

PART 5 "LIFE OF SARAH" hrv yjj PREVAILING THE LIFE OF PREVAILING 23.1-25.18

SARAH'S DEATH 1-7 -ABRAHAM'S OTHER HOME

And Sarah lived 127 years. *She had lived with Abraham at Beersheba but her death at KIRJATH ARBA may show that out of consideration for her health she was cared for at a location best suited to her later years or maybe failing health. Beersheba was subject to temperatures up to 45degrees centigrade whereas hills to the north of Hebron lifted to 2500-3000ft above sea level and offered a cooler climate. In a sense Sarah lived two lives. Earlier she passed herself off as the unmarried sister of Abraham while remaining his faithful wife. In later time she lived sometimes in the Negev and at other times in the region of the ANAKIM. Meantime Isaac lived at Beer LAHAI ROI in the Western Negev close to the Egyptian border.*2. She died at KIRJATH ARBA in Canaan and there Abram went to mourn and tears ran down his cheeks at her death. *There was no failure of affection or covenant over these 52 years and more of marriage.*3. Abraham rose from his wife's face and spoke to the sons of Heth.4. I am a stranger and a settler among you-give me a sepulchre I may hold for the burial of my dead from sight. 5. The sons of Heth answered 6. The Sons of Heth answered," You are a prince of God in our midst. Have your choice of sepulchre-no-one among us will withhold his own tomb from you to bury your dead. 7. Abram arose and bowed to the people of the land-the sons of Heth. *Grace in grief was shown to the patriarch and he acknowledged it.*

PREVAILING BY HUMILITY-ABRAHAM SEEKS AN INTERCESSOR

8 "If it is in your minds", said Abraham "for me to bury my dead among you hear me and intercede for me with Ephron the son of ZOHAR (the cattle man, son of the white one)that he give to me the cave of Machpelah which is at the margin of his territory. 9 Ask him to give it me for the full price that I may bury in your midst in a tomb I hold for that purpose. 10.EPHRON was sitting among the sons of Heth and replied in the hearing of the sons of Heth and all those who came in the gate 11. "I will give you the field and the cave in it in the presence of my people for the burial of your dead." 12. Abraham again bowed low before the people of the land.13.And he said to Ephron in the hearing of the people, "If you are happy, listen, I will give you the price of the field, take it from me for burial of my dead" 14.Ephron answered Abraham 15.My Lord, hear me the land is worth 400 shekels but what is that between me and you? Bury your dead! .16Abraham heard Ephron in the hearing of the sons of Heth and weighed out the silver 400 shekels according to the weight used by travelling merchants. *So the first holding in Canaan is purchased. The kind care of the gentile had deeply impressed Abraham who bowed the second time in acknowledgement of the consideration they gave him. The fact that a free donation of the land was offered tends to affirm the principle of Jesus, "The meek shall inherit the earth".*

READING 2 23.17-24.9 QUEST FOR ISAAC'S WIFE THE BURIAL OF A PREVAILER-A SPECIAL TOMB SITE

17. And the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah (double portion) and the cave within it and the trees within its border which was adjacent to the border of Mamre were assigned by deed to Abraham. 18. It belonged to Abraham by sale before the eyes of the sons of Heth and all at the gate. 19. After this Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre (that is Hebron) in the land of Canaan.20.The field and cave in it were appointed to Abraham as a holding for the burial by the Hittites. *Though through meekness he might have inherited it freely he paid for it to ensure it doubly. It was the earnest of possession in Canaan. Not for 400 years was Israel to lay claim to the land we know as Israel.*

ELIEZER'S OATH 24.1-9 PREVAILING BY FAITH

Abraham was old and come into the house of days. *It was the final year of his life-the 175th and he was unable to travel to perform a vital task of ensuring his son's marriage to a believing bride. This task he committed to a steward-Eliezer. The story teaches much about "stewardship"*

The LORD had blessed him in all things. And Abraham said to his old servant (*Eliezer*) who was in charge of everything he had, "Put your hand now under my thigh and swear by the LORD God of heaven and earth that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of Canaan among whom I dwell but you will go to my land and my family for a wife for Isaac." The servant said to him, "But if the woman be not desirous of coming to this land shall I take your son back to the land of your origins?" *This was a fair question because he would then continue the journey towards Ur from Haran. But Abraham was adamant that this was out of order.* Abraham said, "see to it certainly that you do not take my son back there" "The LORD God of my father who took me from my fathers house and the land of my birth and who caused Himself to be bound by oath saying to me, 'To your seed I will give this land' He will send his angel before your face to take a wife for my son from there(i.e. Haran) *Here even in the final years of his life of faith Abraham is strong and he is holding firm to the promise of God for his posterity on earth.* And if the woman be not willing to return after you, you will be free from this oath –only do not cause my son to return there(i.e. to Ur)*Abraham may have gone down to share in the world's plenty in Egypt but he never returned to the idolatry and blasphemy of Ur. Again Abraham prevailed over the sins of the past by faith that works by love*

READING No.3 ELIEZER SETS OFF FOR HARAN.

