

GENESIS

Why The Beginning Matters

Study 18

Isaac and his Sons

Genesis 23-26

Part 1 of 5: Purchase of the First Piece of Promise Land

Genesis 23:4-6; 17-20

“I am a foreigner and stranger among you. Sell me some property for a burial site here so I can bury my dead.” The Hittites replied to Abraham, “Sir, listen to us. You are a mighty prince among us. Bury your dead in the choicest of our tombs. None of us will refuse you his tomb for burying your dead.”

So Ephron’s field in Machpelah near Mamre—both the field and the cave in it, and all the trees within the borders of the field—was deeded to Abraham as his property in the presence of all the Hittites who had come to the gate of the city. Afterward Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre (which is at Hebron) in the land of Canaan. So the field and the cave in it were deeded to Abraham by the Hittites as a burial site.

1) a) Discussion question. According to Gen 23 and Hebrews 11:9-10, Abraham lived in tents and seemingly didn’t receive the full promise. What similarities do Christians today have in common with this scenario?

Christians today also don’t experience full citizenship and the full measure of the richness of God until the last days. The high money cost he paid is also reflective of the moral cost Christians will pay to inherit the promised land.

Quick Verse Reference

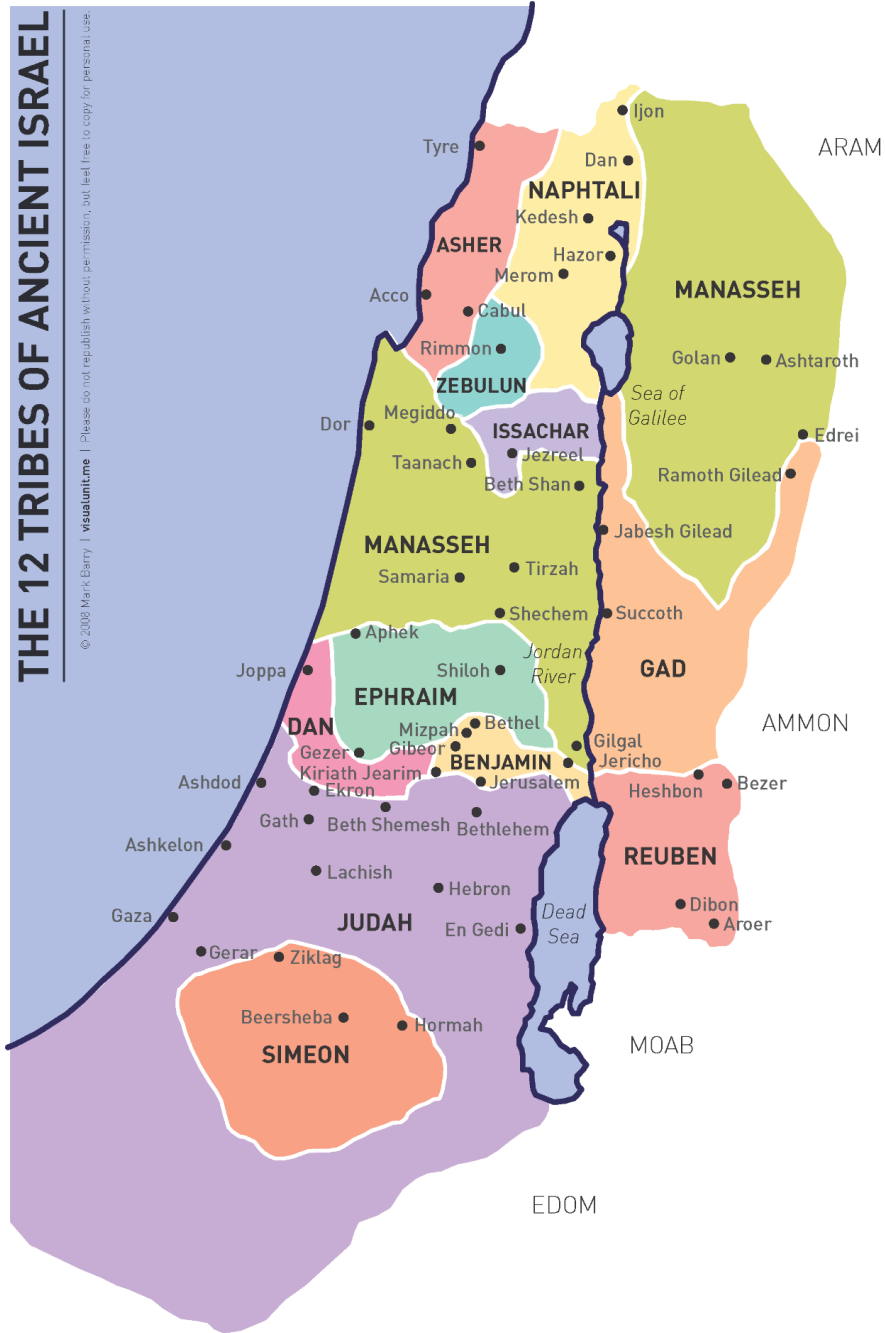
Hebrews 11:9-10

By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

b) Based on the passage, circle the area that Abraham bought and give one reason why this is significant.

