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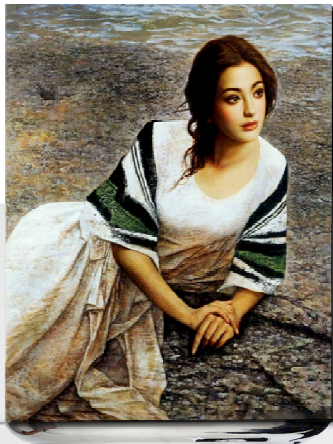
LESSON NOTES (EXPLORE THE BIBLE)

GENESIS—GOD PROVIDES MORE THAN FOOD

OVERVIEW

Preparation for Session "1-3" Genesis 24-28

Even for the corpulently challenged, there are more important things than food. Among them are the issues, hopes, and dreams we have for our family. Do we get to see our grandchildren more than once or twice a year? Will our child find the right spouse with whom by God's help they can spend a lifetime? Will we be able to finish our race strong, or end alone in a nursing home?



For the believer, we know God provides. While most of us do not arrange our children's marriages, we do maneuver circumstances so our children can at least select from better choices. We send them to Christian colleges. We enroll them in private Christian schools. We home school them, hoping they find that someone special at a co-op session.

For Abraham and Sarah, finding Isaac's bride to be was no small matter. She needed to be a believer; no Canaanites! She needed to satisfy Sarah's penchant for protecting her son; no strange women! And, she needed to be fertile, spiritually and physically, to continue the legacy of Abraham's progeny, the very legacy of which Yahweh, the Lord God had declared.

But, when you're old and rich and unable or unwilling to travel, you count on other people to assist you in your important quests. And so it was with Abraham. He trusted the senior servant of his household, Majordomo as it were. So with an oath to faithfulness, Majordomo set out to find a wife for Isaac. It was a long trip.

An expensive trip. But Majordomo did find her. WOW.

CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT (GENESIS 22 & 23)

Genesis 22:1-14. *Abraham encounters his greatest fear—inconsequentiality*. A few years later, God decided to improve Abraham. He called him out, and Abraham replied, “Here I am.”

God said here’s what’s up. Take your son, Isaac (he laughs) the one who you really love, and go to the Moriah region. You are to kill him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I’ll will tell you about later.

Next morning, before Sarah could wake up and freak, Abraham saddled his donkey, gathered two servants and Isaac. When he had enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the region of Moriah.

After three days, Abraham looked up and there it was. He turned back to his two servants and told them to wait while he and Isaac go over to the place. He told the servants to wait, for “We will worship and then we will come back to you.”

Abraham took the wood and placed it on Isaac to carry; Abraham carried the fire and the knife. As the two set out, Isaac was curious—where’s the sacrifice Dad?

God will provide the lamb for the holocaust my son. And they went on to the appointed place. When they got there, Abraham built an altar and set up the wood to burn up Isaac. He laid Isaac on the altar, right on top of the wood. Taking the knife to kill him, he was interrupted by *the angel of Yahweh, the Lord God* calling out to him from heaven—Abraham, Abraham! Stop! Don’t do anything to Isaac. *Now I know you fear God because you did not hesitate to sacrifice your son, your beloved son to Me.*



Abraham looked up and just as he had told Isaac earlier, God provided a ram stuck in a thicket. So the ram was sacrificed and completely burnt up instead of Isaac. From that day on, Abraham

called that area of Moriah—Yahweh Will Provide. And to this day, it is said, “On the mountain of Yahweh it will be provided.”



Q What is the best evidence that Abraham would actually pass the testing of his faith by Yahweh, *before* reading verse 10? Why did he have such great faith? [Hint: consider Hebrews 11:19]

Q Who accompanied Abraham to Moriah in the teachings of Islam?

- Q How many people went to the Moriah region? So what?
- Q How do we know that Isaac was not a baby or small boy as often described in our children's Bible story books? How can this recognition be a guide to improved hermeneutics?
- Q So, why did the Lord God "test" Abraham? Why did He put Abraham through such trauma? [Hint: Satan's accusation to the Lord God regarding Job, or consider Hebrews 2:18; and on an entirely different plane, consider James 1:2-3]

- ✓ "Now I know..."
 - ✓ "God tested him..."
 - ✓ "On the third day..."
 - ✓ "We will be back ..."
 - ✓ "Moriah..." [see 2 Chronicles 3:1]

- Q What is it that the Lord God *then knew* once He saw Abraham about to strike the only son of promise, Isaac?
- Q Consider also this: Just whose son was Isaac?

