

Eliezer the Evangelist – Genesis 24:1-9

I. Introduction:

- A. This is a fascinating chapter for anyone who loves the word of God.
1. There are a great many things here, most of which I don't have time to address.
 2. But I will ramble just a bit to point out several things about the world in which Abraham lived.
 3. It reveals things found nowhere else in the Bible or in our average secular reading.
 4. And quite frankly, all I can do is either nod or shake my head, because I have no explanation for some of them.
- B. There is the oath which the servant was asked to make. Isn't this the first oath we see in the Bible or history?
1. And there is the business of the hand under the thigh.
 - a. I can guess why this custom disappeared, but from where did it come? What was its meaning?
 - b. We find it only once again when Jacob asked his son, Joseph, to bury his remains in the Promised land
 2. Why was it customary for unmarried girls going out to the community well to collect water at specific times?
 - a. We see some of those people's customs when it came to hospitality and the entertainment of strangers.
 - b. For example, this may be the first time we read of feet washing; a practice which extended for centuries
 3. Rebekah threw a veil over her face when she approached Isaac, but apparently didn't wear one during the trip in the presence of Isaac's servant. Why? Was it a fiancé sort of thing?
 4. There are also some hints about early marriage ceremonies.
 - a. Then both Abraham and Isaac married relatives. Was this the common practice or was it special?
 - b. And there is the fact that Abraham remarried at the age of about 140. You don't see that every day.
 5. I don't know if it was common, but both Abraham and Isaac, seemed to be grieving over the death of Sarah in some rather unique ways.
 6. We don't have time to get into any of these things tonight.
- C. I would like to focus on the faith of Abraham's servant.
1. He adds a few points to our considerations of practical and serviceable faith.
 2. Perhaps you, like me, have heard messages using this man to illustrate the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
 3. We see Him being sent by the Father to find a bride for the Son – an apt illustration of saving grace.
 4. I'd like to start there but digress just one step to use this man as an illustration of the evangelist.
- D. We are not told in this chapter exactly who this servant is, but I'm going to call him *"Eliezer the evangelist."*
1. We see in **verse 2** that this was Abraham's oldest and most trusted servant.
 2. In **chapter 14** Abram spoke of his most faithful & loved servant by name, calling him Eliezer of Damascus.
 3. But that was a number of years earlier, so that man may have passed away, and yet, perhaps not.
 4. For the sake of a title for this message, I'm going to say that this was *"Eliezer the evangelist."*

II. In regard to his faith, our first point is that it probably began in Abraham.

- A. There are all kinds of ministries, in many of which you and I can't directly participate.
1. I wouldn't be very good with a regular ladies' ministry, and you might not make a good pulpit preacher.
 2. But we all could be powerful prayer warriors, and anyone might ignite the spark of faith in another person.
 3. Rarely is there a man like Abraham, whose faith in God is begun entirely through the Spirit alone.
 4. I am going to surmise that this servant learned to trust the Lord through Abraham.
 5. But it wasn't by way of family devotions, Sunday sermons or the study of John Gill's theology.
 6. Let's say that he learned to trust the Lord by watching Abraham trust the Lord with real, practical, day-to-day faith.
 7. I can teach you some lessons on faith, as I am trying to do in these lessons, but in reality ***faith is not taught; it is caught.***
 8. Most likely this man's faith was transmitted from the heart of Abraham.