THE 12 TRIBES OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

© 2008 Mark Barry / visualunit.me | Please do not republish without permission, but feel free to copy for personal use.



It is a partial fulfillment of the promised land that belongs under Judah in the future.

Gen 24 (A Bride for Isaac)

2) a) Fill in the blanks. According to the video lecture slide, the story of Isaac getting his bride in Genesis 24 is divided into roughly 4 sections, fill in what was happening.

Verses	Location	What happened
1-9	Canaan	Abraham and his servant
10-28	Mesopotamia	The servant and Rebekah at the well
29-61	Mesopotamia	The servant and Laban at the house
62-67	Canaan	Isaac, Rebekah and the servant

Part 2 of 5: Align our lives with His calling

Genesis 24:1-4;7-8

Abraham was now very old, and the Lord had blessed him in every way. He said to the senior servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh. I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac."

"The Lord, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father's household and my native land and who spoke to me and promised me on oath, saying, 'To your offspring I will give this land'—he will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there. If the woman is unwilling to come back with you, then you will be released from this oath of mine. Only do not take my son back there."

3) a) Discussion question. According to the video lecture slide and the passage, what was Abraham's priority when looking for a bride for his son?

Abraham aligns it with his calling of not mixing culture with the Canaanites and also to make sure his son doesn't leave the promised land.

Quick Verse Reference

Proverbs 14:12

There is a way that appears to be right,
but in the end it leads to death.

b) Fill in the blanks. According to the video lecture slide and the passage, fill in the blanks on how Abraham responds to God's doing.

God's doing	Verse	Abraham's response
God's promises	who spoke to me and promised me on oath, saying, 'To your offspring I will give this land' —	Trusting in God's promise
God's deeds	The Lord, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father's household and my native land	Experience of God's deeds to back him
God's purpose	—he will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there.	Obedience to God's purpose

Genesis 24:63,66-67

He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching.

Then the servant told Isaac all he had done. Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

c) Reflection question. Share if you believe love should come first or after the marriage and the pros and cons of each.

Part 3 of 5: Feel for His hand in our lives

Genesis 24:12-18

Then he prayed, "Lord, God of my master Abraham, make me successful today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. May it be that when I say to a young woman, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too' —let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master."

Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milkah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor. The woman was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever slept with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.

The servant hurried to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water from your jar."

"Drink, my lord," she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink.

After she had given him a drink, she said, "I'll draw water for your camels too, until they have

had enough to drink.”

4) a) Objective question. Select all that apply. Which of the following is true based on the story of Rebekah becoming a bride for Isaac?

- A. We should be bold to pray a specific prayer to God to look for a partner such as: “Whichever lady serves me a glass of water after church service, I shall marry her.”
- B. We should pick only beautiful virgins as our spouses
- C. We should send a servant or another person to pick a spouse for our children
- D. We should marry someone from our *kampung* or a close relative
- E. There are godly characteristics that we can see from a potential spouse before choosing them and most important is to see if they are willing to worship and follow the true God.
- F. This story is a specific and extraordinary story where God’s hand was obvious and should not be applied out of context today.

Background information

1) Why did God allow incest in the Bible?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/incest-in-the-Bible.html>

2) Is it wrong to have a romantic relationship with a close relative?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/close-relative-relationship.html>

b) Fill in the blanks on the similarities between Rebekah and Abraham.

Much like that of Abraham’s	decision	50 years earlier
To leave and go to an	Unknown land	On a promise
Hearing about	This God	And His blessing
To be part of	A new nation	
Cannot see the future, makes	A choice by faith	With a man she met only 24 hours ago

c) Fill in the blanks on the steps in decision making with God in the process according to the lecture slide.

Step 1	Making sure the decision fits into the overall direction of God’s call in our lives,
--------	--

	rejecting other alternatives
Step 2	Committing the endeavor to God in prayer
Step 3	Establishing certain criteria in wisdom, commensuration with the call
Step 4	Stepping out in faith
Step 5	Looking for confirmatory signs and response

Part 4 of 5: Trust in His purpose in our lives

5) Reflection question. There were a lot of ‘What ifs’ for Isaac, what if she said no, what if he didn’t like her, what if she couldn’t bear children? How do you handle the ‘What ifs’ in you life when obeying God’s calling?

