

# Pentwater Bible Church

## *A Bride for Isaac Pt. 2* *Genesis Message Fifty-Two*



Eliezer and Rebecca at the Well Nicolas Poussin, 1648

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher

# Pentwater Bible Church



## Announcements

See us on Facebook



Sunday Radio Teaching on WEEH 100.5 FM at 06:00 AM  
Z95 FM at 9:30 AM & 9:00 PM; WMOM 102.7 FM at 11:00  
AM & 9:00 PM; and Internet <http://www.wmom.fm/>  
11:00AM An exposition of the Book of Galatians is  
presently being broadcast.

Men's Bible Study and discussion group will meet  
Wednesday February 1, 2012 from 7:00 PM to 8:30. Dan  
will start a weekly series on "Israel; The Arabs & Islam."  
First Session will focus on the origin of the Arab-Israeli  
Conflict.

See Insert for The Women's ministry teaching through  
"Living by the Book," Reading The Bible for All it is  
Worth.

Potluck coming February 19<sup>th</sup>! Details next week in the  
bulletin... Stay Tuned!

Skype our Service at PentwaterBibleChurch

Share Your Church With Others

*Sunday Service, January 29, 2012*

*11:00 AM*

Introduction Music: Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring  
J.S. Bach

Opening Prayer:

Communion: Remembering Our Lord

Hymn #1: Let us Break Bread Together  
Spiritual

Message: A Bride for Isaac Part II  
Genesis Chapter 24: 10-27

Hymn # 2: Blest be The Tie That Binds 1,2 &4  
John Fawcett

&

Offering:

Benediction:

Closing Music: Allegro From Brandenburg Concerto  
#3  
J.S. Bach

# LET US BREAK BREAD TOGETHER

1. Let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees,  
2. Let us drink the cup to - geth - er on our knees,  
3. Let us praise God to - geth - er on our knees,  
on our knees

Let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees;  
Let us drink the cup to - geth - er on our knees;  
Let us praise God to - geth - er on our knees;  
on our knees

## *Chorus*

When I fall on my knees, With my face to the ris - ing

sun, O Lord, have mer - cy on me.  
on me.

# Dentwater Bible Church

Genesis Message Fifty-Two

A Bride For Isaac Part II

January 29, 2011

Daniel E. Woodhead

## Review:

THE CAVE AT MACHPELAH-SARAH'S BURIAL

Genesis 23: 3-20

Abraham grieved for Sarah and then needed to find a final resting place for her. He chose to bury her in Hebron where she died.

Abraham had been living in this general area of the Mid-East for fifty-one years and he was much respected by the Hittites there. He spent twenty-five years in Hebron before he moved to Beersheba for the next twenty-six years. He approached the Hittites also known as the Children of Heth, to negotiate for a cave in which to bury Sarah.

The owners of the field, which he had selected for her interment, belonged to the Hittites. There is little secular evidence to affirm the great Hittite empire extending into Canaan. In the biblical text they seem to speak the same language as Abraham and have Semitic names. In considering the issue of Hittites at Hebron, it is helpful to note that Hittite jugs have turned up in a tomb at Megiddo in Israel dating to Cir. 1650 B.C. Hittite hieroglyphic seals deriving from the Late Bronze Age (1600–1200 B.C.) have been found, as well as Syrio-Hittite ivories and jewelry, and the architecture at Hazor have been shown to have been influenced by Syrio-Hittite models. This was probably a splinter group of them that settled outside the generally recognized borders of the Hittite empire. The way Abraham negotiated for the burial site is very similar to what we know of ancient Ugarit (in Syria), Canaanite and Hittite laws and practices, which are also relevant to this event. Also even though the written Hittite laws were dated later than these events, those laws were most likely oral traditions before they were reduced to writing.

Abraham rose up from before his dead wife and spoke to the Hittites that were gathered together at the mourning. He spoke three things to them.

1. He affirmed his status in Hebron as a nomad and not a property owner so that he could properly bury Sarah.
2. He then asked for some real estate to bury her here with them.
3. His purpose was to bury her out of his sight. Clearly the body was beginning to decay.

