

Genesis 24:11-51

No doubt the responsibility of finding a suitable bride for Isaac had lain heavily upon Abraham's shoulders.

Under the circumstances, it seemed like an insurmountable problem.

He must find a godly and capable partner for his son.

This was important for more than one reason. Not only would she inherit great riches, but, through her husband, she would inherit the blessings and responsibilities of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Clearly the daughters of the land, being raised in the idolatrous and worldly

homes of the Canaanites, were not to be considered.

And even his own background was not that encouraging.

His father Terah had been an idol worshipper, and probably that was typical of most of his relatives.

However, they were his own people, and no doubt of a better moral calibre than the nations around him.

Also there was the hope that his own testimony to God's faithfulness had borne some fruit among them.

So after much prayer, Abraham called for his eldest servant, a man whom he trusted completely, and put this most important task into his hands.

Genesis 24:2-3 **"And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled**

over all that he had, Put, I pray thee,
thy hand under my thigh:

3: And I will make thee swear by the
LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of
the earth, that thou shalt not take a
wife unto my son of the daughters of
the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:

4: But thou shalt go unto my country,
and to my kindred, and take a wife unto
my son Isaac."

The servant, being a perceptive man,
immediately noticed that Isaac's
involvement in the plan was
conspicuously missing.

How could his master expect a young lady to
leave her family and country to marry a
man she had never seen?

Yes, this arrangement could present a real
problem.

V 5-9 "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?

6: And Abraham said unto him, Beware
thou that thou bring not my son thither
again.

7: 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.

8: 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.

9: And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter."

There are some real similarities between God's calling of Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees and His calling out of a bride for Isaac.

Both Abraham and Rebekah were required to leave their kindred and their home behind and travel to an unknown country.

In both cases, it required a tremendous step of faith.

So when Abraham's servant suggested the expediency of bringing Isaac back to Mesopotamia, Abraham did not just say no, and leave it at that.

He assured him that the same God that had called him to Canaan would call Isaac's bride to Canaan also.

V 7 **"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."**

So in the end, the success of this venture depended wholly upon God.

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In last week's lesson, we began to see that the calling out of Rebekah by Abraham's servant closely pictured the Holy Spirit's work today.

Yes, in this Age of Grace, the Holy Spirit is responsible to call out a bride for Christ.

And the further we go into this chapter, the clearer this picture becomes.

When Abraham assured his servant that God would bless his mission, we see in his words an interesting blend of election and freewill.

V 7 **"He shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.'**

---"**thou shalt take a wife**"--that sounds as if Rebekah had no choice in the matter, and yet she did.

V 8 clearly says, **"And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath."**

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So having received his instructions,
Abraham's servant wasted no time in
implementing his master's plan.

V 10 **"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."**

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Having traveled over 500 miles, and having
followed Abraham's directions to the
letter, he still found that the job was
only half done.

And he could go no further without specific
directions from God Himself.

Yes, it was time for prayer.

V 11-14 **"And he made his camels to kneel
down without the city by a well of
water at the time of the evening, even**

the time that women go out to draw water.

12: 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.

13: Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:

14: 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."

We can learn a lot from this man's prayer.

First of all, he did not make his request until he had lived up to the light he already had.

He had followed his master's directions faithfully, and in doing so had put himself in the place of blessing.

Actually this prayer would have been unnecessary and unacceptable had it been offered at Abraham's tent door.

And even in Haran he took some very logical steps to further his master's objective before turning to God for direction.

He needed to meet the young ladies who lived there, so he **"made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water."**

So, to the best of his ability, he made sure he was in the right place at the right time before he asked God's assistance.

Now that made a lot of sense, didn't it?

And, I don't think there is anything unspiritual about being practical.

Secondly, he was very specific, and again very practical in his prayer: **"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."**

This was not just a request for a sign, although it certainly was that, but it was also a very practical test of the young lady's character.

And also a request for a drink of water was about the only acceptable way that a strange man could make conversation with a young lady.

As a matter of fact, our Lord used this same technique to open up a conversation with a Samaritan woman many years later.

His situation was even more delicate than the one Abraham's servant found himself in, for not only was Jesus a stranger, but He was a despised Jew as well.

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V 15-16 **"And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.**

16: And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up."

V 15 tells us that **"before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out."**

Isaiah 65:23 says--**"before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."** And it was a good thing for the servant that the Lord answered quickly.

No doubt it would be common courtesy to give a thirsty traveller a drink of water, so the poor man would have been obliged to drink a lot of water had not the Lord answered his prayer quickly!

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And also there was a very practical reason why Abraham's servant didn't have to drink a gallon of water.

Rebekah was the first one to arrive because that was the way she did things.

I doubt that the young ladies of that day enjoyed this job very much.

Trudging all the way to the city well and carrying back a heavy jar of water couldn't have been too appealing.

It was a job that they would tend to put off as long as they could.

But that wasn't Rebekah's style.