Part 5 of 5: Divine Sovereignty does not mean Human Passivity

6) Objective question. Select all that apply. What are the lessons we can learn from the story of Isaac and Rebecca?

- A. We should wait around for God to provide us a spouse
- B. God’s sovereignty does not imply human passivity
- C. Recipients of God’s promise always have a smooth time and don’t get severe trials
- D. Persistent prayer is important
- E. God works His promises through our choices, so choose whatever you want!
- F. God chooses the underdogs– barren women, younger brother, failures (1 Corinthians 1:27-29 says God chose the foolish to shame the wise)
- G. We should be a conmen like Jacob so God will use us
- H. We should not be short-sighted like Esau selling his birthright for a single meal

Gen 23 – Sarah’s death and burial plot
Part 1 of 5: Purchase of the First Piece of Promise Land
Gen 24 – A Bride for Isaac
Part 2 of 5: Align our lives with His calling
Part 3 of 5: Feel for His hand in our lives
Part 4 of 5: Trust in His purpose in our lives

Gen 25 – Jacob’s story

Part 5 of 5: Divine Sovereignty does not mean Human Passivity

Case Study

Case 1 – Finding a Life Partner

Jim Lee is a young man who is earnestly seeking to find a life partner as he is now pushing 30 years of age and his parents have been pressuring him.

He put the matter before the Lord and that week the pastor in his church preached Genesis 24 about how the servant of Abraham managed to get a wife for Isaac. He quoted from Hebrews “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” (Hebrews 13:8 ESV)

So all he had to do is to exhibit the same faith as the servant.

So Jim waited outside Inti College in Subang Jaya by the lobby with a bag with all its contents scattered all over the floor. He committed to the Lord that the first girl that stopped to help him pick up the scattered contents of his bag would be the one God has chosen for him.

So he waited at the college and the first one to offer to help him was his own lecturer Mrs. Liew but since she was already married he shooed her away. Then the next person to stop to help him was Tammy Tan a beautiful girl from a very rich family. She did not attend church regularly, but it did not matter to Jim. This was the one as he had committed this to God and she was the answer to his prayer. He wooed her relentlessly and married her.

A year later they ran into problems as they had come from very culturally diverse backgrounds. Tammy was a very headstrong lady and lived a pampered lifestyle which Jim could not stand. They were soon separated.

1) a) Discussion question. Did Jim apply Genesis 24 correctly? Why or why not?

Model Answer

No, he did not because Genesis 24 is a narrative and it describes to us what happened and we are to apply the principles of the story and not apply the exact procedure the servant used. The servant used the principle of faith in his time and there were other criteria which include the explicit instruction of the kind of lady Abraham wanted for his son so there were criteria. The narratives are not prescriptive they are always descriptive.

b) Discussion question. Doesn't the verse in Hebrews mean that Jesus is the same yesterday today and forever. So what worked for Abraham's servant would surely work for Jim too shouldn't it?

Model Answer

The verse in Hebrews is often taken out of context. The actual context is:

“Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we can confidently say,

“The Lord is my helper;

I will not fear;

what can man do to me?”

Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them.”

(Hebrews 13:5-9 ESV)

The context is the reliability and constancy of Jesus, we can trust him because he will not leave or forsake us. So we don't have to trust money to make us feel safe, we trust God no matter what man can do to us. His faithfulness to us is constant and the principles of his teaching are unchanging. So don't be led away by new and false teachings.

The verse does not mean for us to continue to do the same things over and over again throughout the span of time and history.

God is constant in his love and faithfulness to us. But how He moves in different times and different places in different cultures, will be different.

If we were to follow exactly what Abraham did then we would have to grab each other gonads and also swear or promise whenever we want to do something.

c) Discussion question. Jim now realized that he made a mistake and on that basis, he told Tammy he was very sorry and they should divorce since there was so much trouble in the marriage and he had come into the union under false impressions that it was the will of God. Is this the right move for him to make under God?

Model Answer

The couple is now married. Even though through an unwise procedure and false assumptions, nevertheless they are married and marriage is based on a commitment, not on compatibility. Hence, he does not have the proper basis to divorce and should be better to work things out.

Case 2 – Misplaced Faith – False Teaching

Joannie was a fresh MBA graduate and wanted to start out in business doing the Subway sandwich franchise. She was planning to sink in her whole life savings into buying the franchise. She does not know how to cook and has not run any business in her life.

She read this article by a famous pastor and was convinced that she had the blessing and power in her life to be successful if only she had faith.

