Studies in Genesis - 23

Louis T. Talbot
Our lesson for today has to do mainly with the selection of a Gentile bride for Isaac, a marvelous picture of the calling out of the church, composed of both Jew and Gentile, but largely Gentile, to be the bride of our Lord Jesus Christ. This beautiful story covers all of chapter twenty-four. But before we look at it in some detail, let us take a bird's-eye view of the chapters beginning with the offering of Isaac, even unto Abraham's marriage to Keturah, following Sarah's death and the selection of Rebekah to be Isaac's bride. This takes in Genesis 22:1—25:4.

"A SHADOW OF GOOD THINGS TO COME"

As we read this continued story, we are impressed with the prophetic character of the lives of Abraham and Sarah, of Isaac and Rebekah, and of Abraham and Keturah; for in them we see a typical outline of God's dealings with Israel, of this present church age, and of Israel's future glory when Her Messiah returns to reign. Thus we see in these chapters "a shadow of good things to come" (Heb. 10:1).

In our last lesson, recorded in chapter twenty-two, we saw the unmistakable, prophetic teaching concerning the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; yea, His ascension into heaven; for after Abraham offered Isaac upon the altar, believing that God was "able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" (Heb. 11:19)—after all this, Isaac was restored unto his...
father, even as the Lord Jesus, following His bodily resurrection, ascended into heaven, and was restored to that eternal glory which He had with the Father “before the world was” (John 17:5).

The closing verses of chapter twenty-two give us the genealogy of Rebekah, who was to become the bride of Isaac. Following the offering of Isaac upon the altar and his restoration to his father, we do not see him on the scene again until he goes out into the field “at eventide” to meet his bride.

Nearly two thousand years ago our Lord Jesus was offered upon Calvary’s altar. Israel had refused her King. And from that day, unbelieving Israel has not seen the Lord Jesus. After His resurrection, He showed Himself alive only to those who loved Him. He ascended into heaven; and in “the eventide” of this church age He will come forth from His Father’s house to meet His chosen bride.

To unbelieving Israel He said before He died on the cross,

“Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matt. 23:38, 39).

Israel and all the world shall see Him only when He returns in glory with His bride, the blood-bought church, to take His rightful throne. Then “every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him” (Rev. 1:7). And every knee shall bow before Him, for He is “King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”

But to come back to the Genesis record, Isaac, offered upon the altar and restored to his father, is not on the scene for a time. Meanwhile, immediately following this picture of the cross, we read the story of the death and burial of Sarah, in chapter twenty-three. As we shall see, Sarah is typical of Israel, who has been set aside during this present age, while the church, the bride of Christ, is being called out from among the Gentiles to be “a people for his name” (Acts 15:14). Then after the marriage of Isaac to Rebekah,
we read that Abraham "took a wife, and her name was Keturah" (25:1). Unto this union six sons were born, besides grandsons—a great multitude throughout the years that followed. (See Gen. 25:1-4.) All this speaks to us of the fruitfulness of restored Israel; for after the Gentile bride of Christ is complete, God will deal once more with His chosen people, as a nation; and their day of promised blessing will be glorious.

**THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF SARAH**

Let us turn for a moment to the twenty-third chapter, the only one in the Bible which is given entirely to the death and burial of a woman. And Sarah is the only woman of the Bible whose age, death, and burial are mentioned—a tribute to the Hebrew nation, descended through her! The Scriptures open with a woman in Eden and the record of her sin; the New Testament opens with the story of the Virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord. But no single chapter in the Bible is given to either of them. What we read about Eve in the Old Testament is very little, indeed; and we find only a few comments in the New Testament on this first woman. Concerning the Virgin Mary we have a little in the prophecies and in the Gospels, and nothing at all after the first chapter of Acts. Yet an entire chapter is given over to the death and burial of Sarah.

