



TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

Talk Genesis 24:62-67: The Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah

Lesson 55

"Now Isaac came from the way of Beer Lahai Roi, for he dwelt in the South. 63 And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening; and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels were coming. 64 Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel; 65 for she had said to the servant, "Who is this man walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So she took a veil and covered herself.

66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. 67 Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

Background Notes

Genesis 24 is the longest chapter in the book of Genesis -- 67 verses! In this chapter we have seen how God worked behind the scenes to bring Isaac and Rebekah together in marriage. Abraham's servant had traveled about 500 miles to find a wife for Isaac, the beloved son of Abraham. The servant prayed that his mission would be successful, and he prayed specifically that the Lord would lead him to the right woman. The Lord answered the servant's prayer in the most amazing way. The first woman the servant met was Rebekah -- in fact, while the servant was still praying, Rebekah arrived on the scene! No visible miracle takes place in this chapter, but God's sovereign program was clearly being worked out.

In verse 27 we read of the Lord invisibly guiding Abraham's servant, and in verse 40 of God's angel who would give him success at the end of his journey. We read of the specific answers to the prayers of Abraham's servant. We read of the circumstances that brought Rebekah into the picture. God not only led Abraham's servant to a wife for Isaac, he led him to the *right* wife for Isaac. Since the nation of Israel would come through this union, literally through the DNA of Isaac and Rebekah, God was guiding to bring this couple together. We are talking right down to the genetic material, the DNA that would make up the tribes of Israel, right? God was specifically guiding Abraham's servant here.

Can God do the same thing today? Can God bring two people of His choice together in marriage? Of course He can! If you look to God for His guidance, and if it is His will for you to be married, He will guide you to the right person. Do you believe that? That person will be the man or woman of His choice

Now here at the end of this chapter, Isaac and Rebekah finally meet. *"Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel"(v64)* This was a sign of respect in that culture. *"The servant said, "It is my master." So she took a veil and covered herself."* This was a gesture of modesty.

Now before we leave the background notes for this section, we should say something about marriage between close relatives. Remember Isaac and Rebekah would have been cousins once removed -- that is, Isaac and Bethuel, Rebekah father, were cousins. You remember that Isaac was born in Sarah's old age, when Sarah was ninety, so Isaac and Rebekah were a little closer in age. We know that Isaac was forty (Genesis 25); and probably Rebekah was in her twenties.

What about this marriage between close relatives? First of all, we need to understand that marriage between close relatives is not incest. Cain married his sister (or niece) -- that was not incest. Incest is sex between close relatives *outside of marriage*, and it is sin. Before the Mosaic Law was given, marriage between close relatives was permitted. One reason for this is there were fewer genetic problems in those days. In the Mosaic Law, God put restrictions on marriage between close relatives. (If you want to read about this, turn to Leviticus 12, 18 and 20, read those chapters.) However, even under the Mosaic Law, marriage between cousins was allowed.

One more background note: Camels are mentioned throughout this chapter. Skeptics of the Bible used to say, "Oh, this account is not historically accurate, because camels were not domesticated until after patriarchal times." Well, guess what? The critics and skeptics of the Bible were wrong! Evidence now shows that the Bible was right all along, and camels were used for domestic purposes at this time.

Doctrinal Points

1. The spiritual picture in Genesis 24 may contain the future rapture of the church.

We have mentioned that Isaac, in Genesis 24, is a picture or type of Christ, particularly after His death and resurrection. We have also mentioned that Rebekah is a picture or type of the church, who is called out of this world and walks by faith, looking forward to meeting her Lord face to face and joining Him in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Then she'll be with the Lord forever, as seen in this great spiritual picture of Genesis 24.

Now notice at the end of this chapter that Isaac went out to meet Rebekah and brought her home with him. Is this part of the spiritual picture? Is it possible that the rapture of the church is pictured here? As we have already mentioned, we must always be careful about reading too much into the types, but it is possible that the future rapture of the church is included in this spiritual picture. It is certainly interesting that Isaac's activities are not recorded in Genesis from the time he was received back to Abraham at the place of sacrifice (Genesis 22) until he went out to meet Rebekah. He is mentioned, certainly, but he is not "seen" from the time that he has received back by Abraham as a picture of the death and resurrection of Christ. Now he goes out to bring Rebekah home.

Our Lord is "unseen" at this time, although He is alive and active on our behalf, but one day He will go out to meet His bride. We will see our Lord Jesus when He comes for us at the time of the future rapture of the church. I am reading from one of the great "rapture passages," 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: "*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*" Although we wouldn't want to be too dogmatic, the spiritual picture in Genesis 24 may contain the future rapture of church.

2. The spiritual picture in Genesis 24 may contain the present state of Israel.

The spiritual picture in Genesis 24 may include the present people of Israel -- so not only the future rapture of the church, but the present descendants of Jacob (Israel) as well. Where do we see this idea possibly taught here? Possibly in Sarah! Sarah gave birth to Isaac, but then she was "laid aside" in chapter 23, following the sacrifice of Isaac at Mount Moriah. In the same way, the nation of Israel gave birth to their Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, but Israel was "set aside" after the death and resurrection of Christ. While Isaac waited for his bride, Sarah was no longer the focus of his attention.

In the same way, while Israel is set aside, the church, not Israel, is the primary focus of our Lord's love and attention. It is the church, the bride of Christ, and not Israel, that will bring comfort to the heart of Christ at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

However, we know from Scripture that God has future plans for the people of Israel. If you question that, read Romans 11, where the teaching is very clear that God has future plans for the nation of Israel. However, at the present time Israel is "set aside." Again we cannot be dogmatic on this point, but the spiritual picture in Genesis 24 may contain the present state of Israel.

Practical application

Are you following through on your commitment?

Rebekah made a commitment, by faith, to be the bride and wife of Isaac. She left family and friends, and traveled close to 500 miles to meet and marry Isaac. The journey would have taken several weeks. Maybe there were some days when she had some doubts; maybe there were some days when the road was rough and the weather was bad, or days when everything seemed to go wrong. Did you ever have that kind of day? I know you may say, "Yeah, every day of my life is like that." Life does get discouraging at times, doesn't it? But despite the long and difficult journey, Rebekah followed through on her commitment. She never wavered or turned back. From the moment she said, "I will go," she was committed.

What about us? Are we following through on our commitment? Is it possible that you are wavering in your faith? Is it possible that you are not as committed as you once were? Listen to the words of 2 Corinthians 13:5: "*Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know that Jesus Christ is in you? --unless indeed you are disqualified.*"

Now this verse is not written to make you doubt your salvation – but it *is* given as a warning! This verse warns us to make sure we're following through on our commitment to Christ. If we're not following through, it's possible that our "commitment" to Christ was only a *profession* of faith, and not true salvation. I have taught Bible College students who seemed to be committed to the Lord at one time, but they are now no longer walking with Him. It is possible that they were never true believers. Are we following through on our commitment?