

# God Provides for His Promise

**SESSION IN A SENTENCE:** God works providentially to bring others into His family and fulfill His promises.

**MAIN PASSAGES:** Genesis 24:1-9,12-19,23-27,63-67

The changes in travel planning over the past three decades highlight how we are wired to want, and seemingly need, clear guidance. There is something comforting about having clear, step-by-step, accurate directions as we travel. We don't have to worry about getting lost or stuck in traffic, at least most of the time. We can travel with confidence.

Don't you wish the rest of life were like this? Don't you wish we had clear directions for the important decisions we have to make? We want it; we feel like we need it; but we wonder why clear guidance so often seems elusive.



What are some areas of life that you wish you had clear guidance?

# Group Time

## Point 1: God's covenant family will continue through Isaac (Gen. 24:1-9).

<sup>1</sup> Abraham was now old, getting on in years, and the LORD had blessed him in everything. <sup>2</sup> Abraham said to his servant, the elder of his household who managed all he owned, "Place your hand under my thigh, <sup>3</sup> and I will have you swear by the LORD, God of heaven and God of earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I live, <sup>4</sup> but will go to my land and my family to take a wife for my son Isaac."

<sup>5</sup> The servant said to him, "Suppose the woman is unwilling to follow me to this land? Should I have your son go back to the land you came from?"

<sup>6</sup> Abraham answered him, "Make sure that you don't take my son back there. <sup>7</sup> The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from my native land, who spoke to me and swore to me, 'I will give this land to your offspring'—he will send his angel before you, and you can take a wife for my son from there. <sup>8</sup> If the woman is unwilling to follow you, then you are free from this oath to me, but don't let my son go back there." <sup>9</sup> So the servant placed his hand under his master Abraham's thigh and swore an oath to him concerning this matter.

Why was Abraham so emphatic that Isaac not return to his family's land? This restriction was born out of ethical and theological convictions. God had promised Abraham that his descendants would not only be numerous but that they would possess the land where he was living. *Canaan* was to be Isaac's home, and the home of all those who came after him. Abraham did not want Isaac to go back in any way but follow God's plan forward. And Abraham's faith in God led to certainty of success (Gen. 24:7).



How does daily obedience to God in the "small things," acting on His promises, prepare you for the next step in your journey of faith?

## Point 2: God directs the paths of His people for His purposes (Gen. 24:12-19,23-27).

<sup>12</sup> “LORD, God of my master Abraham,” he prayed, “make this happen for me today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. <sup>13</sup> I am standing here at the spring where the daughters of the men of the town are coming out to draw water. <sup>14</sup> Let the girl to whom I say, ‘Please lower your water jug so that I may drink,’ and who responds, ‘Drink, and I’ll water your camels also’—let her be the one you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master.”

<sup>15</sup> Before he had finished speaking, there was Rebekah—daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, the wife of Abraham’s brother Nahor—coming with a jug on her shoulder. <sup>16</sup> Now the girl was very beautiful, a virgin—no man had been intimate with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jug, and came up. <sup>17</sup> Then the servant ran to meet her and said, “Please let me have a little water from your jug.”

<sup>18</sup> She replied, “Drink, my lord.” She quickly lowered her jug to her hand and gave him a drink. <sup>19</sup> When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, “I’ll also draw water for your camels until they have had enough to drink.”

.....  
<sup>23</sup> “Whose daughter are you?” he asked. “Please tell me, is there room in your father’s house for us to spend the night?”

<sup>24</sup> She answered him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor.” <sup>25</sup> She also said to him, “We have plenty of straw and feed and a place to spend the night.”

<sup>26</sup> Then the man knelt low, worshiped the LORD, <sup>27</sup> and said, “Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not withheld his kindness and faithfulness from my master. As for me, the LORD has led me on the journey to the house of my master’s relatives.”

Abraham’s servant prayed specifically and expectantly because he believed God would fulfill His covenant promises to Abraham. We too can pray with expectancy because we know there is no such thing as luck (see Prov. 20:24). God is in control of it all, and His plan will be accomplished. So let us pray for God’s will to be done and then obey.