Genesis 22:15-24. *Yahweh reassures and Abraham's people grow.* The angel of Yahweh called out Abraham again and said in the strongest terms...

I Yahweh, the Lord God Almighty do affirm by My own authority that because you did not withhold your son, your only son of promise from Me, I will...

- ✓ Bless you,
- ✓ Make your descendants so numerous they cannot be counted,
- ✓ Cause your descendants to take possession of cities of even their enemies,
- ✓ Bless all people through your offspring; yes, everyone will be blessed.

BECAUSE: You obeyed ["listened to my voice"] Me.

Afterwards Abraham returned to his entourage and they headed off together for home in Beer-sheba. Later Abraham learned that God was already showing how His declaration would manifest itself. His brother's wife was pregnant, several times. Even his brother's concubine was fertile. Lots of Genesis 1:26 going on.

- Q Why did the Lord God "swear on Himself" as He declared what was happening to Abraham?
- Q Why did the Lord God affirm the covenant this additional time?

Genesis 23. *Sarah dies and is buried in Canaan.* Sarah lived to be 127 and died where she was living in the land of Philistines, explicitly Hebron. Abraham went there to mourn and weep for Sarah. He arose from over the body and spoke to the sons of Heth, the Hittites.

Look, I'm a stranger among you. Sell to me this land so I can bury my dead wife. Being viewed as a mighty power, they told him he could bury Sarah's body in the choicest tomb we have. No one will refuse your choice.

Abraham showed diligent respect to the Hittites—if you're willing to let me bury my dead, then heed my request. Intercede with Ephron on my behalf so he will sell me the cave of Machpelah—it's on his land. Ask him to sell it to me for full price as a burial site among you.

As it turns out, Ephron was there at the gates and replied directly to Abraham—No sir, listen up. I give [or *sell*] you the cave. The people here at the city's gate are my witnesses. Go bury your wife.

Again with all diligent respect, Abraham responded to Ephron within earshot of the witnesses. If you please, allow me to pay the price of the field. Accept it so I can bury my dead there.

Abraham, Ephron responded, listen up. The land is worth shekels [\approx 10lbs.] of silver,¹ but what is that between friends? Go bury your dead.

So, Abraham relented and weighed out the 10 pounds of silver within sight of the Hittites. Abraham thus acquired not only the cave, but all the trees within the borders of the field, this field in Machpelah near Mamre. Afterwards, Abraham buried Sarah's body in the cave, this cave in Canaan.

- Q Why did Abraham need to “go there” to weep/mourn for Sarah? Was she living in a different place?
- Q Why are the Scriptures so repetitive in the language regarding the agreement between Ephron and Abraham? That is, the details of who agreed what were repeated at least three times.
- Q Why was Sarah buried in Canaan instead of back in her homeland?²

¹On 11/25/2015, the spot market for silver was \$14.24 per ounce; the sale in November 2015 dollars would be \$14.24x16x10, \$2,278.40

²“In that culture, people had a strong desire to be buried ‘with their fathers’ (see Genesis 25:8) in their native land. By purchasing a burial place in Canaan, Abraham indicated his unswerving commitment to the Lord's promise. Canaan was his new homeland.” From Compton's Interactive NIV © 1996.

KEY TEXT ISSUES (GENESIS 27:41-28)

Genesis 27:41-28:5. *Deception finds Fertile Ground*. Esau had had enough of Jacob getting all of Isaac's affection. It's time to put my brother down, now that the time of my father's death is near.

Rebekah learned of Esau's consolation package—you need to flee to Uncle Laban until Esau's over his fury. When Esau is over it, and forgets what you did to him, I'll send word to come back. I cannot deal with losing both of you in one day.

Turning to Isaac—hey look, I'm over this, this living among these Hittites. If Jacob takes a Hittite for a wife, my life will not be worth living. So Isaac called Jacob in and gave him the riot act—No Hittite women for you! So go to northwest Mesopotamia, to your grandfather Bethel's house. Get a wife there, from your cousins, the daughters of Uncle Laban. May the Lord God Almighty keep you close and fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a great community of people. May the Lord God give you the blessing given Grandfather Abraham—possession of the land where you're now living as an illegal immigrant. Isaac did as he was told.

Q Why was Esau so upset with Jacob; after all he was the one who cheated Jacob out of his birthright?³

Q Why was it important that Jacob not marry a Canaanite woman?

