**SDG – Lesson #14**

**Genesis Chapters 23 & 24**

**Chapter 23**

1. How old was Sarah when she died?

Sarah was 127 years old when she died.

2. How old would this make Isaac?

Isaac would have been 37 years old.

3. How old would this make Abraham?

Abraham would have been 137 years old.

**Note: The notation of Sarah’s age at her time of death is the only woman’s age at death recorded in Scripture. This was probably done to remind the reader of the impossible age at which Sarah had Isaac.**

4. Why did Abraham say that he was a sojourner and foreigner?

Even after living in the area for 62 years, negotiating water rights and herding privileges the land was still not his. These titles are also self-deprecating. They would help him to establish a need in the eyes of the people so that he could get land to bury Sarah.

5. What did Abraham want from the Hittites?

Abraham wanted some land/property.

6. How did the Hittites address Abraham? Why?

They referred to Abraham as “my lord” and “a prince of God.” This tells us of the respect the Hittites had for Abraham. Abraham was known for his wealth, power, love of God and favor with God.

7. What did the Hittites offer to Abraham?

The Hittites offered to give Abraham any of their new tombs.

8. How did Abraham respond to this offer? Why?

Abraham asked for the cave of Machpelah, which he would pay full price for. By doing this in the presence of all, there could be no contest to his actually owning the land. By asking the whole assembly of the Hittites it also showed respect to their whole community. Abraham also bowed to them as a sign of respect.

9. Who was Ephron? How did he react to Abraham’s offer given in verse nine? Why?

Ephron was the owner of the land that Abraham wanted to purchase. In the presence of everyone he offered to give the land to Abraham. Just like Abraham, by stating it in the general assembly there were witnesses to his offer. This eliminated the possibility that he would later contest Abraham’s right to the land.

10. How did Abraham react to Ephron’s words?

Abraham simply said, “I give the price of the field,” meaning, “Tell me the price and I will pay.” This is an insistence that he be allowed to pay. We can see Abraham’s desire to be honest and fair. In no way did he want to take advantage of Ephron feeling sorry for him.

11. What is the significance or meaning of Ephron’s response in verse 15?

Ephron’s response is one of great respect. He begins by referring to Abraham as “My lord.” Then, he states the value of the land and ends by saying, “Bury your dead.” This effectively puts the decision in Abraham’s hand. If Abraham wanted to pay, the land was worth 400 shekels of silver. If Abraham didn’t want to pay, Ephron was willing to gift it to him. In essence, Ephron says, “The issue of the land is not significant; your loss and need are what needs to be our priority.”

12. What is the significance of Abraham paying for the land “in the hearing of the Hittites?”

This is a public declaration that he wanted everyone to know that he was doing what he wanted and agreed to Ephron’s price.

13. What is the significance of the land being “made over to Abraham as property for a burying place by the Hittites?”

With the actual transfer of title to the property, Abraham was no longer a sojourner or foreigner in the land.

**Chapter 24** – Abraham finds a wife for Isaac

14. Why would Abraham choose the oldest of his household servants to go on this mission? What else do we know about this servant?

Being the oldest servant would mean he was both the most well-known by Abraham and the one who knew Abraham best. With age comes wisdom. We see there is great trust in this man since he was in charge of all of Abraham’s possessions.

15. Who was this servant? We don’t know for sure but we have a very strong candidate. Read 15:3, who is this candidate?

Eliezer of Damascus was a servant who Abraham had adopted to be his male heir in the absence of a son.

16. Abraham told his servant to put his hand under Abraham’s thigh. Read Jeremiah 31:9 and Ezekiel 21:12. What was done with the thigh in these verses? Why?

The thigh was struck as a sign of remorse and submission. The thigh was seen as the largest and strongest muscle of the body. Striking it was symbolic of striking the whole body or all the person’s strength.

17. What is the significance of putting the hand under the thigh?

It was a sign of submission to the person.

18. What does it mean to swear?

Swearing is a proclamation that calls on God to be the witness to the proclamations truthfulness.

19. How does Abraham identify God in this oath or swearing ceremony? Do you see any significance in this title?

Abraham calls God, “The LORD, the God of heaven and God of the earth.” This title refers to God as the One God who is creator of all. At the same, there are three titles. There is an allusion to His Trinitarian Nature.

20. What did Abraham ask his servant to swear to?

The servant was to swear that he would not look for a Canaanite woman to be Isaac’s wife.