Then the servant took 10 of his master's camels and left. He took all the best of his master in his hand and went to ARAM NAHARIM the city of NAHOR *The best things that Abraham had for a lady were probably worn by the princess of his heart-Sarah. Here she appears again through items of both intrinsic and sentimental value.*

And he caused his camels to kneel at a well of water outside the city at a time when the city's women come out to draw water.

ELIEZER'S PREVAILING PRAYER 12-14

The steward would have had a lot to do with Sarah who essentially ran the household-since the society was in practical things quite matriarchal. This steward was well acquaint with the ways of his mistress and showed great wisdom and appreciation of the task and heart of a woman in his approach.

And he said (in prayer) "O LORD God of my master Abraham, give me success I pray before the end of the day and further the covenant with my master Abraham. Behold I stand guard at the fountain of water and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. Let it be that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please lower your pitcher' will give me drink and will also say, 'I will give drink to your camels also.'" Let her be the one you have assigned to your servant for Isaac and by this may I know you have brought to effect your covenant with my master. *This was as Gideon's prayer an exact equivalent-what we call "putting out a fleece". I knew of something kindred in the life of two friends of earlier days. Jim Law was courting Barbara Duff but they agreed that they would be married only if both were given the same scripture by the LORD. This unlikely occurrence took place as it did in this case and sealed the matter in the heart of Eliezer.*

THE END OF A PERFECT DAY-BEFORE THEY CALL I WILL ANSWER. 17-26 STANDING IN SILENT AWE AT THE DIVINE ANSWER TO PRAYER

Before he had finished speaking, behold Rebekah, who was born to BETHUEL, son of MILCHAH, wife of Abraham's brother Nahor, came along with her water pot on her shoulder. And she was a beautiful girl to look upon –a virgin who had not known man and she went down to the fountain and filled her water pot and came up again. And the servant rushed to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water to drink from your pitcher" and she said, "Drink my Lord" and she hastened to let down her pitcher on to her hand for him to drink. And she said, "I will also pour water for your camels in the trough till they have all drunk" and she

hastened again to the well to draw and drew water for all his camels. And the man stood silent as she rushed (to give drink) to know if the LORD had prospered him or not in the matter. *Truth to tell Eliezer was absolutely overwhelmed by the way the girl acted. She not only did exactly what he asked but she did it so quickly that the whole answer was upon him before he could believe it. But he was a man of great presence of mind and he drew from his treasure a nose ring and two bracelets -Abraham's best probably because these were the fine gold jewels that Sarah may had worn-now to adorn another beautiful lady.* He asked her whose daughter she was. *We have this full answer* **"I am Rebekah, daughter of BETHUEL son of Nahor."** Again the man was dumb-founded-the very family of Abraham. This immensely popular story of divine guidance and matchmaking yields a marriage of great delight and the story of the bride and groom has much in common with the story of Christ and His church. It is a **prophetic TORAH** showing the preparation of the LORD'S bride, her obedience, her response to the Eliezer figure-so reminiscent of God's Spirit. The story is one of the prevailing life of Rebekah-which is the LORD'S intent for His people.

HOSPITALITY

Please tell me if there is room in your father's house for us to overnight. *The party of 10 camels probably had ten riders. The answer must have been positive. Soon the truth of this journey's purpose must be spelt out. Rebekah added, "There is plenty of straw and fodder at our place and room for you to spend the night."* And the man bowed his head and worshipped the LORD *This had been a great journey of 300 miles at least and it would have been accomplished in two or three days. These days changed the whole future of the world and God was in it. The angel of the LORD had truly gone before. It called for prayer. How often do we see great things and fail to drop our head and worship when God answers speedily?*

READING No.4 24 27-52

PREVAILING FAITHFULNESS OF GOD-ELIEZER WORSHIPS WITH JOY 27

And Eliezer said (in prayerful thanksgiving)"Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham who has not forsaken his covenant love and faithfulness to my master. I being in the way the LORD lead or conducted me to the house of the brother of my master." *The obedience of Eliezer to go to the city of Nahor was crowned by his being led to the very house by this lovely daughter of BETHUEL. Truly the "Angel of God" led him. He thought back to the "covenant" which meant so much to Abraham. He himself as a gentile was a disciple of the way and of the God of heaven and covenant. Abraham had "many sons" and this was a gentile son of faith.*