And why is she so important? Sarah is important because Abraham is important. We have already seen, from Galatians, that Sarah stands for grace; whereas Abraham, we know, is typical of faith. He is the "father" of all who are saved by faith. It was by faith that he responded to God's call, and he walked before Him as one who believed God; but Sarah is typical of grace. And we are saved by faith only because of the grace of God. Thus Abraham and Sarah must be together; if God did not deal with us in grace, we could not be saved by faith.

You remember that, when Abraham and Sarah went down to Egypt, they were separated for a time, but their own plan to insure their safe-keeping did not work. God had to put His hand upon them. Again they tried the same
man-made scheme, but again it failed. Sarah and Abraham had to walk together. Why? Because faith and grace always go together.

Now after Sarah's death, Abraham could do nothing. He passed off the scene for the most part, while Isaac and Rebekah were given prominence in the sacred record. Sarah, buried in a stranger's tomb, speaks to us of Israel, set aside during this age of rejection of her King, buried among the Gentile nations of the world. Meanwhile, the servant of Abraham went out to get a bride for the son, after which Abraham was fruitful once more. When? After the bride had been presented to the son!

My friend, do you not see the typical lessons in this sequence of events? For nearly two thousand years God has set aside the Jew. All this while He has been calling out a bride for His Son. After this church age is over, He will take Israel up again; and, through her, reign over the earth. That yet future age of glory can come to pass only when Israel receives her King. Then her fruitfulness will be wonderful! Today we can see "the fig tree beginning to bud," as it were. Israel is going back to Palestine, the land given to Abraham. She is going back in unbelief, even as the prophets foretold; but she is getting ready for the golden age of her Messiah's rule.

And now let us look once more at the record of Sarah's death and burial, to find there yet other lessons of historical value, as well as of spiritual blessing. Sarah was one hundred and twenty-seven years old when she died. She had lived in Abraham's home in Ur of Chaldea, as his half-sister; and for more than sixty years she had shared his pilgrim life. It must have been a great sorrow to the patriarch to lose her companionship, after all those years! But he did not take her body back to Ur; he had severed all ties with the country, from which God had called him, because he looked for "a better country," an eternal city. And as a stranger in Canaan, owning it all, yet not possessing enough to bury his dead, he believed God, and bought the cave of Machpelah as a family sepulchre. There he himself was buried later. So were Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah (Gen. 49:29-32).
A casual reading of the story might lead us to believe that Ephron the Hittite wanted to give this field and the cave to Abraham; but we are told that he simply followed the oriental custom of driving a shrewd bargain, raising the price to much more than the land was worth. It is estimated that the four hundred shekels which Abraham paid for the field amounted to $240 or $250 of our money. The sale was made "at the gate of the city," the place where business was transacted. Ephron the Hittite "dwelt among," or "was sitting among," the "children of Heth" (verse 10); and in Gen. 10:15, we learn that Heth was a son of Canaan, whose father was Ham, the son of Noah. Archaeology has proved that the Hittites were a cultured and powerful nation, thus putting to naught the false teaching of skeptics who formerly denied the existence of this once-mighty people.

So it was that Abraham buried Sarah in the cave of Machpelah. And, looking forward to the day when he, too, would be "gathered to his fathers," he turned his thoughts toward calling out a bride for Isaac, his son of promise. And this brings us to the main portion of our lesson for today—Isaac and Rebekah, a type of Christ and the church, which is His bride.

**ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND THE SERVANT**

Three persons, besides Rebekah, play an important part in the story before us: Abraham, Isaac, and the unnamed servant. While the father and son were in the father's home in Canaan, the servant went on a distant journey to find a bride for the son. And the father arranged it all!

This is but a faint picture of "a certain king, which made a marriage for his son" (Matt. 22:2); and the parable from which these words are quoted was spoken by our Lord Himself concerning the marriage feast to which sinners are invited by the Father's "whosoever will." Canaan is a well-known type of heaven itself. There the Son of God has gone to "prepare a place" for His bride. And while He is away, the Holy Spirit, of whom the unnamed servant is a type, speaks not of Himself but of the Bridegroom, even the Lord Jesus Christ. When He was on earth, the Saviour said to His disciples:
“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you” (John 16:12-15; cf. John 15:26).

