

# Genesis 23-24

January 30, 2011

## **23:1-20: Who can tell us what takes place in chapter 23?**

- Sarah dies and Abraham purchases property there to bury her. Abraham makes a big deal of paying the full price of the property and having the property properly deeded over to him.

## **Why do you think that Abraham was so insistent on the property being deeded over to him?**

- In business, it's always good business to keep business as business. If he had just buried Sarah there without technically owning the property, Ephron's family could one day claim that the property was still theirs. Verbal agreements, if they mean anything at all, only mean something to the two people who make them. It is always smart to get things in writing so that any misunderstanding is minimized.

## **Is this still true if the other party is family or friend?**

- It is *truer* if the other party is family or friend. Family and friends are the ones most likely to misinterpret the agreement and to read "favors" into the deal.

## **Didn't God give this land to Abraham? Why is Abraham having to pay for it?**

- In 12:1-4, at the age of 75, God tells Abraham to go to a land that He would show him and that God would make him a great nation. Ishmael is born when Abraham is 86 (16:16), ten years after Abraham had been living in the land (16:3). Lot and Abraham must have separated when Abraham was 75 or 76. In 15:7 God says that He is giving Abraham this land to possess.

## **Turn to 15:12-16; what do we learn here?**

**12** As the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a terrifying darkness came down over him. **13** Then the Lord said to Abram, "You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years. **14** But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth. **15** (As for you, you will die in peace and be buried at a ripe old age.) **NLT**

- God tells Abraham that his people will be slaves in a foreign land (Egypt) for 400 years. He will judge that nation (which He did with the plagues) and the Jews will leave with great wealth (which they did – Exodus 3:22 & 12:35).

## **What do you think that 15:16 is about?**

- See Leviticus 18:24-25. God judged the people in the land, the Amorites. They were not worthy of living in God's "Holy Land". Read Leviticus 18:26-28. The land did eventually spew them out when the Assyrians and the Babylonians took Israel into captivity.

Israel would not technically possess the entire land until they returned from Egypt. We are always in a hurry; God never is. Being eternal, time means nothing to God, but He is interested in "timing". Another interesting note: If you know your Old Testament, the Jews rested every seventh day (the Sabbath). Resting on the Sabbath reminded them that they were God's people, not their own. It also required trust in His provision since they would not work on that day of the week. The land was also to have a "Sabbath" every seven years in which it would rest and not be planted. After 49 years (7 sevens); the land was to get seven years "off". The Jews, like most people today, ultimately did not trust God to be their provider but began to trust in themselves. Why lose the extra income and profit by letting the land rest? After the captivity, the Jews were eventually allowed to return to the Promised Land. Turn with me to 2 Chronicles 36:19-21.

**19** Then his army burned the Temple of God, tore down the walls of Jerusalem, burned all the palaces, and completely destroyed everything of value. **20** The few who survived were taken as exiles to Babylon, and they became servants to the king and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. **21** So the message of the Lord spoken through Jeremiah was fulfilled. The land finally enjoyed its Sabbath rest, lying desolate until the seventy years were fulfilled, just as the prophet had said. *NLT*

- Notice that the people were in captivity for as many years as it took for the land to catch up on its rest.

#### What might we learn from this lesson about the land and the Sabbath?

- We are to walk by faith. God is offended when we fail to trust him (in this case work all of the time) to provide for us. God's "ways" work. It may not make sense to take a day off, let the land rest, or to tithe and give offerings back to God, but God honors it and we end up with more when we do it His way. In **John 6** the boy gave his **five loaves and two fish** to Jesus to feed the **5,000**. After everyone ate, the boy was given the leftovers: **12 baskets of bread and fish** (Mark 6:43). God blesses us when we do it His way.

#### **24:1-67: Who can tell us what takes place in chapter 24?**

- Abraham sends his servant back to his homeland to get a wife for his son Isaac. The servant goes, prays, and establishes a scenario to know what girl would be the right mate for Isaac. Rebekah meets the criteria and is taken by the servant back to Isaac. Isaac and Rebekah marry.

#### Was this a good idea or a crazy idea to find a wife for Isaac this way? And why?

- It was a great idea. First, Abraham didn't want Isaac to marry someone who did not know and follow the Lord. Second, Abraham trusted the Lord to lead his servant to the precise woman that God wanted to be Isaac's wife (**24:7,40**); he believed that God would work it out. Third, Abraham sent a mature, responsible person who knew what character qualities would make for a good wife. This man would not be attracted to just external beauty; he would look for internal beauty and integrity.

#### What do we know about this servant?

Abraham sent the best person he could possibly send. We discover his name (**Eliezer – el-ee-A-zer**) in **Genesis 15:2**. **Eliezer** was in "charge of all that he (Abraham) owned". **Eliezer** trusted God; we see this as he prays for success (**24:12**). **Eliezer** knew what character looked like and saw it in Rebekah as she served him and his camels.

#### How much water do you think that Rebekah drew from the well for those camels?

- A camel drinks about **5 gallons** of water. Rebekah drew for **10 camels** (**24:10**). She drew **50 gallons** of water in the heat of the day. It was not her job; they were not her camels. She was surely a hard worker and had the attitude of a servant.

#### What are some principles for finding a mate that we see in this passage?

- Trust God and His wisdom, not your own. Abraham trusted God; Eliezer prayed and trusted God.
- Trust the opinion of people who are likely more mature than you. Abraham sent Eliezer, not Isaac.
- Make sure that they are following God like you are following God.
- Consider enduring character to be more important than temporary beauty.
- Place inward beauty above external beauty.
- Be financially ready to get married (**24:35-36**).
- Don't alienate yourself from their family.

#### **24:1: What verses of scripture might we use to explain why Abraham was blessed in every way?**

- See **Proverbs 10:22**, **Matthew 6:33**, **Psalm 37:4**. See **Malachi 3:8-12**; remember that Abraham was giving tithes to God through Melchizedek (**14:20**). See **Joshua 1:7-8**.

**Proverbs 10:22**: The blessing of the Lord makes a person rich, and he adds no sorrow with it.

**Matthew 6:33** Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

**Psalm 37:4** Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you your heart's desires.

**Malachi 3:8-12** **8** "Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me! "But you ask, 'What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?' "You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me. **9** You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me. **10** Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, "I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test! **11** Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. **12** "Then all nations will call you blessed, for your land will be such a delight," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies.

**Genesis 14:20: 20** And blessed be God Most High, who has defeated your enemies for you." Then Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the goods he had recovered.

**Joshua 1:7-8: 7** Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do.

**8** Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.