

The Servant Returned with a Bride for Isaac

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to apply the first principle that God gave after He created Eve and brought her to Adam. We saw that the family of Rebekah was asked to make the decision about whether to let Rebekah leave their home to marry a man whom none of them had ever met. In this topic, we will learn about the decision that was made.

Genesis 24:50-56 says, “Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, ‘The thing comes from the Lord; we cannot speak to you either bad or good. Here *is* Rebekah before you; take her and go, and let her be your master’s son’s wife, as the Lord has spoken.’ And it came to pass, when Abraham’s servant heard their words, that he worshiped the Lord, *bowing himself* to the earth. 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. 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.’ 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.’ 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.’” We see that the family recognized that God was the One who is in control.

The brother and father both said that this was the work of the Lord to arrange all of these details and to answer the prayer of the servant in the way that the Lord answered. Both the father and the brother agreed that this was the work of God and that the servant should take Rebekah as a wife for Isaac. They felt that the Lord had clearly spoken. We also see that the brother became the one who began to speak for the family. We see the immediate response of the servant as he bowed to the earth and worshiped God. With the words of the brother and father, the servant could see that the Lord had prepared their hearts to carry out the plan of the Lord for a wife for Isaac.

The servant also did two other things before they all ate together. First, the servant brought out jewelry of silver and gold as well as clothing for Rebekah. These were gifts from Abraham and Isaac for the future bride that the Lord had for Isaac. Second, the servant gave precious things to the mother and brother of Rebekah. This would have been the dowry. In that day, a dowry was a gift given by the family of the groom to the family of the bride as a payment for the wife. When this gift was received by the family of the future bride, it meant that they had officially promised the bride to the family of the future husband. Genesis 34:12 says, “‘Ask me ever so much dowry and gift, and I will give according to what you say to me; but give me the young woman as a wife.’” In this verse, Shechem offered to pay whatever dowry would be required by Jacob in order to purchase Dinah as his wife. However, the servant took the leadership and gave the dowry to the family of Bethuel without being asked. It was probably much more than the family ever expected as the servant gave those precious things to the brother and mother.

The next morning, the servant asked the family to send him on his way so he could return to his master immediately. That came as a shock to the family. The brother and mother asked if the servant could wait at least ten days. The servant said that he did not want to be hindered from returning to his master. The brother and mother said they would ask Rebekah. We see that Rebekah said she would go immediately as the bride for Isaac. Genesis 24:57-61 says, “So they said, ‘We

will call the young woman and ask her personally.’ Then they called Rebekah and said to her, ‘Will you go with this man?’ And she said, ‘I will go.’ So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham’s servant and his men. 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.’ Then Rebekah and her maids arose, and they rode on the camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and departed.” We see that Rebekah, her nurse, and her maids had their lives changed dramatically in just the short period of one day.

The family wanted Rebekah to stay for a few days longer. However, we see that Rebekah was ready to go immediately with the servant to become the bride of Isaac. As the family sent Rebekah away, the brother gave her a blessing. The blessing he gave to Rebekah was similar to the promise the Lord had originally given to Abraham. First, he said, “May you become the mother of thousands of ten thousands.” God had promised Abraham that his descendants would be as the sand on the seashore. The phrase “thousands of ten thousands” was a phrase used to describe a number that was too large to count. Second, he said, “May your descendants possess the gates of those who hate them.” This was a phrase that was used in a blessing to say that a nation would have victory over their enemies that tried to destroy them. There were many nations that tried to destroy the descendants of Isaac and Rebekah. When the descendants were following the Lord, He gave them victory over many enemies.

Once Rebekah announced her decision to go with the servant to meet her future husband, she was ready to go. We do see that she did not go alone, as it says that her nurse and her maids went with her. The word translated “nurse” can either refer to *one who nurses a baby or one older who served and cared for another*. Genesis 35:8 says, “Now Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the terebinth tree. So the name of it was called Allon Bachuth.” This verse tells us that the name of the one who served and cared for Rebekah was Deborah and she died many years after she went with Rebekah. The word translated “maids” was usually used to speak of *a young woman who was of marriageable age or of a female attendant who served one who was a little older than the maid*. In this case, it would refer to those who served Rebekah.

We go on to see what happened when Isaac met and married Rebekah. Genesis 24:62-67 says, “Now Isaac came from the way of Beer Lahai Roi, for he dwelt in the South. 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. Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel; 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. And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. 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*.” We see how Rebekah met Isaac when they arrived back in the land of Canaan.

Isaac was living in the south part of the land when the servant returned. Genesis 25:11 tells us that after the death of Abraham, Isaac lived at Beer Lahai Roi. This place is first mentioned in Genesis 16:13-14, when Hagar named this place. Those verses say, “Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, ‘Have I also here seen Him who sees me?’ Therefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; observe, *it is* between Kadesh and Bered.” Hagar had fled to this place when Sarah told Abraham to cast out the bondwoman and her son because he was making fun of Isaac on the day that he was weaned. That is why Hagar called both God and the well where God spoke to her “You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees.”

The servant and those with him arrived back at the place where Abraham and Isaac were living in the evening. Isaac had gone out into the field in the evening to meditate. As he was out in the field, he could see a caravan of camels coming in his direction. As the camels got closer, Rebekah saw Isaac in the distance and said to the servant, “Who is this man walking in the field to meet us?” The servant answered, “It is my master.” Rebekah realized that she was about to meet the man who would soon become her husband. In that day, a man was not supposed to see the face of his future wife until after the wedding. As a result, Rebekah took a veil and covered her face. Then, she dismounted from her camel so she could meet Isaac. Meanwhile, the servant had begun talking with Isaac and told him all of the things that had happened while he was away. This included: the trip, the prayer of the servant at the well, the answer of God to his prayer, the invitation to the home of the family, and everything else that had happened, so Isaac heard how the Lord had worked to provide a wife for him.

Then, Isaac brought her to the tent of his mother, Sarah. Since she had a veil over her face, Isaac did not see the face of his wife until after they were married. As a result, this marriage was not based on appearance since Isaac learned at the wedding that Rebekah was beautiful. We also learn a very important lesson about marriage. We see that Isaac loved Rebekah. Love is not a feeling because feelings can change. These verses show us that marriage is based on a commitment to love the other person. Many years later, Paul wrote, in Ephesians 5:28, “So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.” A marriage will only be strong when it is based on a commitment to love rather than outward appearance. We see that Isaac was comforted by this marriage after the death of Sarah. This marriage happened almost three years after Sarah died. This is a reminder that the grieving period may be an extended time for those who have lost loved ones.

This passage has a very important lesson to teach our physical and spiritual children. That lesson is the fact that all godly marriages must be based on commitment and not just on physical appearance. Rebekah and Isaac both made a commitment to love one another before they even knew each other. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to teach others that godly marriages are based on commitment.