Yes; our heavenly Father is the “certain king, which made a marriage for his son.” The Lord Jesus is the Son, for whom the Holy Spirit has journeyed to earth to call out a bride for the heavenly Bridegroom.

My friend, if you are inclined to think this is all imaginary, let me show you that God’s Word tells us that the church is the bride of Christ. In Ephesians 5:21-32 we read one of the most definite statements of this beautiful truth. From this we quote in part:

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself . . .” (verses 22-27).

Christ will “present the church to himself” when He calls the bride home to heaven, into His Father’s house. And He will “present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (verse 27).

“For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church” (verses 30-32).
Nothing could be more definite than that. The age in which we live is different from every other age. This is the time when God is gathering a people out of the earth. He is not making the world better, as the present war gives evidence. If God’s purpose now is to make the world better, then that purpose is failing. But God’s work is not failing! All the powers of hell cannot prevail against His church, as Christ Himself plainly said in Matt. 16:18.

You remember that, when men asked John the Baptist if he was the Messiah who was to come, he said that he was only “the friend of the bridegroom,” rejoicing greatly “because of the bridegroom’s voice” (John 3:29).

And again, in Rev. 19:7-9 we read of “the marriage supper of the Lamb,” when the bride will be adorned in “the righteousness of saints.” And the closing words of the Bible tell us that “the Spirit and the bride say,” to the long-expected Bridegroom, “Come” (Rev. 22:17). These are but a few of the plain teachings of Scripture concerning the church as the bride of Christ. That is why it is not fanciful to see in the choice of a bride for Isaac a prophetic picture of what God is doing during this present age.

We read a moment ago that, when the church is presented to Christ in that coming day, she will be “a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ... holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27).

Now when Abraham’s servant saw Rebekah, he observed that “the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin ...” (verse 16). These words remind us also of what the Holy Spirit wrote about the church, when, speaking through the Apostle Paul to the Corinthian Christians, He said, “I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (II Cor. 11:2). As we look into our own sinning hearts, we marvel at the grace of God, who can cleanse us and accept us “in the beloved” Son, even saying unto us, as He will in that day when we stand before our heavenly Bridegroom,

“Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee” (Song of Sol. 4:7).
Little wonder “the Spirit and the bride say, Come... Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:17, 20).

And now let us turn to the Genesis story again, as found in chapter twenty-four.

“And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age. ... And Abraham said unto his eldest servant...” (verses 1, 2).

It has been pointed out that the emphasis here upon the age of Abraham and his “eldest servant” may well suggest the eternity of the Holy Trinity. Some Bible students believe this servant was the same “Eliezer of Damascus,” referred to in Gen. 15:2. However that may be, his not being named here makes him a type of the Holy Spirit who is calling out the bride of Christ.

If anything is accomplished for the glory of God in this radio broadcast this morning, my friend, it will be the ministry of the Holy Spirit. If you see Christ more clearly this morning, it will be because the Holy Spirit will open your eyes to see Him. And yet I am not in the Church of the Open Door to preach about the Holy Spirit primarily. He has been in the world nearly two thousand years, and yet He has not preached about Himself. As we read a moment ago, His ministry is to attract people to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit did not die for us; the Father did not die for us; the only begotten Son died on Calvary for our sins. And the Holy Spirit points us to Him.

Rebekah—The Gentile Bride

Abraham took an oath of his servant that he would not select a bride for Isaac from among the daughters of Canaan; for the Canaanites were steeped in gross sin. And then Abraham added,

“But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac” (verse 4).

Now Rebekah had to be willing to go to Canaan, to become Isaac’s wife, even as the sinner must willingly accept the heavenly Bridegroom. His “whosoever” resounds to all
the world; but the sinner's heart must respond gladly, willingly, in order to become a member of that body which is the church, the bride of Christ.

