

## ***“Being on the Way, the LORD led Me”***

### ***Genesis 24:1-67***

Chapter 24 is the longest chapter in the book of Genesis. Entire books have been written on this chapter of the Bible. The reason for this is the rich typology found in this chapter. The Bible speaks of types and shadows. Types and shadows are a method of God to reveal His truth and plan to us through models and symbols. For instance Adam is a type of sinful Man and Jesus, the Second Adam, is Perfect Man (Romans 5:14). The Wilderness experiences of the Israelites admonish us to avoid their same pitfalls of the flesh and sin (1 Corinthians 10:1-13). The Exodus is being born again out of a dark and lost world (e.g. Romans 5-6). The Wilderness is life in the flesh (e.g. Romans 7). And crossing the Jordan into the Promised Land is entering the Spirit filled life (e.g. Romans 8). The holidays and festivals of the Old Testament are a shadow or picture of different aspects of Jesus Christ (Colossians 2:16-17). The Passover speaks to us about Jesus (1 Corinthians 5:7). The Tabernacle/Temple is a shadow or model of heavenly things according to the inspired writer of Hebrews (Hebrews 8:4-5). The Law itself is a shadow of things to come later in Jesus Christ of the New Testament (Hebrews 10:1-2). The priesthood of the Old Testament is a picture of the work of Jesus (Hebrews 8:1-6; 9:11). The veil of the Temple is a type of the flesh of Jesus, torn to atone for our sin (Hebrews 10:20).

The idea of the Bible containing types and shadows is exciting because it opens up a whole new vista of revelation from God in His word. But in searching for the types and shadows contained in God’s word we should never overlook the very practical revelations of God that He puts right out in the open. There is a very practical aspect of what happens in chapter 24. The central means by which the servant can fulfill God’s will here is by his “being on the way, the LORD led me” (24:27). From this we learn, “It is hard to steer a parked car. If we want to be guided by the LORD we should be on our way.” (*Verse by Verse Commentary – Genesis* by David Guzik, p. 148). To wait on God means to serve Him as a waiter or waitress in a restaurant, it doesn’t mean to sit around as a Christian couch potato!

Let’s look at Genesis 24 in terms of the types and not overlook the practical applications in the process.

#### **Typology in Genesis 24**

There are five types used by God in Genesis 24. By typology we see the relationship between God the Father, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Church and the world. In this chapter we see father Abraham (God the Father) send his “oldest servant” to seek a bride for his son Isaac much the same as the Holy Spirit secures a Bride, the Church, for Jesus. Who does God lead him to find as a bride? God leads him to Rebekah a servant hearted type of the Church. Then the unnamed servant escorts the bride to the bridegroom Isaac who is waiting in the Promised Land just like Jesus. Lastly we see Laban and Bethuel as types of the world trying to hang on to those who are being drawn to the favored Son.

## **Abraham – A Type of God the Father**

Abraham is only mentioned in the opening lines of Genesis 24 but the mission of the chapter originates at his commands (24:1-4). Abraham told the servant that the LORD would send His angel ahead of him to guide him in the way (24:5-8). Similarly, it is God the Father who sends His only Son to redeem the world (John 3:16). In Genesis 22 we saw the great typology of Abraham as giving His only Son Isaac and so we carry this typology into Genesis 24.

### **The Practical Lessons Learned from Abraham**

When we look at Abraham we see a godly man of faith who has a desire to set his house in order. And that means he wants to assure that his son has a wife. It should be pointed out that Abraham is very particular about who his son would marry. He gives very particular instructions to the servant to “not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites” (24:3). Instead he clearly instructs the servant to, “go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac” (24:4). It was very important to Abraham that his son marries in the faith. The Bible tells us very clearly that we are not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:11-18). The Bible gives a great deal of evidence as to why this is so important. The person we marry should encourage and push us closer to God. If we marry outside of our faith or to someone who has no faith at all, the tendency is to drag us away from the Lord and at the very least it will be a hindrance to our walk with the Lord. That is an important lesson to see here. Abraham was very clear that Isaac his son should not be taken back to the old haunts of the land of Abraham’s past (24:6-7). Instead Abraham said God would direct through the world by His angel.