The way they collectively answered him is significant to understand his relationship with them. They called him a prince among them in response to Abraham's humility. Therefore they closed up their homes and came to show their respect to Sarah and Abraham. They understood him to be *as a god* to them. This is indeed one of the

fulfillments of the Abrahamic Covenant that his name would be great. For this reason they offered him his choice of any of the sepulchres to bury his dead. They affirmed this by stating that none of them would withhold from him any sepulchre he selected. What a God given honor he enjoyed to be so well respected as a man of God in the community. They knew how close he was to God and had an immense respect for him. The first appearance of this offer seems as if they are offering it to him for free. However, this is not the case as the ancients had a well thought-out negotiation process that started out carefully and proceeded slowly to its termination. This is still the way negotiations are exercised in the Mid-East today. The process is equally as important as the end result. Abraham carefully followed the customs of the land in a manner that was pleasing to God. He did not violate their social practices and this added to their endearment of him. It is appropriate to follow the customs in a different culture that do not violate the Word of God. This is a practice we must adopt if we are to witness successfully to others. In affirmation of this Abraham bowed himself to the Hittites. One of the elders of this community Ephron begins to dialogue with Abraham directly.

Speaking very politely, Abraham offers full price if Ephron will *give* the cave at *Machpelah* (vv. 8–9). Ephron, as one of the elders addressing Abraham as *my Lord*, offers the field with the cave. Three times Ephron repeats the word *give* (23:11). Abraham, bowing for the second time, offers to *give* the price of the field (v. 13). Ephron, claiming that money is nothing between friends, sets what appears to be a very high price. The *prince, Lord* Abraham, agreed to the *gift* at full price (23:16). These terms of *give* and *gift* are simply couched terms for an intensely contained bargaining that is common in the Mid-East. Ephron was not offering anything to Abraham for *free*. An overt free offer was not to be taken seriously in these negotiations. This was simply a polite way of doing business.

In the painfully slow process of negotiations Mid-Eastern style Ephron finally gets to the amount he wants for the land and the cave, which is four hundred shekels of silver. This first offer is deliberately high so the negotiations can slowly travel to the settled price. While the price was about ten times the going rate for property at that time Abraham accepted. The negotiations were concluded at the city gate, which is the place of meeting for the leaders of the community to transact business. Therefore it was a legally accepted deal. Abraham now owned the first portion of the land, which he had been promised in the Covenant with Jehovah God. Proverbs 21: 21 accurately affirm Abraham's life. We should pay attention to God's leading in this area. Abraham lived another thirty-eight years after Sarah died. He married Keturah and had six more sons.

Finally this section of Scripture ends with the actual burial of Sarah. The Hittites continued to be neighbors in the region of the cave. Abraham had burial facilities in Haran and could have used them if he so desired. Instead he chose to bury her in Canaan, which will become Israel. He paid a high price for the property and the cave with legal recognition and therefore it is the Hebrews first purchased property in the Promised Land.

## A BRIDE FOR ISAAC PART I

Genesis 24: 1-9

Abraham was now one hundred forty years old and sensing the need to find a suitable wife for his son Isaac. Many of the individual promises of the Abrahamic Covenant were fulfilled during his lifetime. While he had been blessed with wealth, status and influence he did not possess the full extent of the land given in the covenant. He achieved the first legally obtained parcel though. The full promise of all the land would not be realized until the Messianic Kingdom. Nevertheless Abraham affirms the fact that Isaac (his seed) will have the land. Therefore he must have a wife in order to produce an heir to which the Covenant will pass. He approached an unnamed slave/servant of his household who controlled all of his considerable estate. We know this to be Eliezer of Damascus (Genesis 15: 2). This was the same trusted slave/servant who would have been Abraham's choice for inheritor if Jehovah God had not given him Isaac. Now Abraham requires him to swear a solemn oath *not* to take a wife for Isaac from among the Canaanites where they were living. Abraham knew that his nephew Bethuel had recently had a daughter who was called Rebecca. Abraham makes Eliezer swear an oath to Abraham that he will carry out this task. In ancient Mid-Eastern practice Eliezer is told to place his hand under Abraham's thigh and this would signify the acceptance of the oath. This means that if you are subject to my authority then I will sit on your hand in affirmation of you being under my will.

Eliezer then asks Abraham what he will do if the chosen woman will not follow him back to Canaan. Abraham says that Jehovah God will send His angels in front of him to secure the task. If the woman will not come Eliezer is told *not* to go back to Mesopotamia to find her a second time.

The twenty-fourth chapter is the longest in the book of Genesis. It is important for several reasons. First, it is a wonderful model of the appropriate characteristics we should look for in a spouse. Secondly, since the New Testament describes Isaac as a type of Christ we can see those parallels.

The Bible has many references to Isaac as a type. In Amos 7:9,16, Israel is identified as his people. He is used to illustrate the resurrection of the dead and life after death in both Matthew 22:23-33 and Mark 12:18-27. In Galatians 4:28-31 he is used to illustrate the relation of the Old Law to the New. His blessing of his sons is cited as an example of faith in Hebrews 11:20.