Moreover, Abraham was very careful to tell the servant not to take Isaac back to Chaldea. Canaan was to be his inheritance, his earthly home, even as heaven is the Christian's eternal home.

"And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest? And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again" (verses 5-8).

The free choice of the bride is seen in Rebekah's "I will go" (verse 58), when she was asked to make her decision. She was going to meet her bridegroom, whom she had never seen. What a picture of the church, each member of which must decide to trust in Him, "whom having not seen" he loves with the love that the Holy Spirit puts into the willing heart! (See I Peter 1:8.) We love Him because the Holy Spirit bears witness to His love for us, His beauty, His riches, and His power.

And again we repeat the all-important mission of the Holy Spirit, that of winning the bride. Abraham's servant had one business. He was not sent to Chaldea to improve the country, to engage in politics, to reform the people. He was sent to get the one who would be willing to follow him and to become the bride of his master, whom she had never seen. Surely it is not mere speculation or fancy that sees in this a type of the Holy Spirit's ministry in calling out the Gentile bride of Christ to be "a people for his name." This is a
part of the eternal purpose of the Triune God. And we are being built into that mystical body of Christ by faith in the blood of His cross, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who takes the things of Christ and shows them unto us! What a glorious heritage we have!

**The Faith and the Faithfulness of the Servant**

We have already seen, from the Scriptures, how faithful the Holy Spirit is in His testimony to Christ. And this is beautifully pictured in the faithfulness of Abraham's servant, who determined to do the one thing for which he was sent. Some eighteen times in this chapter he spoke of his "master." And his faith in the God of Abraham to guide and to answer prayer teaches us a searching, practical lesson—to say nothing of his praise and thanksgiving for answered prayer.

"And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter. And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor" (verses 9, 10).

"All the goods of his master were in his hand"; that is, this servant could use everything that Abraham had—and Abraham was very wealthy. My friend, that ought to teach us how to do the Lord's work. Sometimes we sing,

"My Father is rich in houses and lands;  
He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands."

But do we believe it? Do we trust Him utterly for the material means to carry on His work? We should never go to the unbelieving world for what we need. Everything that God has is for His work. Abraham's servant had complete charge of all his master's goods; likewise the Holy Spirit, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and with the Son, has at His disposal all the riches of heaven and earth to use in the winning of souls to the Lord Jesus. "His riches" are ours because we love the Son of God. We may be allowed sometimes to go on limited funds, for our own good and for
God’s glory; but He will always see us through. If we are wise, with the “wisdom that cometh from above,” we shall not go to godless men on behalf of our Lord’s work; we shall go, rather, to the Lord Himself. His Holy Spirit can and will touch the hearts of His own blood-bought children for the ministry of saving never-dying souls.

As we read on in this beautiful story, we note several significant things about this faithful servant:

1. **His Prayer for Guidance.** He had gone to the well of water, a place of blessing, and a symbol of the ministry of the Spirit of God through the Word. And as he prayed, he asked for a sign of God’s guidance, earnestly expecting an answer.

   “And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master” (verses 12-14).

   In these remarkable words we have an example of definite prayer, expectant prayer—prayer that takes hold of all the promises of God, believing that He means exactly what He says. Nothing is too trivial for His loving consideration; nothing is “too hard for the Lord” (Gen. 18:14; Jer. 32:17). As someone has expressed it, “Our great matters are little to His power; our little matters are great to His love!” The servant prayed, believing; he asked for a sign; and God granted the prayer, with the token.

   Another startling, reassuring thought comes to us just here: Even as Abraham’s servant prayed about the choice of a bride for Isaac, so also the Holy Spirit prays for the church, the bride of Christ.
"The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we shall pray for as we ought: but the Spirit himself (R. V.) maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:26, 27).

2. His Praise for Answered Prayer. Nor did the servant forget to thank God for the answer to his prayer.

"And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out . . ." (verse 15).

How like Isaiah 65:24 that sounds!

