

Shadows of Christ & His Bride

Lesson #9

Bird's Eye View: School of Faith

March 13, 2024

"Rebekah's journey began at the well. In the Bible, wells provided a meeting place for marriage partners. Jacob met Rachel at a well [Gen. 29:1-30]. Moses met the seven daughters of Jethro, including his future wife, Zipporah, at a well [Exod. 2:15-22]. In Genesis 24, however, Rebekah encountered no future husband but only a thirsty matchmaker in need of lodging."

Gen. 22:22 And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold; As Eliezer, by the precious gifts he gave Rebekah, revealed the wealth of his Master Isaac, so the Holy Spirit by His Gifts gives us a foretaste of what is in store for the Bride of Christ.

²³ And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee:

is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?

Was there room in the house for him and his entourage has a deeper spiritual significance than is conveyed by the literal language. Remember: He represents the Holy Spirit.

So, was there room in the house for *Him*? To have no room for the Holy Spirit is to have no room for Christ, and therefore to have no part with Him.

²⁴ And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor.

➤ Bethuel = house of God; appears to represent one who is a believer

When he discovers she's the great-niece of his master, Abraham, he knows that God has clearly answered his prayer.

Gen. 24:25 Again she said to him,

"We have plenty of both straw and feed, and room to stay overnight."

Gen. 24:26-27 And the man bowed down his head and worshipped the LORD.

And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren.

"I, doing all I knew to do, have been guided to do, exactly what my master wanted.

The Lord led me while I was on the journey." The servant stepped out in faith, believing that God would guide him. He didn't wait for confirmation on when or where he should take the first steps of his journey, he just started walking and trusted that God would lead him.

If we are walking in "God's way," we will not be in "God's way."

Great things tend to happen to people who are in the right place at the right time.

24:28-33 Then the young woman ran and told her mother's household about these things. And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well. And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well. "Come in, blessed of the LORD! Why do you stand outside, since I have prepared the house, and a place for the camels?" So the man entered the house. Then Laban unloaded the camels, and he gave straw and feed to the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. ³³ But when food was set before him to eat, he said, "I will not eat until I have stated my business."

The Power Of The Testimony of the Servant: Gen. 24:34-49

Gen. 24:35 I am Abraham's servant. The LORD has greatly blessed my master, so that he has become rich; and He has given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and servants and slave women, and camels and donkeys.

He was careful to ensure from the beginning: the riches belonged to his master and that his master should receive all the glory. Apostle Paul was likewise careful to ensure that his Master received all the glory when he asked, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers [servants].... I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" [I Cor. 3:5-6]. Christians are all too prone to set the servant on a pedestal, forgetting - and sometimes causing the servant to forget - that his gift has been given by God, and is to be used only for His glory.

The unnamed servant, type of the Holy Spirit, recounts most of what has previously been said.

Gen. 24:36-38 And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old:

and unto him hath he given all that he hath. ³⁷ And my master made me swear, saying,

Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell:

³⁸ But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son.

Interesting: V.3 the Canaanites are described as those "among whom I dwell."

V. 38 Canaanites "in whose land I dwell."

Land is missing from the list of Abraham's wealth in verse 35.

Although the Canaanite was then in possession, that land had been promised to Abraham, and to Isaac; but when the bride was being sought the land was still in the possession of the enemy. During the church age when the bride of Christ is being called, the "land" is still in the hand of the enemy. Canaan will one day be possessed by Isaac through his posterity in the Millennium. This world will become the possession of Christ and His bride.

verse 4: "and take a wife unto my son Isaac."

Verse 38: "and take a wife unto my son."

When it was a matter of instructing the servant, there may have been need to emphasize that the bride was to be for Isaac rather than for Ishmael;

When it is a matter of inviting the bride, there is no thought of anyone except Isaac.

24:39 And I said unto my master, "Peradventure the woman will not follow me."

24:5 "Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me *unto this land*."

Rebekah wasn't being invited to go to a better land: she was being invited to go to a person, Isaac. Her willingness to follow the servant would certainly take her to a better land, Canaan, but surely no one would ever make the mistake of thinking that it was *that* prospect which induced her to undertake the journey.

Consider: Do I sometimes tend to be occupied more with the prospect of seeing heaven than of seeing Him? "The bride eyes not her garment, but her dear Bridegroom's face."

