

The Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah

Genesis 24:62-67

Genesis 24:62-67 - *"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 traveled a long way to find a wife for Isaac, Abraham's beloved son. The servant prayed that his mission would be successful. He prayed specifically that the Lord would lead him to the right woman, and the Lord answered his prayer in the most amazing way. The first woman the servant met was Rebekah - in fact, while the servant was still praying, Rebekah arrived at the well! No visible miracle took place in this chapter, but God's sovereign program was clearly being worked out.

We learned that the Lord invisibly guided Abraham's servant (v27), and how God's angel gave him success at the end of his journey (v40). We read of the specific answers to the prayers of the servant, and 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. Right down to the genetic material - the DNA that would make up the tribes of Israel - God specifically guided Abraham's servant.

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 can guide you to the right person. That person will be the man or woman of His choice.

Isaac and Rebekah finally met at the end of this chapter. *"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.

Before we leave the background notes, we should say something about marriage between close relatives. Remember Isaac and Rebekah were “first cousins, once removed.” Bethuel, Rebekah’s father, and Isaac were cousins. We know that Isaac was forty (Genesis 25); Rebekah may have been in her late teens or early 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), but 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 that there were fewer mutations in the gene pool (and thus fewer genetic problems) back in patriarchal days. In the Old Testament Law, God restricted marriage between close relatives. (Read Leviticus 12, 18 & 20.) 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, “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 indeed 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, after His death and resurrection. We have also mentioned that Rebekah is a picture of the Church, which 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 the Bride of Christ will 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 *type*? Is it possible that the Rapture of the Church is pictured here? Remember, we must always be careful about reading too much into the types, but it’s possible that the Rapture is included in this spiritual picture. It is certainly interesting that none of Isaac’s activities are 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. His name is mentioned, but he is not “seen” from the time that he was received back by Abraham (as a picture of the death and resurrection of Christ) until he brought Rebekah home.

Our Lord is “unseen” at this time, even though 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. 1 Thessalonians 4, one of the great “Rapture passages,” says: *“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. 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 dogmatic about this, the spiritual picture in Genesis 24 may include the future Rapture of the Church.

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

The spiritual picture in Genesis 24 may also include Israel, the present descendants of Jacob, as well. Where do we see this idea possibly taught? It’s possibly seen in Sarah. Sarah gave birth to Isaac, but then she was “laid aside” (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 is the primary focus of our Lord’s love and attention. It is the Church, the Bride of Christ, and not Israel, which will bring comfort and joy 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. There the teaching is very clear that God has future plans for the nation of Israel. However, at the present time Israel is “set aside.” Although we cannot be dogmatic about this possible extension of the *types* of Genesis 24, the spiritual picture 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 everything behind, including 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 days when the road was rough and the weather was bad, or when everything seemed to go wrong.

Did you ever have a day when everything seemed to go wrong? 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 to Jesus Christ? Is it possible that you waver in your faith when life gets hard? 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 very committed to the Lord at one time, but they are now no longer walking with Him. It is possible that they never were true believers. We need to examine ourselves. We need to ask ourselves: “Am I following through on my commitment?”