"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."

What does it mean? It means, my friend, that God's work has to be done by prayer. When God's people do not pray, nothing will be done for His glory; when they pray much, much will be done; when they pray more, then more will be done. Even the minute details are recorded here for our encouragement. The servant's asking Rebekah for a drink, the pitcher upon her shoulder, her offering drink also to the camels—it is all very wonderful! The servant took note of all these things; and "wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not" (verse 21). Then, after presenting unto her his master's gifts; upon learning that Rebekah was Abraham's brother's grand-daughter (Gen. 11:26; 22:20, 22:23; 24:24); and upon receiving kindness at the damsel's hands, the servant

"... bowed down his head, and worshipped the Lord. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren" (verses 26, 27).

The servant's praise and worship followed naturally his "being in the way" of God's will and blessing. The application of these spiritual truths to our own hearts, we need not
dwell upon here. May the Lord help us ever to remember to thank Him for answered prayer, even as we leave ourselves in His own perfect will. Then we may claim as our own His precious promise:

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" Prov. 3:5, 6).

3. His Faithfulness to His Mission. Having been received into the house of Bethuel, Rebekah's father, and of Laban, her brother; having been given the hospitality of an oriental home; the servant would not eat until he had told his "errand" (verse 33). And again we are reminded of the Scriptures, some of which we have already quoted in this connection, which tell us that the Holy Spirit does not speak of Himself, but that He takes the things of Christ and shows them unto us. How zealous He is, how faithful to His mission!

4. His Testimony concerning the Bridegroom. Here again our thoughts turn once more to our Lord's words about the ministry of the Spirit of truth who was to come, who did come on the Day of Pentecost and in the house of Cornelius, to teach us about the only Saviour of sinners. And of all this Abraham's servant is a beautiful type. Before he would eat, he told his errand, speaking of the Lord's blessing upon his master; of his master's riches; of the miraculous birth of a son in his old age; of the bestowal of all his goods upon this son and heir; of Abraham's faith in God to guide his servant in the selection of a bride for Isaac; and of how God did lead all the way. The servant left nothing untold, even to the details which we have already observed concerning his own faith and prayer and thanksgiving to the God who answered that prayer.

My friend, the Holy Spirit tells us in God's Word of blessing untold upon all who will love Him; of the miraculous birth of the virgin-born Son of God; of His heirship to all things; and of the bride's joint-heirship with the beloved Son. (See Heb. 1:2; Rom. 8:17.) The Lord Jesus
Christ is the central theme of all the Bible; and the Bible was written by the Holy Spirit of God as He inspired "holy men of old" (II Peter 1:21).

5. His Tarrying but for a Night. Having told his errand, the servant said,

"And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand or to the left" (verse 49).

Perhaps Laban's eager reception of Abraham's servant (verses 29-31) came as the result of the rich gifts he saw upon his sister; for later we learn that he was a grasping, mercenary man. Perhaps it is not fair thus to judge him, for his kindness may have been prompted by a hospitality that was in his nature. Perhaps he had put his faith in Abraham's God. Whatever his motive was, most certainly the Lord led him and his father to agree to Rebekah's going to become the wife of Isaac; for in response to the servant's query, they said,

"The thing proceedeth from the Lord: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken" (verses 50, 51).

Again the servant "worshipped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth" (verse 52).

"And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master" (verses 53, 54).

Only one night the servant tarried. And only through the long night of this church age will the Holy Spirit tarry to call out the bride. When the last member has been added unto the body of Christ, His church, then the Holy Spirit "will be taken out of the way" of the godless "man of sin" who will be revealed just prior to the Lord's return with His
bride to reign. (See II Thess. 2:7; cf. 2:1-12.) We are passing through the night; but the morning is coming, when "the Sun of righteousness" shall "arise with healing in his wings" (Mal. 4:2). Meanwhile, the Holy Spirit has one work, and He is in haste. When the morning comes, then the bride will be presented to her heavenly Bridegroom.