She was the *first* one to the well because she knew how to shoulder responsibility.

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In V 15, the Holy Spirit lets the reader in on a little secret, which, as yet, Abraham's servant knew nothing about. Rebekah was a near relative.

However, at this point, the servant had no idea who this young lady was. As far as he knew, she might not meet Abraham's requirement at all.

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And this was not the kind of the well that we might envision.

It wasn't a deep hole that you lowered a bucket into on the end of a rope. No, it was an Eastern-style well with a series of steps leading down to a subterranean pool.

We see that indicated in V 16: **"And she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up."**

V 17-20 "And the servant ran to meet her,
and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a
little water of thy pitcher.

18: And she said, Drink, my lord: and
she hasted, and let down her pitcher
upon her hand, and gave him drink.

19: And when she had done giving him
drink, she said, I will draw water for
thy camels also, until they have done
drinking.

20: And she hasted, and emptied her
pitcher into the trough, and ran again
unto the well to draw water, and drew
for all his camels."

Probably most of the young women would have
been willing to given him a cup of
water. It would be a common courtesy.

But not many would have been willing to run up and down those steps in order to supply his camels.

And certainly with 10 camels to manage, Abraham's servant must have had other servants with him.

So most women would have said to themselves, *It's not my job. Let his servants water the camels.*

I'll loan them my jar, but they can do the work.

But that's not what Rebekah did.

She said, "**I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.**"

She didn't have to do that, but she looked at the tired servants and the thirsty camels, and she said "*I will do it.*"

Obviously this young lady was not lazy.

Anyone who would take on such a task would have to be industrious, kind to animals, and willing to go the second mile.

And it was no easy job either.

I'm told that a thirsty camel will drink 5 gallons of water, so 10 camels would have run Rebekah off her feet!

How many steps did she have to climb? How many pitchers of water did she have to carry to supply 10 camels?

We don't really know, but we can be sure that beauty wasn't her only virtue.

The book of Ephesians describes God as the One **"that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."**

Certainly this was true of Rebekah.

Besides being beautiful, it was obvious that she was also very healthy.

And she was not a shirker, and she had a kind and generous spirit.

Yes, this was quite a girl!

But, in spite of this seeming answer to prayer, Abraham's servant did not jump to conclusions.

V 21 says, **"And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit (or to learn) whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not."**

There was no doubt that she would make someone a very good wife, but was she the right one for Isaac?

Did she satisfy Abraham's requirement about being one of his kindred?

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But kindred or not, she certainly deserved a reward for her labours, and Abraham's servant was very generous with her.

V 22 **"And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold."** And then he asked the all-important question.

V 23-25 **"And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in? 24: And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor. 25: She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in."**

Well, the last piece of the puzzle had been added.

Although Rebekah had not given him her name, I wouldn't be surprised if he had already guessed it.

After all, it hadn't been too many years since someone, perhaps from a passing caravan, had showed up at Abraham's door and updated him concerning his brother Nahor's family.

Out of the eight sons that Milcah had born to Nahor, only one girl was mentioned. She was the daughter of Milcah's youngest son, Bethuel, and her name was Rebekah.

We find that in Genesis 22:23 **"And Bethuel begat Rebekah: these eight Milcah did bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother."**

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Actually, Rebekah was Isaac's second cousin.

Because Isaac had arrived very late in Abraham's life, his first cousins would old enough to be his aunts, but Rebekah, the granddaughter of Nahor, would probably be just the right age to be Isaac's wife.

So, having heard that this young lady was Abraham's kindred, the servant was convinced that indeed God had answered his prayer.

V 26-27 **"And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD.**

27: 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."

Although he had generously thanked Rebekah for her labour, his real thanksgiving was directed toward God.

And if we look closely at his prayer, we will see that it illustrates the proper steps in determining God's will.

In V 27, the servant says, **"I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren."**

He had prayed earnestly that the Lord would lead him **"to the house of my master's brethren."**

But he had not prayed that prayer at Abraham's door.

No, he had followed his master's directions, which involved a 500 mile journey, before he prayed for further direction.

And that I believe is the significance of his words---"**I being in the way, the LORD led me.**"

Psalm 37:23 says, "**The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD.**"

But, you know, sometimes we don't follow His orders.

Sometimes our steps are ordered by our own desires.

So we must follow what is clearly revealed in the Word of God, and then the Lord will give us more light.

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No doubt the servant had prayed fervently, and probably audibly, so Rebekah couldn't help hearing Abraham's name mentioned.

Why, that is the uncle I have heard so much about! He was the one that left home

*many years ago at the express command
of the God of all the earth.*

V 28 **"And the damsel ran, and told them of
her mother's house these things."**

And I don't think her story was about all
the work she had done. No, it was all
about Abraham, and, of course,
Abraham's servant.

Rebekah had run home by herself, leaving the
servant standing by the well.