Another lesson we learn from Abraham here is that God’s plan does not circumvent or disregard the will of the potential bride (24:8). If the potential bride was unwilling to go with the servant, he was released from the mission. In the same way, God does not use coercion or bypass the will of people to force them to be a part of the bride of Christ. God makes His offer of salvation known, and then it is the responsibility of the lost to either receive or reject that offer. God will not force you to know Him or love Him. Love cannot be forced.

All of this was worthy of a solemn vow of the servant to the master ritually exemplified in the servant putting his hand under the thigh of Abraham as he swore to obey his instructions (24:2, 9). Putting your hand under the thigh was a way of swearing not only to the immediate person but to all successive offspring. These two truths are important and should be obeyed by us.

### **The Nameless Servant – A Type of Holy Spirit**

Why do we associate the nameless servant of Genesis 24 with typology related to the Holy Spirit? Because in the revealed account of the servant of Abraham and how he goes about his business we see characteristics of the Holy Spirit. Let’s look at some of these similarities.

***Nameless like the Holy Spirit.*** This servant is described as the oldest servant and the servant in charge of all that Abraham had (24:2). But this servant who has been entrusted with such great responsibility in Abraham's house is not named in Genesis 24. The name of this servant is conspicuous by its absence. Similarly, the Holy Spirit does not bring attention to Himself but instead bears witness and brings the focus onto Jesus (John 14:26; 16:13-14).

***A helper like the Holy Spirit.*** Earlier in Genesis 15:2 Abraham's servant is referred to as Eliezer. If this is indeed Eliezer, his name adds evidence to a wonderful typology. The name Eliezer (Strong's #461) means, "God is help" or "helper." Similarly, the Holy Spirit is referred to as our Helper (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7).

***Seeking a bride like the Holy Spirit.*** This servant is commissioned by Abraham to seek out a bride for his son Isaac (24:3-4). He is given specific instructions to seek a bride from Abraham's family. Similarly, the Holy Spirit is calling, seeking out and preparing a bride for Christ (Revelation 21:2, 9; 22:17).

The Holy Spirit is the One who connected with the birth and care of the New Testament Church. He empowers the Church (Acts 1:8; 2:4). He appoints leaders in the Church (Acts 20:17, 28). He commissions people to expand the Church (Acts 8:29; 13:2, 4). He comforts the Church in times of trials (Acts 9:31). He works holiness into the Church (Romans 15:16) and makes the Church fruitful (Galatians 5:22-24).

***Baring gifts like the Holy Spirit.*** The servant brought gifts to give the bride (24:22). Similarly, the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to the members of the Church (1 Corinthians 12:3-11).

### **The Practical Lessons Learned from the Servant**

The typological associations are of great value, but unless we apply what the Lord has revealed it profits us nothing. We always have to answer the question, *so what? What difference does this make to my life? What can be applied to my life from this portion of scripture?* There is a great deal to apply from the life of this servant.

***First, he was trustworthy (24:10-11).*** Abraham was comfortable entrusting "all his master's goods" into the hands of this servant. That tells us that he was trustworthy and dependable. This was an important task and mission Abraham was sending him on. Abraham would have chosen only the most reliable servant to carry out such a task. Are we trustworthy in what God calls us to do? (1 Corinthians 4:1-2).

***Second, he was a man of prayer (24:12).*** The first thing this servant did once he received his marching orders from his master was ***pray***. He said, "O LORD God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham." Notice the focus of his prayer; he sought kindness and success *for his master Abraham*. As a noble servant he sought the welfare of the one he was serving. And most importantly, he sought success from the Giver of success, God. That is an essential truth of all people who would be used by their Master in heaven. Someone has said, ***until prayer is made a priority, progress will not be a reality***. The reason this servant's mission met with success is because he started out seeking the Lord in prayer.

**Third, he was a man of active faith (24:13-14).** He believed God would answer his prayer. He even went so far as to ask God to identify the perfect bride by her servant spirit. Prayer had made this servant wise. And prayer helped him feel comfortable with God and familiar with the way He works. He new to trust God to bring success but he stepped out in faith too; he put feet on his prayers. He didn't lay down and wait for the Lord to bring the answer to his prayer. He stepped out in faith and served his master trusting God to lead him *as he served*.