Something of Abraham's servant's singleness of purpose is seen in the words of verses 55, 56:

"And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go. And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master."

Then it was that they called Rebekah, asked her to decide, and heard her ready response, "I will go."

"And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate thee" (verses 59, 60).

**The Bridegroom's Gifts for the Bride**

Before we continue the story of the journey to Canaan and the meeting of Rebekah and Isaac, let us pause just here to look back at the references to the gifts which the bridegroom sent for his bride. They were rich gifts; and they were entrusted to the faithful servant.

Through the Holy Spirit the church receives gifts from the Lord Jesus. To some are entrusted a few talents; to others many talents. To some there are given gifts of teaching the Word of God, or of preaching the Gospel message. To others there is given the quiet ministry in the home. Some are entrusted with great suffering and sorrow; God can not commit great trials to all of His children. Many passages of the New Testament tell us of Christ's gifts to His church; but the greatest gift of all is our Lord Himself!
And when we see Him in all His beauty, to share His glory (John 17:22, 24), then we shall know the fulness of His love!

**The Journey to Canaan**

"And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way" (verse 61).

It was a long journey, through the desert, over many miles; yet we may well imagine that, as Rebekah rode through the desert sands, her heart was filled with joy at the prospect of seeing her bridegroom face to face, of sharing his riches, and of becoming one of the great mothers of God's chosen people. Doubtless, as she journeyed, she listened to the servant's words of praise for his master; and the weariness of the journey was counted as nothing, in comparison with the prospect before her.

My friend, as we make our pilgrimage from this world of sin to that "better country," of which Canaan is but a type, we are often soiled by the defilement of a desert-wilderness; we are often weary and troubled on every side. But as we hear the Holy Spirit's message concerning our Lord Jesus, as we keep our eyes upon Him and His riches and His glory; as we think of His love for us, that prompted Him to bear "our sins in his own body on the tree" (I Peter 2:24); as we "think on these things," we "reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). And when we see the One "altogether lovely" face to face, then all "sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:10). Our journey is toward "that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. 13:14). One day the Bridegroom will call His bride home. Yes, He will come for her, even as He said.

"Face to face with Christ, my Saviour,
Face to face—what will it be!
When with rapture I behold Him,
Jesus Christ who died for me!

[16]
THE BRIDEGROOM’S GOING TO MEET THE BRIDE

“And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi . . .” (verse 62).

“Lahai-roi” means “The well of him that liveth and seeth me,” or “In full view of the Living One.” And when the church meets her heavenly Bridegroom, she will be “in full view of the Living One”! What a prospect!

Isaac left his father’s home, and went to meet his bride. And one day “the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God” to meet His spotless bride. Then, dear Christian friend, we shall “meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thess. 4:13-18). And with our Bridegroom we shall go to dwell in our Father’s house forever.

“And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide . . .” (verse 63).

At the eventide of this age of sin and darkness, our Lord will call us home. As “the morning star,” He will call us home just before the darkest period of the world’s history quickly runs its course, under the awful rule of the Antichrist. But He will come; and soon afterwards He will return in glory with His bride, to be magnified in all the world as the true and rightful King.

“Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a veil, and covered herself” (verses 63-65).

This was an oriental custom, to light off the camel in deference to the man, and to cover herself with the veil. The veil, even her raiment, had come out of her master’s house. And when we stand before the Lord, “clothed in beauty not our own,” we shall meet Him unashamed and unafraid.
THE BRIDEGROOM'S LOVE FOR THE BRIDE

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

Sarah's tent was the place of authority and honor. What a picture of our exalted position in Christ! And even as Isaac loved Rebekah; yea, far more, "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25).

He loved us enough to suffer shame and sorrow and death. He loved us enough to bear our own sins and iniquities upon the accursed tree.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God... Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:1, 2).

We are waiting, eagerly waiting, for His call, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away" (Song of Sol. 2:10). And as we wait, our prayer is from expectant hearts, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."