- B. If this was Eliezer of Damascus, I would guess that he came into Abram's "employ" during the trip down from Haran to Canaan.
1. Abram may have traded something to someone to have the right to add this man to his company.
 2. Or maybe Eliezer was a free man who saw an opportunity, begging the pilgrim family to let him serve.
 3. But then over the years he became closer and closer to the man of God, observing and then catching his faith in Jehovah.
- C. Or maybe this was a second chief servant – a replacement for the first Eliezer.
1. In fact, he might have been the son of Eliezer the first, and was named after his father.
 2. This may have been one of the young men who went to Moriah with Abraham and Isaac.
 3. Perhaps this man learned to trust the Lord by listening to the excited talk on the return to Beersheba.
 4. Maybe he witnessed the change in Isaac's faith and life, and in the process was changed himself.
- D. One of the lessons here is that he was called to special service, while he was already in service.
1. It is safe to say that the Holy Spirit is not going to fill and empower anyone today, spectacularly using him, if he has been a Christian for a while, but living like a spiritual drone.
 2. Yes, God may save and call a man like Saul of Tarsus, instantly filling and employing him.
 3. But I am convinced that a lazy, fruitless, prayerless, backslidden Christian isn't going to become an instant faith-filled and powerful evangelist.
 4. Such a person will never have the faith necessary to trust God for miraculous victories.
 5. There have to be changes made first.
 6. God only fills empty vessels, but those empty vessels have to be clean and ready for service.
 7. Paul said to Timothy, after describing service of the wood, hay and stubble variety, *"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" – (II Timothy 2:21).*
 8. Eliezer speaks to Rebekah's family as though he was proud to be Abraham's servant – **(verse 34).**
 9. Until we are proud to be God's bond-slaves, we are never going to be much service to the Lord.

III. We learn from this man that victorious faith seeks the Lord's direction.

- A. Abraham called his most faithful servant, telling him that he had a special project for him to carry out.
1. You could say that Eliezer was to be the father's special evangelist. *"Take a wife unto my son, Isaac."*
 2. Then the servant of faith began to ask some questions, suggesting a lack of personal confidence.
 3. Initially we don't see a man filled with conquering faith.
 4. *"What if she won't come with me? What should I do?" "Should I take Isaac up to her house?"*
 5. Eliezer asked questions, but he did so in faith, anticipating his master's direction.
- B. It is not pertinent to my lesson, but Abraham forbade Eliezer from taking Isaac to Haran.
1. First, Abraham was called **away from** that place. He felt that it was permanent, and it applied to his son.
 2. Second, the religion of the rest of the family was faulty; it was hypocritical.
 3. Whatever grandfather Terah & brother Nahor knew of Jehovah, they corrupted with their previous idolatry.
 4. Abraham was not going to permit Isaac to be exposed to that kind of religion. It was too dangerous.

IV. Then this Eliezer immediately prepared and began his journey.

- A. But true faith is never foolish.
1. Like Abraham years earlier, this man split the necessary firewood, so to speak.
 2. He took ten camels covered with provisions for the trip, gifts to give away, and all the accoutrements necessary to bring the Lord's young lady safely to Isaac's home in Hebron.
 3. Sometimes faith doesn't know how to prepare, and when that is the case, trust in the Lord is sufficient.
 4. But sometimes God tells us to trust him through a surgeon's hand, or friend's generosity.
 5. In such a case it is not the dilution of faith to use the means God has supplied.
 6. Study and learn the Word of God so that you have the weapons for your spiritual warfare.

- B. The Lord led the man to the city of Haran and Nahor, the two brothers of Abram.
1. It may not have been miraculous leadership, because he didn't praise the Lord for any special guidance.
 2. But once he got to the outskirts of the city, toward sundown, he prayed, expressing his faith.
 3. **Verse 12** – *“And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.”*
- C. I don't recommend that we always pray like this, but notice the specifics of Eliezer's faith.
1. *“Lord bring to me the woman of your choice, and reveal her to me by putting in her heart to do these two specific things...”*
 - a. That a well-raised young lady would use her pitcher to draw up water and give it to a stranger in need, would be good but not necessarily eyebrow raising.
 - b. But to willingly offer to use her pitcher over and over again, to bring up enough water to slack the thirst of ten needy camels, is going a beyond the ordinary.
 2. We know that the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, but God controls even the hearts of teenage girls.
 3. Eliezer expressed truly unusual faith when asking for these two things.
 4. And not only did the Lord bless that faith by bringing to him Rebekah the niece of Abraham, but without any prompting on the man's part, she did exactly what he asked of the Lord.
- D. And by the way, the man's faith was answered even before it was fully expressed.
1. **V. 15** – *“And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that behold, Rebekah came out”* of the city.
 2. The word *“behold”* suggests that this was surprising. She coming out of the city before he raises his eyes.
 3. Also, in other ways, the Lord had been preparing this young woman for years.
 4. She was beautiful – *“very fair to look upon;”* she was a young lady of faith; and she was kind & hospitable.
 5. She was well trained. Rebekah was everything a young saint of God ought to be, because the Holy Spirit had been grooming her, so to speak.
- E. At that point, if I was that servant, I might have begun praising God and making a scene, but not Eliezer.
1. His faith wouldn't permit him to run ahead of the Lord.
 2. He didn't know exactly who this young lady was until **verse 24**.
 3. When Rebekah did exactly as the man of God had prayed, **verse 21**, declares, *“And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not.”*
 4. Even with the hand of the Lord on us, and with things going exactly as our faith has expected, that doesn't mean we know precise what the Lord intends to do.
 5. Powerful and victorious faith is often times patient faith, awaiting for the Lord to work out all the details.

