

99-08-22a

Let's continue our worship this Sunday morning. Turn with me to Psalm 119, verse 65. Our study Friday night, when we looked at the voice of one crying in the wilderness, John the Baptist, crying out to his generation in Israel to change their minds with regard to their relationship with God, their standing before God.

The theme that seems to dovetail nicely in both our Genesis study here on Sunday mornings and our Luke study on Friday nights is the importance of discernment, of being able to hear and heed the Word of God. There's no better place to go in the Word of God to find its description of itself than Psalm 119. How do we know when we are hearing and heeding the Word of God, the will of God? There are lots of things that try to pass themselves off as the voice of God.

We sometimes think we hear it through circumstances or through an inner impulse or through various ways. How do we know when God the Holy Spirit is leading us and guiding us through the Word and we're not being led astray by our emotions, by our lust pattern, by the influence of the world, the flesh, or the devil? David, in this wonderful meditation on the varied aspects of the Word of God, gives us a clue as to the answer to that question. This is under the letter Taith, this section.

As you may know, Psalm 119 is an acrostic psalm and the verses in each section begin with a particular Hebrew letter. Much of that is lost to us in English. But why would a psalm be an acrostic? Why would someone go to the trouble to start the verses of each section all with the same alphabet letter? Why do we use acronyms or acrostics? I used to do this when I had to memorize various things for school.

It's a memory aid so that you can remember. This psalm was designed to be memorized. When you get to each section and you know that there are so many verses and each begins with the same letter, this helps you memorize this large piece of scripture.

I think it would be, for me, an impossible task to memorize Psalm 119, but apparently the Hebrews could do it. But this is the section that all begins with Taith or the letter T. There are two different letters for T in the Hebrew. This is one of them.

But verse 65 says, You have dealt well with your servant, O Lord, according to your word. This is where we are in the life of Isaac, isn't it? God gave the promise to Abraham that he would bless his son Isaac. Isaac has come to the land of the Philistines, and even though he's had some difficulties, even though he himself has failed in some ways, the pattern of his life is one of faith, and God has dealt well with him, and he's in a period of great prosperity.

You have dealt well with your servant, O Lord, according to your word. Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe your commandments. Before I was afflicted, I

went astray, but now I keep your word.

You are good and do good. Teach me your statutes. The proud have forged a lie against me, but I will keep your precepts with my whole heart.

Remember how the Philistines came and told Isaac that those were their wells, even though Abraham had dug them, and he chose to move away rather than fight with them. Their heart is as fat as grease, but I delight in your law. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn your statutes.

The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver. The next section here is Yod, the letter Y in Hebrew. Your hands have made me and fashioned me.

Give me understanding that I may learn your commandments. Those who fear you will be glad when they see me, because I have hoped in your word. Principle of blessing by association.

I know, O Lord, that your judgments are right and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me. Let, I pray, your merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to your word to your servant. Let your tender mercies come to me that I may live, for your law is my delight.

Let the proud be ashamed, for they treated me wrongfully with falsehood, but I will meditate on your precepts. Let those who fear you turn to me, those who know your testimonies. Let my heart be blameless regarding your statutes, that I may not be ashamed.

Testing and affliction may come. What are we going to meditate on? Are we going to dwell on the problem or are we going to meditate on the word of God? That's our choice. There are people around us who are proud, who treat us wrongfully, who treat us with falsehood.

Are we going to worry over our relationship with them or are we going to look to comfort and sustaining fellowship in the relationships with those who fear God? He says in 79, Let those who fear you turn to me. That's where I will look for my comfort, for my sustaining fellowship, for the love and the grace and the ministry of God the Holy Spirit that is not going to be present in relationship with those who wrong us. Let my heart be blameless regarding your statutes.

He doesn't say, Let my deeds be blameless. Let my words be blameless. He says, Let my heart, because these other things flow from the heart, and when God's word does its work in our heart, these other things will follow.

It's a wonderful passage of scripture. Virtually any section of Psalm 119 is a wonderful place to come and to be refreshed and restored and have our minds reminded of where

our strength and where our sustenance comes from. Turn with me back now to Genesis chapter 27 where we resume our study.