=== start quote ===

Becoming Blessing-Minded
Creflo Dollar

There are so many awesome benefits that come with accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and personal Savior, from healing to financial increase. However, the one that heads up the list and is actually the source of every promise you could ever receive from God is the blessing. Many times, when we talk about the blessing, we focus on the tangible material items that make our lives comfortable, such as houses and cars. But the blessing is much more than that. It is actually an empowerment to prosper and have success in every area of our lives. When the blessing is in operation, nothing can stop you or hold you back from obtaining everything God has promised you. Ephesians 1:3 says that if we are a part of the Kingdom of God, through our acceptance of Jesus Christ, we have already been blessed with every spiritual blessing available. That means we have wisdom and power that enables us to do and accomplish anything.

Spiritual blessings also include things like healing, increase, and spiritual gifts that God can impart in our lives to be a blessing to others. When we are blessed, we are empowered to excel.

If we go back to the book of Genesis and look at the account of the creation story, we discover that, when God created mankind, He equipped Adam and Eve with this very blessing. Genesis 1:27, 28 says, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." God endowed the first man and woman with the ability to absolutely dominate the earthly realm. That power was the blessing! Unfortunately, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden and ate of the forbidden fruit, they lost their spiritual connection to the Father and, consequently, the blessing. But the good news is that, through Jesus, the power of the blessing has been restored!

Galatians 3:13, 14 says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

The "promise" mentioned here in this scripture is the blessing! It is the empowerment God originally bestowed on Adam and Eve, and then a man called Abraham. Jesus came through the lineage of Abraham, and through His substitutionary sacrifice on the cross, each of us now has access to the blessing when we receive Him by faith. When the blessing is on your life, you have success no matter where you are. Joseph was a prime example of this. When he was thrown in prison for being falsely accused of raping his master's wife, God showed him favor with the prison staff! In time, he became the overseer of the entire facility (Genesis 39:1-23).

So how do we activate the blessing in our lives? By speaking the Word of God! God's Word is blessed, and when we begin to understand the power of our words and align them with what the Bible says, we turn on the power of the blessing. It will begin working for us, in us, and around us when we use our mouths to declare the Word with boldness, and in faith. The more we speak the Word, the more our minds will be renewed to the reality that we are blessed.

Developing a blessing consciousness involves paying more attention to the empowerment God has equipped us with than we do the circumstances and situations going on around us. When you know you have been blessed, your confidence in the blessing will propel you to victory, all the time! Be sure to visit our online bookstore for tools to help you grow into a deeper awareness of the blessing. You are empowered to prosper!

Scripture References: Ephesians 1:3 Genesis 1:27, 28 Galatians 3:13, 14 Genesis 39:1-23

<http://www.creflodollarministries.org/BibleStudy/Articles.aspx?id=362>

2) a) Is financial increase a benefit of accepting Jesus as Lord?

Model Answer

The financial increase has never been suggested as the benefit of accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour. In fact, the first Christians experienced great financial loss and persecution. Paul himself experienced financial loss moving around as a tent maker. The Disciples left their

businesses.

b) Discussion question. Is blessing equal to success in every area of life? Explain.

Model Answer

The other major untruth is that Creflo Dollar equates the blessing with success in every area of life and no matter where you are. His specific example of Joseph will tell you that he means a change in circumstances that will bring material benefit, high position, or honor like in Joseph.

Circumstantial change is not a blessing offered by the gospel of Jesus Christ. Circumstantial change for the better or success in a particular field of human endeavor is often possible when someone becomes a dedicated Christian and lives ethically, and works hard hence reaps the circumstantial benefit of his changed lifestyle. But it will be equally possible that his dedication to Jesus will lead him to speak out against evil like John the Baptist who lost his head or Isaiah who was put in a tree trunk and sawn into two. The blessing is a spiritual blessing that is the ultimate truth.

c) Discussion question. Is the power of the Word of God found in speaking it out loud? If not, how is the power of the Word of God realized in our lives? Explain.

Model Answer

His false teaching culminates in how one uses the Word of God. He uses this idea of positive confession. The Word has intrinsic power when it is spoken and declared.

The Biblical view of the power of the Word of God is not found in speaking it out. It is found when the values the Word teaches are learned, internalized, and lived out in our lives. For example when someone hurts us or treats us badly.

Understanding the Word and applying its principles will require us to love them back in return and pray for them and forgive them. This unleashes the power of the Word as the Word has changed our lives and our lives speak to people of the world. Mere vocalization of the Word treats the Word no differently from some form of magical incantation which we can use for our own success.

d) Discussion question. How can Joannie succeed in her business instead?

Model Answer

Open for discussion.