V. But then when God answers, our expectant faith should become thankful faith.

- A. Notice the total lack of embarrassment on his part.
1. Standing there in front of this young woman, and perhaps with others in the vicinity... (**verse 26**)...
 - a. *“The man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD.*
 - b. *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.”*
 2. Later, in the presence of Bethuel, and Laban, Rebekah's brother, the man of faith once again, *“worshipped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth.”*
 3. He is not going to waste his faith by confining it's blessings to his own heart. It must be shared.
 4. He wants everyone to know how directly involved God is in the whole episode.
 5. And notice there isn't a word about God's blessings *“on me.”* It was all about Abraham.
 6. The servant evangelist is all about finding the Lord's woman and praising Him for doing so.

- B. There is quite a bit of repetition throughout this chapter.
 1. The man's initial prayer at the well is fulfilled almost word for word when Rebekah arrives.
 2. And then when she brings him into her home where he meets her family, he states the purpose for his journey, beginning with repeating the words of Abraham, whom they all knew as Abram
 3. Then he repeats what Rebekah did in the fulfilment of his prayer of faith.
 4. He even tells the family that he bowed in the worship of God there at the well.

VI. But Eliezer's faith is not complete until his purpose is complete.

- A. When Laban recommended that the family keep their sister for a few days, probably for the purpose of getting her ready and giving her wedding gifts and marriage advice, Eliezer said,
 1. *"Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master."*
 2. It is not enough to be led by the Spirit to the woman of God's dreams.
 3. By faith, we need to bring her by the hand back to the Lord.
 4. In **Matthew 8** and **Luke 9** a potential disciple asked Christ for permission to take care of a family emergency before actually following the Saviour, but Jesus told the man to put first things first.
 5. Christ must be first. *"Let the dead bury the dead"* while we move ahead.
- B. And then came perhaps the most spectacular faith of the whole chapter.
 1. **Verse 58** – *"And they called Rebekah, & said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? & she said, I will go."*
 2. Rebekah's trust, followed by her departure for Canaan, were almost as incredible as Abram's had been nearly a century earlier.
 3. She is probably a teenager. She had been sequestered, probably never away from her family home.
 - a. Now she is going with a stranger to marry someone even more unknown to her. Sight unseen.
 - b. This was a permanent and life-changing choice, and by faith she was in full agreement.
 - c. The Lord had given her a new heart – a heart which she did not possess before that night.
 - d. What a beautiful picture of salvation and saving faith.
 4. Someone might explain Rebekah's decision by saying she was abused by her family, and she was trying to escape a bad home life.
 5. Another might say she was only a fickle teenager who was bedazzled by the glittering gifts of gold.
 6. But because I find her in the Word of God, without any explanation of any sin in her heart, I'm going to say that she, too, was stepping out by faith to obey the Lord.

VII. Conclusion

- A. Eliezer had been given a commission from his Master, and he met the conditions of that commission perfectly.
 1. But it was not legalistic obedience which drove him.
 2. He was **moved** by faith, and **governed** by faith.
 3. Furthermore, he was blessed because of his faith.
 4. God honored his faith, by permitting him to lead a young soul back to his master, creating a permanent new relationship
- B. This is an example of the way our faith should govern our day-to-day lives.
 1. And particular, this is an example of how faith should be employed in our efforts at evangelism.