**Fourth, he was “on the way” of the LORD (24:15-28).** Where was it that the Lord led this servant to a successful answer to his prayer? It was while he was, “**being on the way, the LORD led me . . .**” (24:27). There is a critically important truth in these words. That truth is, *before God can lead us along the path, we need to be on the path*. We see this truth in the following scriptures:

**Psalm 37:23**

<sup>23</sup> The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD,  
And He delights in his way.

**Proverbs 3:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> Trust in the LORD with all your heart,  
And lean not on your own understanding;  
<sup>6</sup> In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
And He shall direct your paths.

Jesus is the way the truth and the life and before you can experience all that God has for you, you must first come to know Him (John 14:6; 17:3). Once you receive new life in Christ, you pass from your way to God's way and God's way is a way of tremendous blessing.

**Fifth, he was a man of worship (24:26-27, 52).** When he saw the answer to his prayers and fulfillment of his mission he was moved to worship the Lord. He just had to bless God for leading him in this incredible way. How about you, do you bless and thank God when He answers your prayers? We are called to be thankful in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5:18). That doesn't mean we are thankful *for* all things, it simply means we are thankful *in* all things. Why are we thankful in all things? Because God is with us to get us through all things. And for that we should worship Him.

**Rebecca – A Type of the Church**

Rebecca is a beautiful type of the Church.

**First, her marriage to Isaac was planned (24:34-49).** Just like the marriage of the Church to Christ, Rebecca's marriage was planned long before she even knew about it. We are chosen in Christ by God before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:3-4).

***Second, she was a necessary part in God's plan (24:49).*** Rebecca was the whole reason the servant went on his mission. She was the bride and answer to his prayers. The Church is a necessary part of God's plans and so was Rebecca (Ephesians 1:23).

***Third, she looked forward to her wedding day (24:58).*** She hadn't seen her groom yet, but she looked forward to marrying him enough to be willing to go with the servant. In the same way we haven't seen Jesus but we love Him (1 Peter 1:8).

***Fourth, she journeyed to meet her groom (24:61).*** A journey was necessary for Rebecca to meet her groom and the Church journeys in this life until we meet our Groom Jesus 9 1 Peter 1:3-9).

***Fifth, it was love at first sight when she met her groom (24:64-67).*** Rebecca was united to Isaac for her entire life. And the Church is united to Jesus for eternity (Ephesians 5:26-27; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 19:70).

### **The Practical Lessons Learned from Rebecca**

Rebecca is a model of godliness and womanhood. She was a woman of virtue (24:16), compassionate (24:18), strong and industrious (24:19-20), and ready to respond in faith (24:58). She was the perfect wife for Isaac.

### **Isaac – A Type of Christ**

The typological connections between Isaac and Christ are not limited to this chapter. Like Jesus, Isaac was a man of prayer (24:63; Matthew 14:23; Mark 1:35; 6:46; Luke 6:12; 9:28; 11:1; 18:1). Like Jesus, Isaac appeared at just the right time (24:64; Galatians 4:4). Isaac, like Jesus, was born miraculously (Genesis 21; Luke 1:35). He was named before he was born just like Jesus was (Genesis 17:19; Matthew 1:21). Isaac, like Jesus was offered up for a sacrifice (Genesis 22; 1 John 2:2). Both were willing to be obedient unto death (Genesis 22; Philippians 2:8). And both were brought back from the dead to lead and bless many peoples; Isaac figuratively and Jesus literally (Genesis 22; Ephesians 1:19-23).

### **The Practical Lessons Learned from Isaac**

Again, like the servant, we see the man God uses is a man of prayer. Isaac was meditating or praying when the servant brought his bride (24:63). We probably miss many of God's blessings because of our prayerlessness. It is in prayer that we are made alert to the will of God and its manifestation in life. That is why we are exhorted to always live in a spirit of prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

### **Laban and Bethuel – Types of the World**

Just as Laban and Bethuel tried to delay the departure of Rebecca to her groom (24:55), the world tries to clutch and grab and prevent people from coming to Jesus. The world

puts obstacles and deterrents in the path of the one seeking God or who is trying to live for God. We know that the world is not an entity in and of itself but is an instrument of evil moved and manipulated by the “god of this world” Satan (2 Corinthians 4:4; Matthew 4:8-9; John 12:31; 14:30; Ephesians 2:2; 6:12; 1 John 2:15-17; 5:19). Laban and Bethuel become types of the people of the world because they function in worldly wisdom (1 Corinthians 3:19). They are only concerned with the things of this world and not the plans of God. That is part of the deception of those who live for this world and have no interest in heaven (2 John 7).

