

January 13

Scriptures: Read Genesis 24

Key Verse: “then he said, ‘Oh Lord God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham’.”(Genesis 24:12)

Overview

This most beautiful story expresses the goodness and guidance of God. Abraham, at 140 years of age, possibly thought he was close to death, thus he wanted to settle important matters before he died. In order to keep his descendants in the godly line of Shem and to remain separate from the sinful idolatry of Canaan, he felt it necessary that his son Isaac (now 40 years old) marry a girl from his own family (Nahor or Haran in Mesopotamia rather than a Canaanite woman. Abraham told his servant that Isaac was not to go; he was to stay in the land God had promised them while a servant would search for a wife. He made his oldest servant, probably Eliezer of Damascus (cf. chapter 15:2), take a solemn vow by putting his hand under Abraham’s thigh. In this ancient custom, the thigh symbolized the organs of procreation and an oath made in this manner was particularly sacred and binding.

Abraham’s loyal servant was wise and God-fearing – a great example of faithfulness, obedience, and trust.. His obligation to find a wife for Isaac took him quite a distance away and the angel of the Lord went before him (24:7). He knew how to pray and worship God (24:12; 26) and believed God would answer Abraham’s prayers and his. The servant prayed God would grant him success in his mission and would show “kindness” (i.e. “hesed” in the Hebrew, meaning grace and favor) to his master Abraham. Even before he had finished praying, God began to answer his specific prayers, for along came Rebekah, the daughter of Abraham’s brother’s son, (which made her Isaac’s second cousin). In those days, the young women would go as a group to draw water from the well at dawn and at dusk. Rebekah, a beautiful young lady, was among those who came at dusk to fill their water jugs. She did exactly as the servant had prayed, and it was no small task to draw plenty of water for ten thirsty camels. When Abraham’s servant spoke with her family, he was totally honest and gave glory to God. It seems Rebekah had a godly family and her father Bethuel and brother Laban discerned this was of the Lord (24:50, 51).

The servant, excited at the success of his mission and anxious to return, wanted to depart with Rebekah the next morning. She and her family agreed. Upon seeing Isaac, Rebekah dismounted from her camel showing respect, then she veiled her face, since it was the Eastern custom that the groom not see the bride without her face veiled until after their marriage.

God clearly was the One who had chosen Isaac’s mate for him and God used the servant to accomplish His plan. The union was successful, for we are told Isaac loved her (24:67). In today’s western society, it is unthinkable for another to choose one’s mate for it is a personal decision between the two who want to wed. In Isaac’s case, it was with God’s guidance and prayer that his spouse was chosen, and this is the right principle for us today as well. In fact, in all important decisions we should pray for God’s guidance and His will, and trust Him, for He is faithful.

Prayer

O Lord, we pray that You will guide us in our decisions today and every day.