THE HOME OF BETHUEL-A WARM WELCOME

The girl ran to her mother's house and explained the nature of these things. Now Rebekah had a brother called Laban and he hurried outside the city to the spring. And when he saw the nose-ring and the bracelets on his sister's arms and heard the words of Rebekah saying, "This is what the man said to me" he went to the man and behold he was standing by the camels at the spring. "Come blessed of the LORD, why are you standing outside the walls. I have prepared the house (Hebrew *hnp*) and a place for the camels" *Laban was equally industrious and was ever a man to make the most of opportunity. He knew of his wealthy great uncle and was aware that this was no small event.* So he came to the house and the camels were unloaded and given hay and food and Eliezer and the men with him were given water to wash their feet. *After a journey of 300 miles they would be glad of such hospitality.* Then food was being set before them but he said, "I will not eat until when I have spoken of my errand "and Laban said, "speak on."

THE SPEECH OF ELIEZER: ABRAHAM'S OATH RECOUNTED 34-41

And he said, "I am Abraham's servant. The LORD has blessed my master and he is (still) growing great. *Here the continued blessing of God is recognised.* He has given him flocks and herds and silver and gold; menservants and maidservants and camels and asses. Sarah wife of my master bore him a son after he was

entered old age and he has given him (Isaac) all that he has. *Here the lack of jealousy on Eliezer's part is readily seen-though he had previously been accounted heir as senior servant.* And my master made me swear not to take a wife for his son from the houses of the Canaanites-the land where he dwells but go to my father's house and to my kindred to take a wife for my son. And I said to my master, "Peradventure (Hebrew יל a) the woman will not return after me" *Here the weakness of his own faith is freely admitted.* He replied, the LORD before whose face I have walked will send his angel with you and he will give you success on your way and you shall take a wife for my son from my kindred and my father's house. Then you will be released from your oath when you come to my kindred if they do not give her to you. *Here he testifies to the deep settled faith of Abraham-who did not doubt. As a steward Eliezer is a man of faithfulness to his master*

EVENTS AT THE WELL RECOUNTED: 42-47

And I came today to the well and I said, "Lord God of my master Abraham, if you will arrange please for the success of my way which I have come. Behold I am standing at a fountain of water and if a young woman comes to draw water and I say to her, "Please give me a little water to drink from your pitcher" and she says to me, "I will give drink and also your camels" let her be the wife you have prepared for the son of my master. Before I had finished praying in my heart behold Rebekah came with her water-jar on her shoulder. She went down to the well and drew water and I said to her, "Give me to drink." She quickly lowered her pitcher and said, "Drink, and I will water your camels" and I drank and the woman also gave the camels drink. I asked her "Whose daughter are you?" and she said, "The daughter of BETHUEL son of Nahor whom MILCAH bare him." Then I put a ring on her nose and bracelets on her arms. *Eliezer is a remarkable raconteur and a man of absolute integrity in his actions and words. This also is required in a steward.*

ELIEZER'S RESPONSE AND THAT OF BETHUEL & LABAN 48-52

And I bowed and worshipped the LORD God of my master Abraham who led me in the way faithfully to take the daughter of my master's brother as a wife for his son. Now if you will show covenant kindness and faithfulness to my master make it clear to me and if not make it clear and I will turn to the left or to the right. Laban and Bethuel answered, "This thing is from the LORD, we can say nothing to you good or ill. Behold Rebekah is before you. Take her with you and let her be a wife for your master's son according to what God has done or spoken. And when the servant heard what they said he bowed to the earth before the LORD.

READING No.7 24 53-67

Eliezer brought out items of gold silver etc to Rebekah and gifts to her brother planning to leave in the morning. That Laban considered hasty so he requested a 10 day stay. They differed so they asked Rebekah to decide. She opted to leave.