We're transitioning out of the life of Isaac just as we did from the life of Abraham a chapter or so ago. Isaac is going to recede from our immediate view and we're really picking up the story of Jacob at this point. We need to take note, however, of the last two verses of chapter 26 as we resume this morning.

When Esau was 40 years old, he took his wives, Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite and Basemat the daughter of Elon the Hittite and they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah. You might note, first of all, that Esau is 40 years old when this takes place. So here's a little math question for you.

How old is Jacob at this point? Well, being twins, he is also 40 years old. Here's a little tougher one. How old is Isaac at this point? You get a clue if you go back to chapter 25, verse 26.

How old is Isaac when Esau marries these two women? He married himself, Rebekah, at the age of 40 and she was barren for 20 years. And then when Isaac was 60, the twins were born. So Isaac is now 100 years old when he acquires these two daughters-in-law.

How old was Abraham when Isaac was born? 100 years old. So looking at the pattern of his father, Isaac, when he is 100 years old, he's already had his sons, but when he is 100, kind of a critical time of life there, instead of seeing a grandson or laying eyes on the future descendants that are going to carry forward the blessing, his eldest son, his heir, marries into the Hittites, which Abraham was emphatic should not happen. So at the point when Abraham got a confirmation that the promise of God would go forward and the reality of what had been simply a promise from God came before his eyes, Isaac gets something of a major setback here because Esau, his heir, his eldest, his firstborn, goes out and takes his wives, not one but two Hittite women, women of the land, Canaanites, in keeping with what we know of Esau, who is a sensual man, a lusty man who likes to go out and hunt down his game and kill it and bring it back and doesn't care anything about the domestic life, doesn't seem to care much about even inheriting the possessions of his father.

He trades it away for a good meal, at least what he thinks is going to be a good meal. These women, their names, Judith and Basemat, have the idea of sensual beauty. Judith, this is later going to be the word for Jewess.

In the later scriptures, a Jewish woman, this is the word that's used. And that, of course, was a very, very rough equivalent in our language might be lady. When we say lady, we immediately think of someone who has poise and grace and dignity, who has some class.

We say, well, she's not a lady, she's just a woman, if they lack those things. But lady is a

term of respect or a term of looking up to someone as a model of what a woman should be. In the same way, Judith, later on, this is the term that's used for a Jewish lady.

And so you get the idea that she is attractive. She has attributes, obviously, that make her attractive to Esau, certainly. And Basamat, likewise, this is a word for balsam, which was a wonderful substance that was used for various ointments and medicine and that kind of thing.

So you get the idea that in the physical realm, these women are attractive. Obviously, it's not going to be in the spiritual realm, or Esau wouldn't be looking amongst the daughters of the Canaanites. But why do we have this note right here immediately after what we studied last time, which is the covenant that Isaac enters into with Abimelech and Phechal? And they have these witnesses, and he has finally found his space, and he has come to terms with his neighbors.

He makes a covenant with Abimelech, and now there's not going to be any more disputes over wells. There's not going to be any more movement where Isaac has to pick up and displace. This conflict with the Philistines is resolved, and it's resolved through a covenant in much the same way that Abraham made a covenant with the Hittites that were in his region, and he made a covenant with Abimelech.

And what this is an illustration of, what it's an example of, actually, is how do we as believers come to terms with the world around us? I would be tempted to say unbelieving world, but it's not always the fact that they're unbelievers. It's those who are not following the path of covenant promise, those who are not on that path of seeking and looking for the things of God and the promises of God and so forth. Because the Abimelech that Abraham deals with is apparently a believer who recognizes the voice of God when he hears it, who honors it when he hears it, who believes what God says about the prophet Abraham needing to pray for him and so forth.

And it's not to say that all of these people are necessarily pagan unbelievers, but they are not under the umbrella of God's covenant promise. They are not moving forward in the fulfillment of God's plan. What is the nature of our dealing with these people? Well, it's not combative.

It's not warfare. It's not search and destroy like it's going to be later on when Israel returns to this land after their slavery in Egypt. It is finding a degree of accommodation, live and let live, and agreement in that regard.

