

Rebekah Decides to Marry Isaac

Genesis 24:50-61

Genesis 24:50-61 - *“Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, “The thing comes from the LORD; we cannot speak to you either bad or good. ⁵¹ Here is Rebekah before you; take her and go, and let her be your master’s son’s wife, as the LORD has spoken.”*

⁵² And it came to pass, when Abraham’s servant heard their words, that he worshiped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth. ⁵³ Then the servant brought out jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother. ⁵⁴ And he and the men who were with him ate and drank and stayed all night. Then they arose in the morning, and he said, “Send me away to my master.” ⁵⁵ But her brother and her mother said, “Let the young woman stay with us a few days, at least ten; after that she may go.”

⁵⁶ And he said to them, “Do not hinder me, since the LORD has prospered my way; send me away so that I may go to my master.”

⁵⁷ So they said, “We will call the young woman and ask her personally.” ⁵⁸ Then they called Rebekah and said to her, “Will you go with this man?” And she said, “I will go.” ⁵⁹ So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham’s servant and his men. ⁶⁰ And they blessed Rebekah and said to her: “Our sister, may you become the mother of thousands of ten thousands; and may your descendants possess the gates of those who hate them.” ⁶¹ Then Rebekah and her maids arose, and they rode on the camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and departed.”

Background Notes

After Abraham’s servant told Rebekah’s family how the Lord had led him to Rebekah, he proposed that a marriage be arranged between Rebekah and Isaac. The servant was convinced that Rebekah was God’s choice of a wife for Isaac, but the decision was up to Rebekah and her family. *“Now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me. And if not, tell me...”* (v49). Laban, Rebekah’s brother, and Bethuel, her father, made the final decision for the arranged marriage (v50-51). Rebekah and her mother would certainly have been consulted in the decision, but Laban and Bethuel formally agreed to the marriage.

The response of Abraham’s servant was to worship the Lord: *“And it came to pass, when Abraham’s servant heard their words, that he worshiped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth”* (v52). Is that our first response when the Lord answers our prayers? What a great example to follow!

Then the servant brought out expensive gifts of jewelry and clothing for Rebekah, and costly gifts for Rebekah's mother and brother, Laban. You can be sure that Laban had his hand out for anything he could get, in view of what we'll read later in Genesis about his character.

After a night's rest, the servant was ready to leave with Rebekah and return home. After all, his mission was accomplished! But the family said, "Wait a minute! Not so fast! Give us a few days to say our goodbyes. Rebekah needs some time to get ready." But the servant was insistent: "*Do not hinder me, since the LORD has prospered my way; send me away so that I may go to my master*" (v56). The family agreed to let Rebekah make the final decision, and verse 58 gives her great response: "*They called Rebekah and said to her, 'Will you go with this man?' And she said, 'I will go.'*" Rebekah's decision is similar to Ruth's decision to leave her home and her country and go to Israel with Naomi.

Before they left, the family blessed Rebekah: *And they blessed Rebekah and said to her: "Our sister, may you become the mother of thousands of ten thousands; and may your descendants possess the gates of those who hate them."* The "gates" were critical to the defense of a walled city, so to "possess the gates of those who oppress you or hate you" meant that you would be victorious over your enemies. This blessing fits right in with the Abrahamic Covenant. God promised Abraham: "*blessing, I will bless you, and multiplying, I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies*" (Genesis 22:17).

And so Rebekah and the servant left Rebekah's home and family to make the long 500-mile journey back to Abraham and to Isaac, the waiting bridegroom. Deborah, Rebekah's nurse and her handmaids accompanied her, so a small caravan set out.

Doctrinal Points

1. Rebekah is a picture or *type* of the Church in her position.

Both our doctrinal points have to do with Rebekah as a picture or *type* of the Church. In the first doctrinal point, Rebekah is seen as a picture of the Church in her **position**. Do you remember that a *type* is defined as "an Old Testament person, place, event, or other item, that illustrates or pictures New Testament truth"? We should be careful not to imagine or "dream up" a spiritual picture to impose on an Old Testament text, and call that a *type*. No! A true *type* is a **divinely intended picture**. So we must be careful not to read too much into possible *types*, or come up with our own ideas for *types* that were not divinely intended. However, it is hard to miss the type of the Church as seen here in Rebekah.

On the authority of Hebrews 11:19, we have already seen that Isaac was a *type* of the resurrected Christ, and the unnamed servant who left home and went to the far country to seek out a bride for Isaac is a *type* of the Holy Spirit, who is calling out of this world a bride for Jesus Christ. So it follows that Rebekah is a *type* of the Church, the bride of Christ.

Rebekah was planned for and selected to be Isaac's bride before she knew of him. What a picture of the Church the subject of God's eternal counsels! Ephesians 1:4 says, *"He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love..."*

As Isaac's bride, Rebekah would complement or complete Isaac. In the same way, the Church, the bride of Christ, complements Him: *"the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all"* (Ephesians 1:22-23). What about Rebekah's new clothing and gifts? They may also be part of the spiritual picture. As the bride of Christ, the Church has been clothed with righteousness and given spiritual gifts.

What do you think Rebekah and the servant talked about during the long journey? I'm sure Rebekah asked questions about Isaac, and learned more and more about the man whom she would marry. This is the position of the Church today. As we await the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, the Holy Spirit reveals to us more and more of our Lord Jesus: His glorious Person, His wealth, and His great love. In John 15:26 the Lord Jesus said: *"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me."*

What a blessed position the Church occupies today! Rebekah is a picture of the Church in her position.

2. Rebekah is a picture or type of the Church in her response.

Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go." What an example of faith!

Rebekah responded on the basis of the testimony given by the servant about his master and his master's son. Rebekah couldn't say, "Let me see a picture of this man, Isaac, before I decide!" No! She responded to the servant's invitation, and came to Isaac sight unseen. This wasn't "blind" faith, because she had the faithful witness of the servant and evidence to back it up. So it wasn't blind faith, but it was a response of faith.

In the same way, the response of the Church today is a response of faith. 1 Peter 1:8 speaks about this response: *"whom having not seen, you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory."* Philipians 3:13 indicates that by faith we are to reach forward to the things that are ahead: *"forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead."* Do you see this picture in Rebekah's response of faith?

Hebrews 12:1-2 says: *"Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."*

That response of faith is pictured in Rebekah's immediate departure from her old surroundings. Suppose they had waited another ten days as her family suggested. Those ten days could have stretched out into a month. During those ten days all kinds of drawbacks could have developed. Rebekah's proper response was to go **immediately** - by faith! This is also the Christian's response. *"We walk by faith, not by sight...."* (2 Corinthians 5:7). Rebekah is a picture of the Church in her response.

Practical Applications

1. Parents, are you willing to let your children go?

Once Rebekah had made her decision to go, her family didn't hinder her response of faith to do the Lord's will. Unfortunately, some Christian parents today try to control their children's lives and actually hinder God's will for their children's lives.

God may be calling that young person to prepare for some area of Christian service, but the Christian parents, of all people, stifle the Lord's call because they want their child to become "successful" and "marry well" in this world. Parents, are you willing to let your children go?

2. Don't delay the decision you must make.

No one is born a Christian. We all must make **a decision** to become a Christian. Don't delay in making that decision! 2 Corinthians 6:2 says, *"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."* Rebekah responded by faith to the servant's invitation and said, *"I will go."* She didn't delay. She didn't risk losing interest by delaying her response. She went by faith, immediately!

If you are not yet a believer, I urge you not to delay. You risk never having this opportunity again. Don't delay the decision you must make!