for God's lovingkindness - v. 12
 - Lovingkindness = tenderness and consideration toward others
- ◆ **How does the servant propose to "know" God's lovingkindness?**
 - Through a simple question & answer dialog - v. 14
 - Part of which is simple ... part of which is quite labor intensive!
 - ◆ A thirsty camel can consume 30 or more GALLONS of water

The Courtship

- ◆ Do you think his “test” was random or deliberate?
 - ▶ Deliberate
- ◆ What do you think the servant was looking for?
 - ▶ Certain character qualities ... in my opinion
- ◆ What three in particular?
 - ▶ Kindness
 - ▶ Takes initiative
 - ▶ Hard working!!!!

The Courtship

- ◆ Note that the servant defines both the test and is specific about the answer
- ◆ Only by this can he be certain that he has received God's lovingkindness and [God's choice](#)
- ◆ Note also that the servant's motive is to fulfill his master's task and not for his personal glory ...
- ◆ Revealing a loyal, obedient, and humble servant
 - ▶ Which speaks well of Abraham's household management

The Courtship

- * Part 2 - God's response
 - ◆ What is the first thing we note about God's response?
 - ▶ The IMMEDIACY - v. 15a
 - ◆ Verses 15b-16 are obviously "contextual commentary" for the readers sake
 - ▶ They report Rebekah's lineage, her beauty, and her purity
 - ◆ Why did the servant run to meet Rebekah? - v. 17
 - ▶ I have NO IDEA!

The Courtship

- ◆ Rebekah's response - w. 18-19
 - ▶ She gives the servant water and offers to "water" his camels
- ◆ To which the servant says ... hallelujah, Amen!!
- ◆ NOT IN MY BIBLE
- ◆ Has the Q&R sign been fulfilled in w. 18-19?
 - ▶ YES
- ◆ So what is the point of w. 20-21 ... why doesn't the narrative just jump to v. 22?