Now, if these people had come and attacked Isaac, if they had come and done what the kings of the north did to Lot, then Abraham goes out and fights. But generally speaking, Abraham was a peaceable man. In fact, almost exclusively, Isaac is a peaceable man.

And rather than fight over possessions, he will move until there is no longer a struggle.

God blesses him. And these people who treated him badly, who ran him out of town and who ran him away from his father's wells, now come to him and they are the ones appealing for a covenant.

They become afraid of Isaac because of his prosperity and how much he has grown. And so God blesses him and God brings him to a place where he can enter into an agreement with them. You all live over there.

I'll live over here. And we won't fight. And that's what has happened.

But then, juxtaposed with this, at the end of chapter 26, we have Esau. Esau comes to a different arrangement with the people of the land. It's one thing to enter into an agreement.

You all live over there. I'll live over here. And we won't fight over wells anymore.

There's a difference between covenant and marriage. Intermarrying is a far different type of interaction. This is something that, from the beginning, Abraham married within the clan.

Isaac married within the clan. Esau has deliberately and consciously gone against his father's and his grandfather's wishes and married outside the land. Outside the clan, rather.

In the land with the Canaanites. And it says these two daughters-in-law were a grief of mind. This is literally Morat.

It's from the word Marah. You may be familiar with this word when you get over to the story of Ruth. When Naomi returns after losing her husband and her two sons over in Moab, and she comes back, and her daughter-in-law Ruth comes with her, and her family and her kin and her acquaintances greet her and say, Hi there, Naomi.

What does she say? She says, Don't call me Naomi. Call me Marah. Which is the word for bitterness.

That's the word that's used here. They were a bitterness. And then the word after this is Ruach.

Which is the spirit or the soul. They were a bitterness of soul. A bitterness of spirit.

To Isaac and Rebecca. Even Isaac, Esau is his favorite son. He loves him for bringing in the game and so forth.

But this is a bitterness of soul to Isaac. And this is critical for two reasons. These little notices here in these two verses, 34 and 35, not only contrast with Isaac's good decision to enter into a covenant, to eat a meal, and to see the Philistines on their way, but to

contrast with that, Esau does not follow that path of separation with accommodation, you might say.

You can be separate, but you can be accommodating. You don't have to be vindictive and spiteful. You don't have to be arguing at every turn and combative and getting into people's business and saying, Why are you all shoveling dirt into my father's wells? And so forth.

And this is a great example of the principle that guides our dealings with those who are outside. We should be, generally speaking, we should be the type of people who cause people to ask the question, These are people who seem to have a hope that I don't have. I'm going to ask them about it.

Be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you. It doesn't say be ready to go and flick yourself on anyone who looks like they don't have the hope that is in you, which is the model for Christianity today. But if you read what Paul says to Timothy and to Titus about the way the church should conduct itself toward those who are outside, we are not to be a thorn in their side and a pain and a source of conflict.

We are to live quietly and work with our hands and be honorable in our dealings with those who are outside, to give no cause for offense, Jesus Christ himself is the stone of stumbling and the rock of offense. We don't have to add to that by getting up on our high horse and taking people to court and doing lots of other things, harassing them when they are trying to go do various things. Isaac is an early example of that principle, as was Abraham before him.

But Esau does more. Esau commits to a personal, individual relationship with the people of the land. His children are going to be half Hittite.

He starts out life as a man with two wives. Very soon his brother Jacob is going to do the same thing, and we'll be coming back and revisiting this idea because of course Jacob is going to have both Leah and Rachel as wives, and pretty soon he'll have a couple of concubines after that. But they are a bitterness of soul, a bitterness of spirit to Isaac and Rebekah.

One of the things you note here is the father had a lot to say about the marriage of the sons, didn't he? Isaac is either not consulted or he doesn't interfere with this marriage. Abraham arranged Isaac's marriage. Isaac had nothing to do with the initiation or the fulfillment of that thing.

But here Isaac is strikingly passive in comparison with the model of his father. And with the firstborn son and with so much riding on it, did Isaac, because of his favoritism to Esau, just let him go? It was a bitterness of soul, but he didn't try to stop him. He didn't

exert his parental authority.

He didn't forbid it. Did Isaac give his blessing to this marriage? It's not told to us, but he certainly didn't stop it. But these women, you make a compromise, you allow some rope because of weakness in some area, and it's going to come back and be a bitterness of soul.

