



THE BEGINNINGS!

The Book of Genesis

Faith and providence!

Genesis 24:1-67

Message #26 of 50 – S926

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Sunday Morning Service

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Faith and providence!

Genesis 24:1-67

Opening Comments

- Good morning – turn to **Genesis 24**
- Today we continue our journey through **Genesis: THE BEGINNINGS!**
- Chapter 24 is the longest chapter in Genesis – 67 verses
- We will probably need an extra hour to get through it all
- When we think of God working, we often imagine miracles
- A miracle is when God overrules the natural order and does something supernatural
- In John 9, the disciples talk with Jesus about a man born blind
- Jesus heals the blind man – on the Sabbath
- The once-blind man is questioned – Jesus can't be from God **John 9:32-33**

Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.

- This was a miracle – God did what cannot be done
- Miracles are not that common – it isn't how God normally operates in the world or in the lives of people
- Often what people call miracles are not miracles
- It is something else, it is God working within the natural world to accomplish His will
- The theological term for that is the Providence of God
- In describing the providence of God **R. Kent Hughes** says

Such a God, of course, is great beyond our imaginings because He maintains all of life, involves Himself in all events, and directs all things to their appointed end while rarely interrupting the natural order of life.

- When God answers our prayers, it is usually through providence rather than through miracle
- So, it is important for us to understand what providence is and how we should walk in God's providential outworking in this world
- Chapter 24 is a fascinating look at the providence of God
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to open our hearts and minds
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Faith and providence!**
- In the last chapter Abraham's wife of more than 100 years died
- Chapter 24 is about Abraham getting a wife for his son Isaac
- There are some culturally odd things in this chapter
- There is also something that is easily missed – one commentator refers to it as a golden thread of the gospel running through it
- Let's get into it
- **Genesis 24:1**
- At the end of chapter 23 Abraham was 137
- **Genesis 24:2-4**
- Isaac is at least 37 – past time to find a wife
- Abraham looks around at the Canaanite women and wants something better for his son
- The Bible is filled with things called types – these are symbols, illustrations, or pictures of spiritual truths
- This chapter is filled with types pointing us to the gospel
- I will try to point them out to you and then show you the golden thread that connects them to the gospel
- In this account Abraham is a type of God the Father and Isaac is a type of God's Son, Christ
- Don't worry if you don't see it yet
- Abraham calls the oldest servant in his house
- Though he plays a key role throughout this chapter, he is not named
- He is a type of the Holy Spirit
- Throughout this account he always acts in accordance with the will of the Father, and in the interest of the Son
- Abraham is going to make this servant swear an oath not to get Isaac a wife from the local women – go to Mesopotamia
- Odd cultural thing – hand under thigh – could mean **Allen Ross** "...putting his hand under the patriarch's thigh was a solemn sign that if the oath was not carried out, the children who would be born to Abraham would avenge the servant's unfaithfulness."
- Servant has logical question
- **Genesis 24:5-9**

- Abraham believed God was capable of arranging heaven, earth, and the affairs of men in such a way that the servant would find a wife for Isaac from Abraham's family in Mesopotamia
- Abraham trusted in the providence of God
- **Genesis 24:9-14**
- This was a trip of about one thousand miles
- It would have taken months to get there
- Once he has the camels kneel, the servant prays and asks for God to direct him to the one He has appointed to be Isaac's wife
- The servant is not asking for a miracle.
- He is not setting out a fleece or asking God to suspend the natural order to guide him.
- This is a very sensible request. It reveals the servant's heart for his master's son.
- He is not looking for just any woman, but a special one. **R. Kent Hughes**

A woman who would volunteer to do this would be remarkably kind, generous, and industrious.

- It also indicates his faith, he is trusting God to guide him
- So far, just an ordinary sequence of events
- Then, God's providence is manifested
- **Genesis 24:15**
- This is my favorite part of this account
- Even before he is done praying, the answer to his prayer is walking toward him
- It reminds us that God knows everything – Jesus – **Matthew 6:8**
For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.
- Faith in God's providence causes me to wonder at what God might be doing to answer my prayers before I start praying them
- **Genesis 24:16-20**
- It is estimated that a camel can drink about 25 gallons of water
- There were ten camels – 250 gallons of water
- Rebekah's pitcher may have held three gallons
- Could have been 80 to 100 trips down to the well
- **Genesis 24:21-25**
- The servant gives her an extravagant gift

- And then he finds out she may be the one he is looking for
- Not certain yet – she is from Abraham’s family, but he doesn’t know if Rebekah’s family is willing to let her go
- **Genesis 24:26-27**
- He knew beyond a shadow of doubt that it was the Lord who had brought him to that place at that time and arranged for Rebekah to be there just as he was praying
- That’s what God’s providence does
- He is sovereign, omnipotent, and omniscient
- He arranges events, circumstances, and people in such a way as to make His will happen
- At the same time, He doesn’t override mankind’s free will – mystery
- **Genesis 24:28-30**
- Laban, Rebekah’s brother, is not a great guy
- We will see that clearly once we get to chapter 29
- **Genesis 24:31-34**
- Servant, not by name, but as ‘Abraham’s servant’
- **Genesis 24:35-49**
- Relates the whole account to them – he believes God arranged this
- Asks them what they are going to do now
- **Genesis 24:50-51**
- This is culturally odd to us – agreeing to let your sister/daughter marry someone she doesn’t even know
- **Genesis 24:52-56**
- The servant is anxious to get his master’s bride to him ASAP
- **Genesis 24:57-58**
- There were an endless number of human reasons why she could have said no, but she sensed God’s providential hand and knew that yes was the only right answer.
- Rebekah is a type of the church – the bride of Christ
- If you are a believer in Christ, then at some point you sensed the Holy Spirit calling you into a relationship with Christ **1 Corinthians 1:9**
God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

- Rebekah didn't know what lie before her, but she sensed that God was wherever she was headed and that was enough
- **Genesis 24:59-60**
- Interesting, the Lord blessed Rebekah's future husband in the same way **Genesis 23:17**
...blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.
- Then the long journey to Canaan
- **Genesis 24:61**
- If Rebekah is a type of the church and the servant is a type of the Holy Spirit – we see the church's relationship to the Holy Spirit
- We are to follow Him on the long journey to be with Christ
- Rebekah didn't know the way to Isaac, nor would it have been safe for her to try to make the journey on her own
- The closer we follow the Holy Spirit, the better the journey is
- **Genesis 24:62-67**
- Isaac was anxiously waiting with his father for the return of the servant and his new bride
- How excited he must have been to the caravan returning
- And then how he must have rejoiced to discover that she was a woman of faith
- And then as a bonus, she was 'very beautiful'
- The theme of this chapter is God's providential activity in the lives of people
- God is always working – arranging heaven and earth to accomplish His will
- Christians are not slaves to the whims of impersonal luck, chance, or fate – Instead **Romans 8:28**
And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.
- Our responsibility is to believe, trust, and obey/follow
- Rebekah believed God had sovereignly chosen her to be Isaac's husband
- She trusted that God would be faithful to her
- And she followed His servant

- The Holy Spirit is active in the world preparing a bride for Christ
- God is providentially arranging heaven, earth, and events to call all who will believe, trust, and obey into His church – as a bride for His Son – Christ
- As believers, we are on the long journey out of the world and to be with Jesus
- It is a journey of faith – believing, trusting, and following
- It is a journey of joyous expectation
- Just as Rebekah looked up and saw Isaac – someday we will look into the loving eyes of our Savior – what a glorious day that will be
- Until that day – believe, trust, and obey!
- **Pray!**