24:40 And he said unto me, The Lord before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way: and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house."

In verse 7 there is no mention of Abraham's walk. All the emphasis is upon what God had done. Now attention is focused upon Abraham's manner of life. It was marked by an obedience that had begun when he first obeyed God's call to do what Rebekah must also do if she would be Isaac's bride: she must leave country, kindred, and father's house, and follow God's leading.

She has fulfilled 2 of the 3 requirements. She is not a Canaanite, and she is from Abraham's country and his kindred. What more was required to convince him that Rebekah was indeed the woman who would become Isaac's bride? All that God could do had been done. What is lacking? She must be willing to leave her country and kindred and follow the servant to Isaac's home. It is a long, difficult journey.

There is no compulsion. The individual must exercise his will and make a choice.

The success of the servant's journey will depend on whether Rebekah will choose to follow him.

Schopenhauer: "The first 40 years of life give us the text and the next 40 give us the commentary. For the Christian, the text is Hab. 2:4: The just shall live by faith.

The commentary is being written as we listen to God and obey His directions a day at a time. Sad to say, some understand neither the text nor the commentary and their lives are ended before they have started to live."

Abraham's walk of faith: example for all believers who say: I Will.

Walk of Faith; Walk of Sanctification

Wiersbe: In the Bible's hall of faith in Hebrews 11, candid pictures are given of great men whose faith stands out in Old Testament history like bright stars on a dark night. All except Abel, Enoch and Noah are descendants of Abraham, the man and father of our faith.

Abraham's life's story reveals the very secrets by which the Spirit of God intends to transform us from faltering pilgrims to men and women of stalwart faith.

In this chronicle Abraham is given almost half the space. He has more than twice the space allocated to the law-giver, Moses. In Genesis, the story of Abraham and his family is spread over the book from chapter 11 through chapter 50.

What distinguished Abraham as a man of faith? [20th generation from Adam]

Learning To Face & Handle The Tests of Life To The GLORY OF GOD

I. Expect Tests From God

I Pet. 4:12-13 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

II Cor. 4:16-17 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

Abraham enrolled in "The School of Faith" at age 70. [left Haran @ 75]

The spiritual history of Abraham was marked by four great crises, each of which involved the surrender of something which was naturally dear to him.

1. He was called: separate himself from his native land and kindred; 70 yrs. Genesis 12:1

2. He was called on to give up Lot. ~80 yrs. Genesis 13:1-18

Note #1: Abraham had to separate from Lot who walked by sight.

Gen. 13:10-11 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.¹¹ Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

Note #2 Rebekah will separate from her brother Laban who walked by sight.

Gen. 24:30 And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well.

Gen. 18:10, 14 And He said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

Rom. 4:19-22 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: ²⁰ he staggered not at the promise of God through UNBELIEF; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God ²¹ and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform ²² And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

1. Weak astheneo = without strength, powerless, sick; to doubt, hesitate, vacillate; double-minded

2. Considered Not = Paid No Attention To The Physical Obstacles

3. Staggered Not = diakrino ou = To be in strife with oneself; to doubt, hesitate, waver

Wuest's Word Studies: "to judge between two," "to vacillate between two opinions or decision."

Wuest: Abraham did not vacillate between belief and unbelief with respect to his difficulty and the ability of God to meet it. He did not waver.

James 1:2-8 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

³ Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

⁴ But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.

For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

⁷ For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

⁸ A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

What is the enemy of faith? UNBELIEF

Consider: Storms in life can cause us to doubt God. [connects fear with little or no faith]

Matt. 8:24-25 And behold, a violent storm developed on the sea, so that the boat was being covered by the waves; but *Jesus* Himself was asleep.

²⁵ And they came to *Him* and woke Him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing!"

➤ Jesus rebukes their lack of faith.

Matt. 8:26 And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of LITTLE FAITH?

Mark 4:38 And He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

Mark 4:40 And He said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have NO FAITH?

Connection Between Doubt & Unbelief: To hesitate or waver; being uncertain of what to believe or do; allow circumstances, setbacks and feelings to influence decisions & change my mind

Matt. 14:31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O you of little faith, why did you doubt?

