

THE “UNSEEN HAND OF GOD” AT WORK
IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES! - Part 2
GENESIS CH24:29-67

ILLUSTRATION

The programme “Kingdom” is an epic six-part series narrated by Sir David Attenborough from the BAFTA award-winning BBC Studios Natural History Unit. Across six episodes in one of the most ambitious wildlife series ever made, Kingdom follows four rival animal families over five years, telling their stories as they compete for survival and dominance in one of the most spectacular places on Earth.

In the heart of Zambia, leopards, hyenas, wild dogs and lions all lay claim to a corner of South Luangwa National Park known as Nsefu - a lush landscape situated on the banks of the mighty Luangwa River. Teeming with life, Nsefu is an ideal place to raise a family – and that means that things can get crowded!

Kingdom follows the stories of four animal families – a lion pride, a wild dog pack, a hyena clan and a leopard family – who are all competing to make Nsefu their home. It’s a story about endurance, control, ever-shifting power dynamics, and perhaps the greatest challenge of all: raising a family in a competitive world.

In a very similar way to the families in the programme “Kingdom”, and not just over 5 years, but from Ch24 now over 60 years, we see family changing, and we are about to see the next generation of family, after Abraham and Sarah.

MISSION REFRESHMENTS! V29-33

Once Laban, Rebekah's brother, hears about the riches given to his sister from “the man” he ran!

- Now why is he running so eagerly?
- What are his motives?
- Are they centred on riches or hospitality
- For we are going to see in later chapters (27-31) more of Laban and what he likes!

Laban, obviously has some responsibility in the day to day running of the family, despite Laban's father Bethuel (v50) still very much alive! So Laban, gives reasons for the man to stay:

1. v31 Laban sees the man as blessed by God!
2. v31 Laban says that he has prepared a place for them and the camels!
3. v32 However, it is the man and his men, who unharness the camels, feed them, and wash their own feet!
4. v33 Food is set before them, but did Laban make and prepare things?

What is really interesting, is that despite all of this hospitality and the several hundred miles travelled, the man (aka Abraham's servant), refuses to eat, until he explains his mission!

MISSION EXPLAINED! V34-49

- V34 Explains who he is
- V35 Explains God's blessing
- V36 Explains how Sarah was old when she conceived

- V36 Explains how the unnamed son has been left everything
- V37 Explains the reasons for the oath
- V38 Explains the reason for coming here
- V39 – v41 Explains Abraham's faith in God
- V42 – v44 Explains his prayer
- V45 – v48 Explains today's scenario
- V49 Explains his summary

The servant shows remarkable integrity and transparency in the retelling of his story about his mission! ***We too, have a testimony regarding our mission to make disciples! So tell and follow the servants example of integrity and transparency!***

MISSION SUCCESS! V50-67

On hearing about the servants mission, and seeing the “unseen hand of God” at work in people's everyday lives, both Laban and his father Bethuel (Abraham's nephew), give glory to God and are fully prepared to follow God's will!

The servant and the men with him (**v32, v54 + v59**) stay the night (**v54**) but want to leave in the morning and it is interesting that the only two people who wish for them to stay longer, are indeed the same two people who have received, along with Rebekah, expensive gifts, Laban and his/her mother (**v54 + v55**)! ***Hmmm!***

Is not Rebekah, a young girl (v16) and very attractive! Rebekah is one of the women whom the Bible specifically says was beautiful. The others are Sarah (**Genesis Ch12:11-14**), Rachel (**Genesis Ch29:17**), Abigail (**1st Samuel Ch25:3**), Bathsheba (**2nd Samuel Ch11:2**), Tamar (**2nd Samuel Ch14:27**), Queen Vashti of the Persians (**Esther Ch1:11**), Esther (**Esther Ch2:7**), and the daughters of Job (**Job Ch42:15**). But what is she like at making decisions? Some want her to stay, some want her to go, in the end it is Rebekah who is asked to make the decision! And what a decision it is! Rebekah decides to leave immediately! Sound familiar?

Rebekah's decision is reminiscent of Abraham's decision back in Genesis Ch12:1-4! She is willing to:

- 1. Be obedient to the request!***
- 2. Leave her family!***
- 3. Leave her country!***
- 4. And to trust in God for her future! (v50 + 51)***

The family now bless Rebekah, willing to let her go, and their blessing is incredibly similar to the blessing that Abraham received from God in Ch22:17-18! Both blessings are connected through being “obedient” to God's will!

And finally we see once again the “unseen hand of God” at work, because as Rebekah arrives to what will be her new home, Isaac is there meditating in the field, wow!

Husband and wife are introduced, and we see further reasons for such a long chapter, the beginning of the new family in focus, Isaac and Rebekah, not Abraham and Sarah! Isaac takes Rebekah as his wife and she takes Sarah's place, as Isaac has taken the place of Abraham!

APPLICATION

1. Think about how “the unseen hand of God” is constantly at work in your life!