We might, while we're thinking about time issues, just refresh our minds. When did Abraham die? Abraham sort of slipped from view and we just took passing notice of his death. But chronologically, how much of all of this has Abraham seen? We know from chapter 25, verse 7, that Abraham died at the age of 175, right? We know that he was 100 when Isaac was born.

So when Isaac got married to Rebekah, Abraham is 140. When Rebekah bears the twins and Isaac is 60, that makes Abraham 160. So Abraham lived to 175, so he lived to see Jacob and Esau reach their mid-teens.

They're roughly 15 years old when Abraham passes away. So just to give us some perspective, Abraham has now passed away by the time that Esau is 40. Abraham's been in his grave some 25 years.

Interestingly, when you think about the death of Abraham, you know when we come up here to chapter 27, this is the blessing scene. We're all at least familiar with the rough details of Jacob deceiving Isaac and taking Esau's blessing. The blessing scene here takes up a whole chapter.

It's very important. There's a lot riding on the blessing from the father who believes himself to be on his deathbed, although he's going to live another 30-35 years. We know later on in Genesis, we're going to see Jacob on his deathbed dispensing the blessing and talking about each of his 12 sons and then laying his hands on Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, and crossing his hands, blessing the younger instead of the elder.

This blessing thing is real big. Well, let's back up a minute. What happened to Abraham in his blessing scene? Where's the big deathbed scene with Abraham and Isaac? The more you think about it, the more striking it is by its absence.

You go back there to the end of chapter 25, and it says Abraham died at a good old age and was gathered to his people. Isaac and Ishmael came and buried him in the cave of Machpelah, and it goes on and on. But we don't get the deathbed scene.

What happened to the being old, said this, that, and the other, your brothers, all the things that typically happen is just totally missing. Why is that? I ask myself. Maybe nobody else cares, but I wonder why that is.

Well, you remember a few weeks back, I commended to your attention the fact that we

often compare Isaac and Ishmael. We often compare Jacob and Esau. But it's instructive to compare Ishmael and Esau and to compare Isaac and Jacob because there's a difference.

When you look at Ishmael versus Esau, what are the differences? Ishmael's mother is an Egyptian. Ishmael's mother is a slave. The conception with Hagar took place outside the will of God, outside the word of God.

It was a human viewpoint solution to a problem. It represents loss of faith, loss of perspective. Failure on both Sarah's and Abraham's part.

Ishmael never was Abraham's heir. He never had the birthright, and he never had the blessing to lose. It was never his to begin with.

Before he was ever born, God said, in Isaac shall your seed be called, that you will have a son from the fruit of your own body, and he will be your heir. Ishmael never possessed it. He was never qualified.

He was disqualified through the circumstances of his birth. And through, in one sense, no fault of his own, his status, by lack of proper birth, he was never qualified. And although I personally think Ishmael is going to be in the eternal future, I think he was a believer in God, for the purposes of illustration, Ishmael, I think, represents the unbeliever who has never had a birth that qualifies him for inheritance.

God blesses Ishmael, and Ishmael is blessed for the sake of his father Abraham. Princes come from him, and he has a land, and they've come down to this present day. But he never had the promise.

And so he, in my mind, either represents unbelievers or believers who never even begin to follow the path to blessing and the path to fulfillment of God's calling and God's purpose. But to me, I think it has to be the unbeliever, because every believer possesses the potential. Every believer possesses the promise.

In any dispensation, you have the potential to go as far as you can go with the calling and the promises of God. And Ishmael basically never does. He's out of it through, essentially, no fault of his own from the beginning.

You can see him follow that pattern when he grows up and can make his own decisions. He's not like Uriah the Hittite. He's not like Ruth.

He's not like Rahab. He's not like Naaman the Syrian and a host of others in the Bible who, even though by birth are not Israelites, they come to God and they say, I know that you're God. I know that you're real.

I want to be among your people. I want to enter into a relationship with you, and I want

to be a part of the promise. And God includes them in.

It's a redundant statement, but that's what God does. God brings them into the fold. Uriah has an inheritance, as do many of these other Gentiles.