### **Today's Message:**

#### ELIEZER PRAYS FOR ABRAHAM'S WELFARE

Genesis 24: 10-14

*<sup>10</sup>And the servant took ten camels, of the camels of his master, and departed, having all goodly things of his master's in his hand. And he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. <sup>11</sup>And he made the camels to kneel down without the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time that women go out to draw water. <sup>12</sup>And he said, O Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, send me, I pray thee, good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. <sup>13</sup>Behold, I am standing by the fountain of water. And the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water.*



<sup>14</sup>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 showed kindness unto my master (ASV 1901).

The text ignores the distance of the travel as well as the time it took Eliezer to reach Nahor's city Haran in Northwestern Mesopotamia. The actual distance traveled is approximately four hundred fifty miles.



Eliezer's Journey from Beersheba to Haran

He took ten camels with him and a caravan of wealth. These were not all the camels that Abraham owned. This wealth being transported was to serve as the price for the bride. It was also designed make a powerful impression on Nahor's family. It would also serve as the device for testing her character. It would also provide homeward transportation for the bride and her entourage. The figure ten, relevant to gift giving in the Old Testament, is common. Examples are Jacob's ten bulls (Genesis 32: 15); Joseph's ten donkeys (Genesis 45: 23); Jesse's ten loaves (I Samuel 17: 17); Jeroboam's ten loaves (I Kings 14: 3); and Naaman's ten talents (II Kings 5: 5). The entourage traveled to *Aram Naharaim*, which is the city of Haran. אֶל-אָרָם נְהַרִים

Eliezer then took the camels to a well just outside the city in the evening. He knew that women traditionally went out for water at this place and time. It was natural for a stranger to go to the public wells. He could replenish his water supplies and at the same time learn about the town and make useful contacts, because the well was a meeting place for the townsfolk and shepherds. Jacob, too, immediately went toward the well on arriving at Haran (Genesis 29: 1-14). Moses did the same thing when he fled to Midian (Exodus 2:15-21). Water is an incredibly important commodity in arid regions. (We read of the water theft by the servants of Abimelech in chapter 21.) Therefore it is a primary place of congregating. In each case the encounter at the well resulted in a betrothal. The three scenes share a number of features in common. Eliezer trusted the LORD to grant him specific leading. He prayed that Isaac's future bride would give him and his camels' water to drink. Interestingly he asked the Lord to grant his prayer for Abraham's sake not his own. He was truly a loyal servant. This is a fine example for us to follow in our work and careers. When you go to work for someone, work hard and do it as to their direction. Do your work with their best interest in mind. If you work for somebody that is difficult and you do not respect do your work as to the Lord (Ephesians 6: 5-6). To water ten thirsty camels involved much work, for camels guzzle great amounts of water. If they needed to replenish their total capacity they would each drink twenty-five gallons each. This would amount to two hundred fifty gallons in all. He had them kneel down in preparation for receiving their water which is a tradition still followed in the Mid-East.

The result here is not one of chance (*mikreh*). It is in reality, a deliberate act of God. A fine characteristic of biblical man is his conviction about the role of divine Providence in everyday human affairs. He prays that the proper criteria of a bride to be suitable which he determines might be in accordance with God's will and be effective. The criteria that the servant establishes are aspects of character not physical appearance. The ideal wife must be hospitable to strangers, kind to animals, and willing to give of herself to others. The difficulty of the prescribed test can be appreciated with the volume of water these camels needed. Each probably needed the entire capacity of twenty-five gallons of water to regain the weight it lost in the course of the long journey. It takes a camel about ten minutes to drink this amount of water. The proper choice of a wife for Isaac is that she must be industrious.

#### ELIEZER MEETS REBECCA

#### Genesis 24: 15-27

*<sup>15</sup>And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. <sup>16</sup>And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin neither had any man known her. And she went down to the fountain, and filled her pitcher, and came up. <sup>17</sup>And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Give me to drink, I pray thee, a little water from thy pitcher. <sup>18</sup>And she said, Drink, my lord. And she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. <sup>19</sup>And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. <sup>20</sup>And she hastened, and emptied her pitcher into the*