Q Why was Rebekah especially concerned about Jacob not marrying a Hittite?

Q What name was Jacob later called/renamed which gave credence to Isaac's blessing (28:3)?

GENESIS 27:41-28:5

Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him. He said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob."

⁴²When Rebekah was told what her older son Esau had said, she sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, "Your brother Esau is consoling himself with the thought of killing you. ⁴³Now then, my son, do what I say: Flee at once to my brother Laban in Haran. ⁴⁴Stay with him for a while until your brother's fury subsides. ⁴⁵When your brother is no longer angry with you and forgets what you did to him, I'll send word for you to come back from there. Why should I lose both of you in one day?"

⁴⁶Then Rebekah said to Isaac, "I'm disgusted with living because of these Hittite women. If Jacob takes a wife from among the women of this land, from Hittite women like these, my life will not be worth living." **28**¹So Isaac called for Jacob and blessed [or *greeted*] him and commanded him: "Do not marry a Canaanite woman. ²Go at once to Paddan Aram, [northwest Mesopotamia] to the house of your mother's father Bethuel. Take a wife for yourself there, from among the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. ³May God Almighty [El Shaddai] bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples. ⁴May he give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now live as an alien, the land God gave to Abraham." ⁵Then Isaac sent Jacob on his way, and he went to Paddan Aram, to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, who was the mother of Jacob and Esau.

³Genesis 27:38-40: Esau said to his father, "Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father!" Then Esau wept aloud. His father Isaac answered him, "Your dwelling will be away from the earth's richness, away from the dew of heaven above. You will live by the sword and you will serve your brother. But when you grow restless, you will throw his yoke from off your neck."

Genesis 28:6-40. *On the Path to Uncle Laban's House, the House of God*. Once Esau learned about how displeased his father Isaac was about marrying Canaanite women, he went to his Uncle Ishmael ["God hears"] and found a cousin there to marry—Mahalath [stringed instrument]. This was in addition to his other wives, by the way.

On his way to Haran (northwest Mesopotamia), Jacob stopped to rest. Using a stone as a pillow, he fell asleep and dreamt, what a dream...

There was a stairway from the ground to heaven—angels of God were going up and down the stairway. At the top was the Lord God Yahweh who said,

I am the I AM, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be as numerous as the dust of the earth; they will spread out to the west & east, the north & the south. All people will be brought closer to Me by you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you, wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.

Jacob was impressed—surely Yahweh is in this place, and I was unaware of it. Afraid, he said this place is awesome! None other than the house of God, the gate of heaven. So he took his pillow stone, anointed it with oil and called the place "Bethel," house of God. BTW, the place used to be called Luz (a Hittite name).

Jacob vowed—If God will be with me, watch over my journey, feed me and give me clothes to wear so I can return safely, then Yahweh will be my God, and all you give me, I will give You a tenth.

Q Why did Esau marry his cousin Mahalath?

Q Who was at the top of the stairway?

GENESIS 28:6-40

Now Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him to Paddan Aram to take a wife from there, and that when he blessed him he commanded him, "Do not marry a Canaanite woman," ⁷and that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Paddan Aram. ⁸Esau then realized how displeasing the Canaanite women were to his father Isaac; ⁹so he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, the sister of Nebaioth and daughter of Ishmael son of Abraham, in addition to the wives he already had.

¹⁰Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. ¹¹When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. ¹²He had a dream in which he saw a stairway [ladder] resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. ¹³There above it [or *There beside him*] stood the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying.

¹⁴Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. ¹⁵I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

¹⁶When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it." ¹⁷He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven."

¹⁸Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. ¹⁹He called that place Bethel, [house of God] though the city used to be called Luz.

²⁰Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear ²¹so that I return safely to my father's house, then the LORD [Or *Since God . . . father's house, the LORD*] will be my God ²²and [Or *house, and the LORD will be my God, then*] this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth."

- Q What did the Lord our God indicate was to happen to Jacob? [Land, lots of descendants, descendants who disperse everywhere, these descendants will bless everyone, to be with him, bring him back, and not leave him.]
- Q How have all people been brought closer to God (blessed) by the descendants of Jacob?
- Q What was Jacob's reaction to this dream? [pillar from stone...]
- Q Why is it important to recognize the principle of tithe here in Jacob's vow? That is, when was this tithe principle illustrated? [Note also Melchizedek's offering from Jacob's grandfather, Abraham.]



–Museo del Prado