This doubt comes through giving up one's conviction of faith based on what one sees or feels.

a. My Doubt Leads To Unbelief: Downward Spiral

b. Focusing on my circumstances or my own resources will allow unbelief to GROW.

c. When unbelief starts to GROW, it destroys confidence, makes me uncertain and builds distrust.

d. Unbelief leads to further unbelief and finally a hardening of my heart.

Mark 9:24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

➤ Apistia = often shows a lack of confidence in God to do what He promised to do.

You decide: you have a choice.

Matt. 13:58 And He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief. [apistia]

Heb. 3:19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. [apistia]

Rom. 4:20 he [Abraham] staggered not at the promise of God through UNBELIEF; [apistia] but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.

Unbelief In The Christian Walk: UNBELIEF IS NOT:

1. The Absence Of Faith
2. A Negative State Of Mind
3. A State of Blank Ignorance Of God and His truth
4. A State of ignorance of the Existence and attributes of God
5. Not at intellectual state at all

So what is UNBELIEF in a Christian? The Bible represents unbelief as SIN.

Therefore, it is not a state of mind; it is a Condition Of My Heart!

1. Unbelief is SIN. Heb. 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

2. Unbelief is a CHOICE. Mark 16:14 Afterward Jesus appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen him after he was risen.

3. Unbelief is a lack of CONFIDENCE.

Withholding of confidence in One who is worthy of our confidence. Unbelief of the heart darkens one to committing his heart and soul to the will of God.

Truth: Belief is giving God my confidence, yielding myself to Him, confiding in Him, trusting in Him, casting myself upon Him, voluntarily receiving His truth and committing myself to Him.

Unbelief Is At The Heart Of My Lack Of Commitment To God!

Key Points:

1. Abraham firmly believed in what God promised because he firmly believed in God's power.
2. His belief in God allowed him to overlook the visible problems to see the POWER of Him who was invisible.
3. His ability to see and trust the invisible kept him from staggering over the obstacles of doubt that surrounded him.
4. By believing, Abraham climbed to the very heights and gave glory to the Power Of God!
5. God declared Abraham righteous because He BELIEVED Him.

We look in on Abram at age 100 and find he is still going through soul-stretching experiences. If we stop learning, we stop growing.

We will face new challenges, fight new battles and learn new truths.

3. He had to abandon his cherished plan about Ishmael. ~103 Genesis 17:17-18

Jack Kelly: Our flesh is like Ishmael, older, bigger, stronger. He's self-directed and self-centered, used to being the only one, used to calling the shots. He's experienced, independent and acts on his own initiative. In assessing a situation, he says, "Self, what's best for me?" Our spirit starts out like Isaac, younger, smaller, weaker. He's God directed and God centered. He's a newcomer, inexperienced and dependent. He consults with the Spirit of God. In assessing a situation, he says, "Lord, what's best for you?"

The flesh doesn't like the spirit. He thinks the spirit is weak and taunts him. He tries to assert his control over him, to push him aside, to silence his voice.

"Ishmael wasn't interested in God's plan for Abraham's offspring. He was the first born and resented the intrusion of this newcomer in his family, usurping his rights. Similarly, our flesh isn't interested in God's plan for our life, only in the fulfillment of selfish desires.

The flesh and the spirit cannot co-exist. They have only you in common. Salvation brings a new heart and a new spirit but not new flesh. We have to learn to walk by the spirit and deny the flesh, to prefer God's will for our lives over our own."

Gal. 5:16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Christian character is developed via a series of tests. Frequently there is one supreme test, in view of which all others are preparatory. Fiery tests of faith which occur early in life sometimes climax in much greater tests of faith in a time of spiritual maturity. God's demand is, Son, give Me your heart [Proverbs 23:26].

It is not our intellect, talents, money, but our heart, God asks for first. When we have responded to God's requirement, He lays His hand on something especially near and dear to us, to prove the genuineness of our response. God requires truth in the inward parts and not merely on the lips. Thus, He dealt with Abraham.

The spiritual history of Abraham was marked by four great crises, each of which involved the surrender of something which was naturally dear to him.