*trough, and ran again unto the well to draw, and drew for all his camels. <sup>21</sup>And the man looked stedfastly on her, holding his peace, to know whether Jehovah had made his journey prosperous or not. <sup>22</sup>And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden ring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold, <sup>23</sup>and said, Whose daughter art thou? Tell me, I pray thee. Is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in? <sup>24</sup>And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bare unto Nahor. <sup>25</sup>She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in. <sup>26</sup>And the man bowed his head, and worshipped Jehovah. <sup>27</sup>And he said, Blessed be Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, who hath not forsaken his lovingkindness and his truth toward my master. As for me, Jehovah hath led me in the way to the house of my master's brethren (ASV 1901).*

The servant Eliezer's prayer is answered almost immediately, completely and in a greater measure than what he asked! Although he knew that this was the region of Nahor's family he had not specified that in his prayer. The girl who comes to the well is an answer to prayer. She is Rebecca the granddaughter of Nahor. The family of Nahor, which we were given in the 22<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Genesis, is for us to see the providential nature of this meeting. It is not a chance encounter. God has a plan for all His children if we only look for it, not turn away from Him and resist the clear path He has for us. Further his prayer he did not mention beauty, and she is well endowed with it. But, her chastity, a precious virtue, is unblemished.

Eliezer upon seeing her ran to meet her. Displaying a sense of urgency and seeing the water bottle she was carrying he asked for some water to drink. She responded to the urgency he displayed by going about her business briskly and conscientiously not wasting time gossiping or engaging in other distractions. She got to the task immediately. In order to test her he only asked for water for himself. He did not ask her to provide water for his animals. However, she did offer to water the camels, which is highly generous to say the least. She knew full well the level of effort associated with watering ten camels. It could have been as much as two hundred fifty gallons of water. She got right to the job. Interestingly in the Hebrew here there is only *one* verb used for speaking. There are *eleven* different verbs associated with Rebecca's actions. This is a clear indication that she was industrious. At first Eliezer's response was to watch until all the camels had been satisfied. He just wanted to be sure that the Lord had led him to the correct girl. She impressed Eliezer so much that he bestowed gifts upon her. He did this even before he asked her name or from which family she came. He was exercising faith in God in response to his prayer. She received *a golden ring of half a shekel weight and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold*. (The Hebrew text here means it is a nose ring.) These gifts would impress her and her family. *One*, most women like jewelry and *two* the specific weights given are an indication of their trading value. Her family would appreciate the gifts and because of their value immediately realize the earnestness with which they were given. This was a serious move on the servant Eliezer's part. It was

designed to move the relationship closer in order to further discussions and family meetings.

Eliezer then offered an inquiry to move the relationship along. He said, *“Whose daughter are you? Tell me, I pray you.”* Then he said, *“Is there room in your father’s house for us to lodge in?”* She told him that she was the *“daughter of Bethuel who is the son of Milcah whom she bore unto Nahor.”* This showed that she was related to Abraham thereby meeting one of the conditions Abraham had given unto Eliezer. She also responded to the question of lodging. She said, *“We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.”* To provide provender and shelter for the camels and all the other men is a generous hearted undertaking.

Eliezer responded to these events, ever the man of God in worship and prayer. He immediately worshipped God by bowing his head and then giving thanks. He said, *“Blessed be Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his lovingkindness toward my master.”* This is again clear recognition of the Abrahamic Covenant being fulfilled. He now realizes that it is God that is in control of this situation. For he says, *“As for me, Jehovah hath led me in the way to the house of my master’s brethren.”* He recognized God’s providence and the fact that the angel was doing things that were not mentioned and were sight unseen. God’s angel brought the proper woman to the well at just the right time of the right family with the best qualities for a wife for Isaac. The sign requested had been fulfilled and the servant Eliezer recognized God’s total providential control.

Rebecca’s Characteristics are:

1. Hard working
2. Efficient
3. Conscientious
4. Friendly
5. Helpful
6. Hospitable to strangers
7. Kind to animals
8. Willing to give of herself to others
9. Chaste
10. Unblemished character

NEXT WEEK: A BRIDE FOR ISAAC PART III

**Please Call or e-mail with any questions or comments.**

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# BLEST BE THE TIE THAT BINDS

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Blest Be the Tie That Binds'. It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are printed below the vocal line of each system.

1. Blest be the tie that binds Our hearts in Chris - tian love;  
2. Be - fore our Fa - ther's throne, We pour our ar - dent prayers;  
3. We share our mu - tual woes; Our mu - tual bur - dens bear;  
4. When we a - sun - der part, It gives us in - ward pain;

The fel - low - ship of kin - dred minds Is like to that a - bove.  
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, Our com - forts and our cares.  
And of - ten for each oth - er flows The sym - pa - thiz - ing tear.  
But we shall still be joined in heart, And hope to meet a - gain.