Ishmael has that opportunity and turns it down. His mother gets him a wife from Egypt. And that's the name of that tomb.

He's out of the running. Now, by way of contrast, think about Esau. What are the circumstances of Esau's birth? Esau's mother is Rebekah.

He is a twin with Jacob. Everything that Jacob characterizes Esau, plus Esau is born first. His mother is divinely chosen, divinely brought back through supernatural working on behalf of the servant of Abraham.

You can't get any better than Rebekah for a mother. She's a wonderful woman of faith. She's from the clan.

Esau is qualified in every way, including the chronology. He's born first. He is, in fact, the firstborn.

He possesses the birthright. He possesses. He is the heir of all things to Abraham and Isaac.

He footers it away. He trades it away. He gives it away because he doesn't value it.

So he stands in stark contrast to Ishmael. And you can see his lack of interest in the preceding chapter, in chapter 25, the end of chapter 25, when you have the cooking of the stew. If you review 25, 29 through 34, Jacob cooks a stew.

Esau comes in from the field. He's weary. Esau says to Jacob, Please feed me with that red stew.

I am weary. Therefore his name was called Edom. Jacob said, Sell me your birthright as of this day.

Esau said, Look, I'm about to die. What is this birthright to me? Is Esau about to die? No, he's not. But he thinks he is.

So Jacob says, Swear to me as of this day. He swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils.

Then he ate and drank, arose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright. One of the few places where the narrator in Genesis comes out and makes a moral judgment or makes an observation outside just giving you the details of the story.

Very important. Now, with that in mind, let's read chapter 27 where we're moving

forward this morning. We've already seen Esau marry into the Hittites, so we know the nature of his heart.

Now it came to pass, this is Genesis 27.1, Now it came to pass when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, My son. And he answered him, Here I am. This, by the way, is a fascinating, we don't have time to go look at it, but it's very interesting to go through the Bible and see all the places where there is a call and there's a response.

The most famous one is probably Samuel as a boy in the company of Eli there. And both when Eli calls Samuel and he says, Here am I. When God calls Samuel and he says, Here am I. Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. But there's a pattern and usually when you see this sort of an interchange, it's a momentous occasion.

Something important is about to happen. It's kind of like when we saw Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked and beheld and lo, there was the mountain. Well, this is another one of those little signposts.

When you see somebody say, Hey, you. He says, Here I am. Well, stand by.

This is really an important thing coming up. Then he said, Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death.

Now, therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow and go out to the field and hunt game for me. And make me savory foods such as I love. And bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die.

Now, Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring it. So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, Indeed, I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying, Bring me game and make savory food for me that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of the Lord before my death.

Now, therefore, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you. Go now to the flock and bring me from there two choice kids of the goats and I will make savory food from them for your father such as he loves. Then you shall take it to your father that he may eat it and that he may bless you before his death.

Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man and I am a smooth-skinned man. Perhaps my father will feel me and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him. And I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing.

But his mother said to him, Let your curse be on me, my son. Only obey my voice and go get them for me. And he went and got them and brought them to his mother and his mother made savory food such as his father loved.

Then Rebekah took the choice clothes of her elder son Esau which were with her in the house and put them on Jacob, her younger son. And she put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. Then she gave the savory food and the bread which she had prepared into the hand of her son Jacob.

So he went to his father and said, My father? He said, Here I am. Who are you, my son? Jacob said to his father, I am Esau, your firstborn. I have done just as you told me.

Please arise, sit and eat of my game that your soul may bless me. But Isaac said to his son, How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the Lord your God brought it to me. Then Isaac said to Jacob, Please come near that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not.

So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. And he did not recognize him because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands. So he blessed him.

Then he said, Are you really my son Esau? He said, I am. He said, Bring it near to me and I will eat of my son's game so that my soul may bless you. So he brought it near to him and he ate and he brought him wine and he drank.

Then his father Isaac said to him, Come near now and kiss me, my son. And he came near and kissed him. And he smelled the smell of his clothing and blessed him and said, Surely the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed.

Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren and let your mother's sons bow down to you.