1. He was called: separate himself from his native land and kindred; 70 yrs. Genesis 12:1
2. He was called on to give up Lot. ~80 yrs. Genesis 13:1-18
3. He had to abandon his cherished plan about Ishmael. ~103 Genesis 17:17-18
4. God told him to offer up Isaac as a burnt offering. ~130 yrs. Genesis 22

Gen. 22:1-2 Now it came to pass After These Things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." Then He [God] said, "Take now your son, Your Only Son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

Key Point #1: God's request seems unreasonable. Isaac was a miracle child, a gift from God in response to Abraham's faith, Abraham's only son, the future of the covenant rested in him.

Key Point #2: When God asked him to offer his son, He was testing Abraham's faith, hope and love. It appeared God was wiping out everything Abraham and Sarah lived for.

"Our faith is not really tested until God asks us to bear what seems unbearable, do what seems unreasonable and expect what seems impossible." Look at Joseph in prison, Moses and Israel at the Red Sea, or David in the cave. Same lesson: We live by promises!

*Learning To Face & Handle The Tests of Life To The GLORY OF GOD
The POWER Of BELIEVING FAITH which GLORIFIES GOD!*

I. *Expect Tests From God*

II. *Focus On Promises Not Explanations*

Gen. 22:3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

Abraham's Response: No doubt or delay, no reluctance or hesitation; instead, he "rose up early in the morning." He bowed in absolute submission to the will of God. FAITH TRIUMPHED over natural affection, over reason, and over self-will. Here was a most striking demonstration of the efficacy of Divine grace which can subdue every passion of the human heart and every imagination of the carnal mind, bringing all into "unrepining acquiescence to God."

Faith & Obedience Are Eternally Intertwined!

Gen. 22:4-5 Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off.

[Notice on the 3rd day Abraham saw the place where he was to sacrifice His son? Coincidence]

⁵ And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and WE will come back to you."

#4. God's will NEVER Contradicts God's Promise.

He HELD ON to the promise "in Isaac shall thy seed be called. [Gen. 21:12].

#5. Abraham believed even if God allowed him to slay his son, He could raise Isaac from the dead. God had promised Abraham that Isaac would have children. It was God's problem!

Heb. 11:17-19 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," ¹⁹ concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

Truth: Faith does not demand explanations; faith rests on promises.

I. *Expect Tests From God*

II. *Focus On Promises Not Explanations*

III. *Depend On God's Provision*

Gen. 22:6 So Abraham took the WOOD of the burnt offering and Laid It On Isaac His Son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together.

Provision of the Lamb: Gen. 22:7-12 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son."

Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

And Abraham said, "My son,
God Will Provide HIMSELF a lamb for a burnt offering: so the two of them went together.
Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there
and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the
wood. ¹⁰ And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son..
But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said,
"Here I am." ¹² And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now
I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, YOUR ONLY SON, from Me."

Consider: A true worshiper of God holds nothing back from God but obediently gives Him what
He asks, trusting that He will provide.

Gen. 22:13-14 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind *him* was a ram caught
in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt
offering instead of his son.

And Abraham called the name of the place, Adonai Yireh; The-LORD-Will-Provide;
as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

Abraham then gave the location a prophetic label.

It appears he somehow knew he was acting out a prophecy!

Martin Luther: "Our suffering is not worthy of the name of suffering.

When I consider my crosses, trials and tribulations, I shame myself almost to death, thinking
what they are in comparison of the sufferings of my blessed Savior Jesus Christ."

God Never Wastes Suffering.

Job 23:10 But He knows the way that I take; When He has tested me,
I shall come forth as gold.

Spurgeon: The promises of God never shine brighter than in the furnace of affliction.
It is only by passing through trials that we come to KNOW who God is — His grace,
His faithfulness, His sufficiency.

Wiersbe: I need never fear the "cup of testing" the Father hands me. My Savior has already
drunk the cup before me and I am following in His steps. I need not fear because the Father
has prepared it for me in love. The cup He prepares for me will never harm me.

I may suffer pain and heartbreak, but He will eventually transform my suffering into glory.

Rebekah has fulfilled 2 of the 3 requirements. She is not a Canaanite, and she is from Abraham's country and his kindred. What more was required to convince him that Rebekah was indeed the woman who would become Isaac's bride? All that God could do had been done.

What is lacking?

She must be willing to leave her country and kindred and follow the servant to Isaac's home.

It is a long, difficult journey - -

- a journey of sanctification to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ

There is no compulsion. The individual must exercise his will and make a choice.

The success of the servant's journey will depend on whether Rebekah will choose to follow him.