In a beautiful "mission accomplished" meet up Isaac was out in the field "meditating" having come from Beer Lahai Roi-"Well of him who lives and sees me". Why did he return? The word understood as "meditate" is used but once in the OT. It is the true Homologoumenon. *Temp penoth. Of the many meanings these are of interest "To turn around, to clear a road or prepare a house, to face something frankly, to consider or regard". Who knows whether he was worried about his mother's illness; concerned about his own soul or anxieties, bothered about the state of his home and environment or deeply aware of God and praying or even considering deeply how he should live as a potential husband.*

Rebekah asked "Who does this man walking in the field to meet us belong to?" She was started to know that this man was Eliezer's master. The servant recounted to Isaac all the actions(and words) he made-he brought her into the tent of his mother and made her his wife -he loved her and was comforted after his mother. *Sarah had recently died and Moses simply writes "after his mother".*

READING No.7 25 1-11

KETURAH'S FAMILY BY ABRAHAM 1-4

This long saga of the great man of faith comes to its conclusion with his remarriage to KETURAH (incense)-the birth of 6 sons by his second wife-and his burial alongside Sarah at Machpelah-undertaken by his sons Isaac and Ishmael. And Abraham added to take a wife KETURAH by name. She produced to him ZIMRAN ("Singing"-Ptolemy links the name with Medina and Mecca), JOKSHAN ("fowler" father of SIBEANS & DEDANITES-tending to demonstrate a post 1800BC date for the book of Job), MEDAN ("Strife"), Midian(Father of the Midianites who dwelt from the borders of Moab to Mt.Sinai), ISHBAK ("Leave behind")and SHUAH ("Bowed down"-the SHUHITES-again referred to in the book of Job-Ptolemy locates them in BATANEA)Scripture tells us further that JOKSHAN father of Sheba and DEDAN through DEDAN became progenitor of the ASSHURITES LETUSHITES ("Hammerers") and LEUMMITES (Ptolemy's Alloumaiota-Psa7.8,9.9) and that Midian produced grandsons for Abraham-Ephah("Darkness"), EPHER("Calf"), HANOCH ("Dedication"), ABIDA ("Father of knowledge") and ELDAAH("Whom God called")-all descended from KETURAH.

GOD'S PURPOSE PREVAILS IN THE WILL AND DISBURSEMENTS OF ABRAHAM 5

And Abraham left all he had to Isaac. To the sons of his concubines Abraham gave liberal gifts (The Hebrew word נָתַן supplies the root meaning of Matthew-the name of the NT disciple. It means "liberal gift") and while he was alive Abraham sent them from his son east to a land of the east. It would appear that they went in train with Zimran their eldest brother to what is now Saudi Arabia. From there a number of their descendants migrated back westward. The displacement was a perfect start for the Bedouin style life. It is also to be noted that Abraham possessed "several concubines"-not only Hagar-whose son Ishmael was also well treated under Abraham's gift of estate during his later life. The method of dispersing funds before death is here commended in scripture.

ABRAHAM DIES SATISFIED 7-11

These were the days of the years of the life of Abraham, one hundred and seventy five years. Abraham breathed his last and died; in hoary white hair; good old age; and satisfied (or weary) and he was added to his people (buried with Sarah but brought to the realm where the spirits of the just live on) His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah bordering on Mamre in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite. He had bought it from Ephron and there he had buried Sarah his wife. And after his death God blessed Isaac his son and he dwelt at Beer LAHAI ROI

READING No.7 25 12-13 ISHMAEL AND HIS SONS

These are generated progeny of Ishmael son of Abraham whom Hagar the Egyptian handmaid of Sarah bare to Abraham. These names of the sons of Ishmael are in order of birth: NEBAIOTH ("high places" or prophecies"), Kedar ("black" hence "foul"), ADBEEL ("miracle of God"), MIBSAM ("sweet odour"), MISHMA ("hearing"), DUMAH ("silence", "expectation" or "rest"), MASSA (denunciatory "Oracle "or prophetic burden). It is of interest that the rabbinic reading breaks the list at No.7 although like Jacob Ishmael had 12 sons as the further account acknowledges

SUMMARY & CONCLUDING DATA 14-18

HADAD ("sharpened" as iron or "swift"), TEMA ("untilled"-the desert south of Syria), JETUR ("enclosure"-these gave their name to ITUREA and previously lived near the foot of Hermon), NAPHISH ("refreshment" of soul) and KEDEMAH ("former" or "eastern"). These were the sons of Ishmael and these are their names according to their "fountain villages" or "enclosures" and according to their "castles" or

"mountain fortresses"-the names of ***the twelve rulers*** of their peoples. And these are the years of Ishmael one hundred and thirty seven years and he breathed his last, died and was added to his people. *Isaac outlived Ishmael by 31 years-he may well have attended his funeral here mentioned.* They settled from HAVILAH to SHUR which borders with Egypt as you go towards the "footsteps"*(perhaps where the Jews passed as they exited from Egypt or alternatively a section of stepped land)* These (brothers) fell out face to face with each other or fell upon each other in battle. *They lived then and now in constant enmity one to another.*

The end of Part 5: "Prevailing"