### **The Practical Lessons Learned from Laban and Bethuel**

The lessons we learn from these two characters are all negative. They only offer physical food for the servant to eat, but show no interest in seeking the will of the Lord in these circumstances. They were a hindrance to the work of the servant (24:56). Maybe Laban and Bethuel thought by delaying the servant that he would offer more treasures or dowry in payment for Rebecca. Whatever the case, they are examples of ungodly who have no true interest in the things of God.

### **“Being on the way the LORD led me”**

What does this chapter tell us about being led by God? It tells us a lot about being led by God. When we look at this long chapter there are a number of things we should take note of in order to be led by the LORD.

***First, make devotion to God a priority (24:3-4).*** Abraham would only accept a bride for his son Isaac who was of the same faith. It’s important we understand the will of God will lead us closer to Him and not put obstacles in the way of knowing Him more deeply.

***Second, understand God will not force you to follow His will (24:5-9).*** If the bride would not go with the servant, he was released from the mission. God will not force us to follow His plans. Instead He will put us in a position to follow Him in faith.

***Third, unless prayer is a priority, progress will not be a reality (24:10-14, 15-25).*** The servant prayed along the way and the Lord led Him (24:10-14). John Bunyan the author of *Pilgrims’ Progress* wrote, “You can do more than pray after you’ve prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.” E.M. Bounds wrote, “When God’s promise and man’s praying are united by faith, then ‘nothing shall be impossible.’” That is what we see in the life of the servant along the way of God’s mission for him. If we are to find our “bride,” we need to be in prayer. Before we pray, everything seems distant and out of place. But when we pray, God’s brings it all together for us (24:15-25).

***Fourth, you have to be serving on the way for God to bring you to His final destination for you (24:26-27).*** The servant was led by God as he was serving his master. We may have desires, plans and hopes, but for God to direct us into all that He has for us, we need to be serving the Lord. God has a plan for each of us (Ephesians 2:10). But we won’t find

that plan or finish it until we step out in faith and serve the Lord along the way (Jeremiah 29:11-14).

***Fifth, don't keep God's plans a secret (24:28).*** Rebecca ran and told her family the things God was doing. When God orchestrates His divine appointments and networks His plans, share it with others. That is part of the blessing that God sprinkles around while carrying out His plans.

***Sixth, know and be able to state God's mission clearly (24:29-49).***the servant knew what his mission was and was able to clearly communicate it. We may not know the fine details of God's particular mission for our lives, but we do have the overall mission plan of His word. Study His word and know it so that the Spirit can use it to guide you with it (Psalm 119:105; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

***Seventh, don't allow the world or worldly to sidetrack you fro your mission from God (24:50-57).*** The world will always help you to find excuses to put off following God. The objective of the world is to keep you for its own. Don't settle for the second best offers of this world! Hold yourself to the high standard of God's perfect will and nothing less.

***Eighth, be ready to go when God presents the opportunity (24:58).*** Rebecca was ready to go. She was in tune with the Lord enough to see His hand in what was happening around her. And when the opportunity came, she was ready, to go!

***Ninth, when God's plans are being worked out, patiently wait in prayer (24:63).*** Isaac had to wait for God's plans to be carried out. Think of how hard it must have been for him to wait for the return of the servant with his bride? But he did not merely busy himself; he meditated in prayer to the Lord. And then, finally, one evening, when he looked up, he saw the answer to his prayer. Let patience have its perfect work in you and God will not let you down (James 1:4).

***Tenth, be comforted in the arms of God's provision (24:64-67).*** It's no accident that Isaac brought Rebecca into his mother's tent. He mourned the loss of his mother Sarah. But the Lord had a way to fill that void of grief. Don't try to fill your voids with alternatives to God's planned provisions. Wait on the Lord and He will meet your need. God will comfort you.

Hopefully you are not like Laban and Bethuel and are more like Abraham, the servant, Rebecca and Isaac. Why not get alone in prayer right now and ask the Lord for direction as to which of these types most characterizes you. And then repent where you need to and rejoice where you need to. Above all, worship the Lord.