That was probably the servant's desire, for
he was much too courteous to just *show
up* at someone's door without a special
invitation.

And that invitation was not long in coming.

V 29-31 **"And Rebekah had a brother, and his
name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto
the man, unto the well.**

30: And it came to pass, when he saw

the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well.

31: And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels."

Laban was as excited as Rebekah!

However, I think the basis of his enthusiasm was not the same as his sister's.

When "**he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands**" he smelled money.

And certainly he showed his true colours in later years when Isaac's son Jacob came to his door.

We'll talk about that young man a little more as time goes on.

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However, despite Laban's personal motives, his greeting did seem to indicate an knowledge of Abraham's God--"**Come in, thou blessed of the LORD.**"

However, although Rebekah was a true believer, her brother was one of those that Jesus later called *tares among the wheat*.

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V 32 **"And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him."**

Every hospitality was extended to Laban's guests.

But the servant, even after so long a journey, was not willing to take his ease just yet.

V 33 **"And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on."**

Apparently the servant's motto was *Business before pleasure*.

So, in spite of the fact that he and his men were tired and hungry, Abraham's business must come first.

Yes, his chief business was to act in the interests of Abraham's son.

And that is what the Holy Spirit is doing in this present Age of Grace.

He makes it His chief business to seek out and then provide for the bride of Christ.

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When they told Abraham's servant to "**Speak on,**" I'm sure they had no idea what they were letting themselves in for. So as the household servants tried to keep the food warm, and everyone's stomachs began to growl, this servant talked on and on.

But the man was no idle talker. Every word he said was important, and calculated to produce a specific result.

V 34-41 "**And he said, I am Abraham's servant.**

35: And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses.

36: And Sarah my master's wife bare a

son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath.

37: And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell:

38: But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son.

39: And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me.

40: And he said unto me, The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house:

41: Then shalt thou be clear from this

**my oath, when thou comest to my
kindred; and if they give not thee one,
thou shalt be clear from my oath."**

Like the Holy Spirit, this faithful servant needed to woo and to win a bride for an absentee bridegroom.

This was no small task, and the responsibility lay heavily upon his shoulders.

First of all, he casually mentioned that--

**"the LORD hath blessed my master
greatly; and he is become great: and he
hath given him flocks, and herds, and
silver, and gold, and menservants, and
maidservants, and camels, and asses."**

He didn't attribute Abraham's great wealth to his business ability, but rather gave full credit to God.

And then he made it clear that **"Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath."**

So it was quite apparent from the servant's remarks that Rebekah would not be expected to marry an old man, nor would she be marrying a poor man.

Isaac had been born when his mother was very old, and would probably be just the right age for Rebekah.

And although it was obvious that he was a young man and a rich man, the servant gave no description of his physical appearance.

Was he handsome, or rather plain? Rebekah had no way of knowing.

In the Gospels, the Holy Spirit tells us what Jesus said and what He did, but He

doesn't say anything about Jesus' appearance.

In Isaiah 53:2, we are told that **"he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."**

But, of course, that is only how man sees Him.

If you want to see Christ through the eyes of His bride, you need only to turn to The Song Of Solomon 5:10-13: **"My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.**

11: His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven.

12: His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set.

**13: His cheeks are as a bed of spices,
as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies,
dropping sweet smelling myrrh."**

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Yes, the servant's testimony assured Rebekah
that Isaac was rich.

The golden earring and the two bracelets
were tangible proof of that, but for
everything else, she must view him
with the eye of faith.

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Well, the food was now getting overcooked,
but by this time, no one seemed to
mind.

You see, by now, the servant's story had
become very personal.

Why, he was talking about their family, and
their daughter Rebekah!

V 42-48 "And I came this day unto the well,
and said, O LORD God of my master
Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way
which I go;

43: Behold, I stand by the well of
water; and it shall come to pass, that
when the virgin cometh forth to draw
water, and I say to her, Give me, I
pray thee, a little water of thy
pitcher to drink;

44: And she say to me, Both drink thou,
and I will also draw for thy camels:
let the same be the woman whom the LORD
hath appointed out for my master's son.

45: And before I had done speaking in
mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth
with her pitcher on her shoulder; and
she went down unto the well, and drew
water: and I said unto her, Let me

drink, I pray thee.

46: And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also.

47: And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands.

48: And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son."

At the beginning, the servant's account had been about Abraham's plans, but now it was evident that it was God that had directed every step of his journey.

Yes, it was God's plan, and it included *their* daughter.

And it was time for a decision.

V 49 **"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."**

Nothing more was to be added.

They must make their decision now, a decision that would be based exclusively on the servant's testimony.

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V 50-51 **"Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or**

good.

51: Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken."

Well, as far as the servant was concerned, it was mission accomplished.

All he had to do now was distribute his master's gifts.

But we will have to wait until next week to read about that joyous event, and what would follow it.

Yes, things will move quickly in our next lesson, for Abraham's servant was a man of action!