How have you experienced God answering your prayers? How has that shaped the prayers you pray now?



How does our awareness of God’s character help us take steps of obedience and faith even when we cannot see all that God is doing?

### Point 3: God provides the way to advance His covenant promises (Gen. 24:63-67).

<sup>63</sup> In the early evening Isaac went out to walk in the field, and looking up he saw camels coming. <sup>64</sup> Rebekah looked up, and when she saw Isaac, she got down from her camel <sup>65</sup> and asked the servant, “Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?”

The servant answered, “It is my master.” So she took her veil and covered herself. <sup>66</sup> Then the servant told Isaac everything he had done.

<sup>67</sup> And Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah and took Rebekah to be his wife. Isaac loved her, and he was comforted after his mother’s death.

Abraham’s servant returned with Rebekah, and she became Isaac’s wife. With this marriage, God was arranging for His covenant promises to continue. But God was doing more than just fulfilling His promise; He provided a wife whom Isaac loved, who loved him, and who comforted him in the loss of his mother.



How can it help us navigate life’s struggles and joys knowing that God loves us and is intimately involved in our daily lives?

While God’s provision of Rebekah to be Isaac’s wife was God’s perfect plan to carry on the covenant promises, we soon discover that Isaac and Rebekah were far from perfect. God’s provision is always perfect, but His people never are, that is, until Christ completes His work of perfecting a pure and spotless bride, comprised of all the believers in His church.

**Bride of Christ:** The church is described as the bride of Christ, faithfully waiting for the day when Christ will return and heaven and earth will be one. Made up of all believers from all \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, the church is the bride that Christ \_\_\_\_\_.



#### Voices from Church History

“The Church’s one foundation  
Is Jesus Christ, her Lord; She  
is His new creation, By Spirit  
and the Word; From heav’n  
He came and sought her To  
be His holy Bride; With His  
own blood He bought her,  
And for her life He died.”<sup>1</sup>

—Samuel J. Stone (1839-1900)

# My Mission

Because we are one people of God, the bride of Christ, we work together to invite others to become part of God's family through faith in Jesus.

- **How do you need to trust in the plan and purposes of God in light of His sovereignty and covenant promises in Christ?**
- **What are some specific ways to pray for one another concerning decisions and situations we are presently facing?**
- **What steps can you take this week to obey God's call to share the gospel with unbelievers?**

## Notes

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Daily Study

## Day 1: Read Genesis 23:1-20

The entire chapter of Genesis 23 is dedicated to telling of Sarah's death and burial. This highlights her importance in the redemptive story that unfolds in Genesis, but it also offers us insight into grief. Even for those of us in Christ—those of us who have the hope that death is not final—death still stings. We are to mourn and weep over our loved ones who have died, much like Abraham grieved over Sarah in this chapter.


But grieving can be difficult for some of us because we feel that we are not trusting in God when we do. We feel as if our grief communicates doubt in our resurrection hope, as if our grief focuses our attention too much on the now instead of looking at the eternal. And so we struggle in our grief. We feel the desire to grieve, the need to grieve, but we resist. We fight for stoicism, to maintain a stiff upper lip.

But here, and elsewhere in Scripture, we see that grieving is expected. Abraham was not chastised for his mourning and weeping. Revelation 21:4 tells us that one day, when Christ returns and makes all things new, “He will wipe away every tear” from the eyes of His people. “Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.” That will be then, but not now. Psalms 34:18 and 147:3 tell us that the Lord is close to the brokenhearted and that He heals them. First Thessalonians 4:13 tells us that as believers, we mourn death; we just do it differently from the world—we mourn with hope. And perhaps our greatest insight into the properness of mourning death comes from Jesus, who wept at Lazarus' tomb (John 11:35). Mourning death is proper because in our tears we communicate the value of the gift God has given us in our loved one.

### Voices from the Church

“Those who die [in Christ] suffer no defeat and experience no loss. Their bodies may be asleep in the grave, but a day of awakening is coming!”<sup>2</sup>

—Mark Howell

 How has the gospel impacted your view of death and your grieving?