Cursed be everyone who curses you and blessed be those who bless you. Now it happened as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob and Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. He also had made savory food and brought it to his father and said to his father, Let my father arise and eat of his son's game that your soul may bless me.

His father Isaac said to him, Who are you? He said, I am your son, your firstborn, Esau. Then Isaac trembled exceedingly and said, Who? Where is the one who hunted game and brought it to me? I ate all of it before you came and I have blessed him, and indeed he shall be blessed. When Esau heard the words of his father he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry and said to his father, Bless me, me also, O my father.

But he said, Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing. Esau said, Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright and now look, he has taken away my blessing.

And he said, Have you not reserved a blessing for me? Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, Indeed I have made him your master and all his brethren I have given to him as servants. With grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son? And Esau said to his father, Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me, me also, O my father.

And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. Then Isaac his father answered and said to him, Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth and of the dew of heaven from above. By your sword you shall live and you shall serve your brother.

And it shall come to pass when you become restless that you shall break his yoke from your neck. So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him. And Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand.

Then I will kill my brother Jacob. So that's as far as we need to go this morning. Very powerful story.

But if you kept in mind that preceding section, you will notice that there are some interesting ironies in this story. You have some similar elements to what happened at the end of chapter 25, don't you? There is hunger involved. There's food involved.

There's somebody who thinks he's about to die involved. Jacob is there in both cases to take something away that would normally go to his brother. There's quite a fascinating set of parallels here.

What I want to do before we look at the details of this is step back for just a moment and think about the large picture. If we sort of apprise ourselves of what's going on in the symbolic and in the illustrative sense here, it's going to make our study of the details that much more pertinent. We have already seen in the marriage story for Isaac and Rebecca that there are echoes, there are foreshadowings.

I wouldn't say echoes, I guess. You can't have an echo in advance. But there are foreshadowings.

There are premonitions of what's going to take place with Israel and the church. When you see Abraham, the father, Sarah as the wife. She has her place in the household.

She has failures. She initially seems to give away the rights of the mother when Hagar has a son. It looks like everything is going to go to Ishmael.

She wants Ishmael driven out. She has her son. He is the heir.

Ultimately, everything comes right with Sarah. But then Sarah dies and Sarah is out of the picture. You have this wonderful foreshadowing where Abraham, picturing the father, sends a servant to go get a bride for his son Isaac.

Isaac is the Lord Jesus Christ. The servant, picturing God the Holy Spirit, going to a faraway place, to a place of faith, but not in the immediate vicinity there, and bringing back the bride for the son. Ultimately, Rebekah dwells in the tent of Sarah.

She takes the place of Sarah as the matriarch of the family. This tremendous parallel to the situation with God the Father and Israel as the chosen people, but Israel being set aside. Israel, in a sense, has died as a nation.

They are off the scene. God sends forth the Holy Spirit to call out a bride for his son, the Lord Jesus Christ. That is us.

We are Rebekah. To be united with Christ and to enjoy the blessings that were originally promised to Israel, we dwell in the tent of Sarah, so to speak. We are now called upon to be fruitful.

You already know that there are a lot of things, and this would have been impossible or very difficult, at least for Israel to foresee, when they studied the Pentateuch and studied the Law of Moses. But we have wonderful hindsight because we are farther along in the unfolding revelation of God's plan and we see these things. There is a similar, in fact, the interweaving of God's revelation and God's plan and the things that are recorded in the Bible is so extensive.

To me, we just find one little thread in the great fabric and we are able to trace it and follow it through. There are many others. I feel like I am missing about 95% of what is there.

In one sense, it is frustrating. We feel the limitations of our nature and how slow we are to learn and to understand. But we get just glimpses and we get flashes of what God is up to and how he communicates ahead of time everything that he is going to do.

He identifies himself over in Isaiah and he says, I am the God who tells you what is going to happen before it happens. If you have an ear to hear, if you have an eye to see, you can see these things. We just want to say, Lord, give me those eyes, give me those ears so that we can see and understand.

This same thing is going on in this next section. We are going to pause here and take our break, but when we come back we are going to notice before we get into the details and look at some of the individual words and happenings in this chapter, we are going to step back and see that this too foreshadows the history of Israel and the history of the church and God's unfolding plan. Let's pause here for a moment and take our break.