21. Why would Abraham make the servant swear to this? (2nd Cor. 6:14)

The Canaanites were pagans. Marriage to one of them would lead to an unequally yoked marriage. Such a marriage would be a serious challenge to the faith of Isaac and his children.

22. Where did Abraham want his servant to go to find a wife for Isaac? Why?

Abraham wanted the servant to go back to his home country of Haran. Since Abraham was monotheistic it would appear that this part of the custom of the land of Haran.

23. What was the servants concern with the mission bring given to him? (vs. 5)

The servant feared that no woman would want to come back with him to marry someone that was unseen and unknown.

24. What did the servant think the answer to his concern was?

The servant thought that he would need to take Isaac back with him.

25. How did Abraham react to this idea? Why?

Abraham told the servant not to take Isaac back because God had promised the land to him and his offspring.

26. How did Abraham believe a wife for Isaac would really be found and brought back? (vs. 7)

Abraham felt God would send an angel to touch the heart of the right woman and that God would also lead the servant to her.

27. How certain was Abraham of this belief?

If the woman didn’t come back, he released the servant from the oath. Obviously, if the servant didn’t succeed, then Abraham believed God would bring the right woman to Isaac.

28. What did the servant take with him on his quest?

He took 10 camels and all sorts of choice gifts. These were meant to be used as a dowry fulfillment. It also showed the wealth of the husband to be.

29. Where did the servant stop? Why?

He stopped at the city well. The women of the town would come to the well in the evening to get their water.

30. How did the servant go about determining which woman was the right one for Isaac? Was this wise?

The servant prayed and asked God to show him the right woman. He asked that it be the one that would offer to not only get him water but also water his camels. This was remarkably wise. Not only did he put it in God’s hands, but he also identified a characteristic of a good spouse – a servant’s heart.

31. How quickly did God respond to the servant’s prayer?

Before he finished praying Rebekah came.

32. What doctrine of prayer does this confirm? (Isaiah 65:24)

Not only does God hear our prayers, He answers them before we even finish speaking.

33. Carefully look at what the servant prayed (vs. 14) and what Rebekah actually did. What difference do you see?

Not only did Rebekah offer to draw water for the camels, she offered to continue to draw water until they were finished drinking.

34. Who was Rebekah?

Rebekah was the daughter of Abraham’s nephew.

35. What does the Hebrew name Rebekah mean?

Rebekah means, “Ensnaring beauty.”

36. What was the servant’s first reaction to Rebekah’s action? Why?

He gazed at her in silence. Such a fast response to prayer probably shocked him.

37. What were the servant’s next questions for Rebekah?

He asked who her father was and if he could stay with them.

38. How did the servant respond to her answer?

He worshipped God.

39. How was the servant received by Rebekah’s family?

Every act of hospitality was taken in greeting the servant of Abraham.

40. Who actually greeted the servant and made these preparations? What does this suggest or indicate?

Laban, the son of Bethuel, greeted the servant and prepared the house for him. This would indicate that Bethuel was either quite old and had passed responsibility to his son or that he was incapacitated in some way.

41. How seriously did the servant take his responsibility to fulfill his oath to Abraham? (vs. 33)

The servant wouldn’t even eat until he told the family of Bethuel why he was there.

42. Same question as #41. But, now look at vs. 49.

After telling his story and the purpose of his journey, the servant asks for an answer. If it is positive, he will stay. If not, he will leave and continue on his quest.

43. How did Laban and Bethuel respond to the servant’s discourse?

They acknowledged that God had brought him and offered Rebekah as the wife for Isaac.

44. How did the servant respond to the words of Bethuel and Laban?

He first bowed to God. This was an act of worship. He then gave the gifts to the family. This sealed the marriage agreement. With his job done, he finally ate.

45. Everything had gone extremely well. What road bump appears in verse 55?

Rebekah’s mother and brother ask the servant to let her stay for ten days.

46. How was this issue resolved?

Rebekah was asked if she would go immediately. She agreed to go with no hesitation.

47. God’s divine action throughout this event has been quite evident. How do we also see it in:

Vs. 60 – The blessing of Rebekah echoes the Covenant that God made with Abraham. He would become a great nation with many descendants.

Vs. 63 – Isaac went out to meditate/walk in thought and was the first to meet Rebekah. It would appear that Rebekah was the answer to what he was thinking about.

Vs. 67 – Isaac loved Rebekah – this was not always the case in arranged marriages. -- Isaac was comforted.