## Day 2: Read Genesis 24:1-9

Settling for what is good at the expense of what is best, or to the neglect of other good, is a grave danger especially for those of us who live amongst great prosperity. It is easy to fix our gaze on the good we have and give in to the lull of contentment—good is good enough.

As Genesis 24 opens, we read how God had blessed Abraham in everything (v. 1). And yet, there was still one thing missing. Good was *not* good enough for Abraham. Isaac still needed a wife to continue the covenant promises. The rest of this chapter, the rest of Genesis, and the continuation of God's plan of redemption can be traced back, at least in part, to Abraham's discontentment. We need to be clear though, Abraham's discontentment was not because he wanted more; it was not born out of ingratitude or an endless appetite for God's blessing. It was rooted in God's covenant promises, and Abraham knew what was necessary to achieve blessings not for him—he was, after all, quite old at this point—but for his son and the whole world.



What good things in your life might be taking your eyes off God's best?

## Day 3: Read Genesis 24:10-27

Abraham's servant demonstrated great wisdom in the test he devised to find a potential wife for Isaac. Giving a stranger a drink of water was one thing; volunteering to draw water for ten thirsty camels was something else all together. Hospitality was at the heart of the servant's test. A woman who was willing to go to such lengths to demonstrate hospitality revealed much about her character. And a woman of character was whom the servant was after.

As followers of Christ, we have been called to practice hospitality, even if it comes at great cost to us (see Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9). The reason is because hospitality affirms the gospel. It is compelled by humility and care for others, which Christ demonstrated perfectly for us. Providing a meal for someone, inviting someone into your home, or helping someone with a household project might not seem like much, but these acts of hospitality communicate far more than we imagine.



How can you practice hospitality for those in your church and neighborhood this week?

## Day 4: Read Genesis 24:28-49

We can't miss what caught Laban's attention, at least in part, in this account. We read that after he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's wrists and heard what she shared, he ran out to meet Abraham's servant. Being intrigued by the potential wealth of this visitor doesn't seem out of character for Laban, as we will see later in Genesis. This is important because it hints that the servant could have won approval for Rebekah to become Isaac's wife by focusing exclusively on Abraham's great wealth.

But that is not what the servant did. Notice that as he recounted what happened, he was very clear to appeal to what God had done. That was what he stood on—God was clearly at work to provide Rebekah for Isaac.

While seeing what God is doing around us is sometimes difficult, there are times when we make what we know He has done difficult for others to see. Unlike Abraham's servant, we fail to speak of His works to others when we have the opportunity, and in doing so, we miss opportunities to declare His kingdom to those who need to hear it.



What has God done in your life recently, and with whom can you share this news, hopefully leading to sharing the good news about Jesus?

## Day 5: Read Genesis 24:50-67

Parting ways with loved ones is never easy. Sending Rebekah to a foreign land to marry a man she had never met, even if he was family, had to have been difficult for her family. When we read through the Gospels, we encounter Jesus saying some curious things about family, that following Him would bring divisions to families (see Matt. 10:21-22; 10:35-37; Luke 14:26). What did He mean by this? In short, a family not united in Christ will be divided on some level. Sometimes drastically.

But there are times when the gospel will separate a family for different reasons, for example, when God calls a family member to the mission field. Even if a family is united by the gospel, separation like this will be difficult. But unlike Rebekah's family, we have assurance that we will see one another again, and on that day, we know it will all be worth it because Christ is always worth it.



How can you encourage missionaries and others you know who have been separated from family and loved ones for the sake of the gospel?



# Encourage One Another

*Join together with 2-4 people from your group, or with your family, sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and you are responding.*

Share your thoughts and reflections on the truths from Scripture in this session:

- God's covenant family will continue through Isaac (Gen. 24:1-9).
- God directs the paths of His people for His purposes (Gen. 24:12-19, 23-27).
- God provides the way to advance His covenant promises (Gen. 24:63-67).



How have you responded to these truths from Scripture?



Did anything happen to you this week that made you more aware of God's provision? If so, what was it?



How can we help one another see life's events as instances of God's providence rather than random or chance happenings, regardless of how good or bad things might seem?

## Notes

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---