

Pentwater Bible Church

A Bride for Isaac Pt. 3

Genesis Message Fifty-Three



Eliezer and Rebecca at the Well Nicolas Poussin, 1648

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher

Pentwater Bible Church



Announcements

See us on Facebook 
Sunday Radio Teaching on WEEH 100.5 FM at 06:00 AM
Z95 FM at 9:30 AM & 9:00 PM; WMOM 102.7 FM at 11:00
AM & 9:00 PM & Internet <http://www.wmom.fm/> 11:00AM

Men's Bible Study and discussion Wednesday February 1,
2012 from 7:00 PM to 8:30 Topic: "Israel; The Arabs &
Islam." 2nd Session will focus on life of Jews and Arabs Cir.
700 BC to 600 AD.

February 29th Women's ministry teaching through "Living
by the Book," 1st Session at Joan's House Reading The Bible
for All it is Worth

Potluck February 19th Sign up Today!

Pray for John Ferguson, as he will have hernia surgery on
February 10th

Skype our Service at PentwaterBibleChurch

Share Your Church With Others

Sunday Service February 5, 2012

11:00 AM

Introduction Music: All Creatures of Our God and King
Maranatha Hymns

Opening Prayer:

Communion: Remembering Our Lord

Hymn #1: He Leadeth Me
J. H. Gilmore

Message: A Bride for Isaac Part III
Genesis Chapter 24: 28-67

Hymn # 2: Oh The Deep, Deep Love of Jesus
John Wesley

&

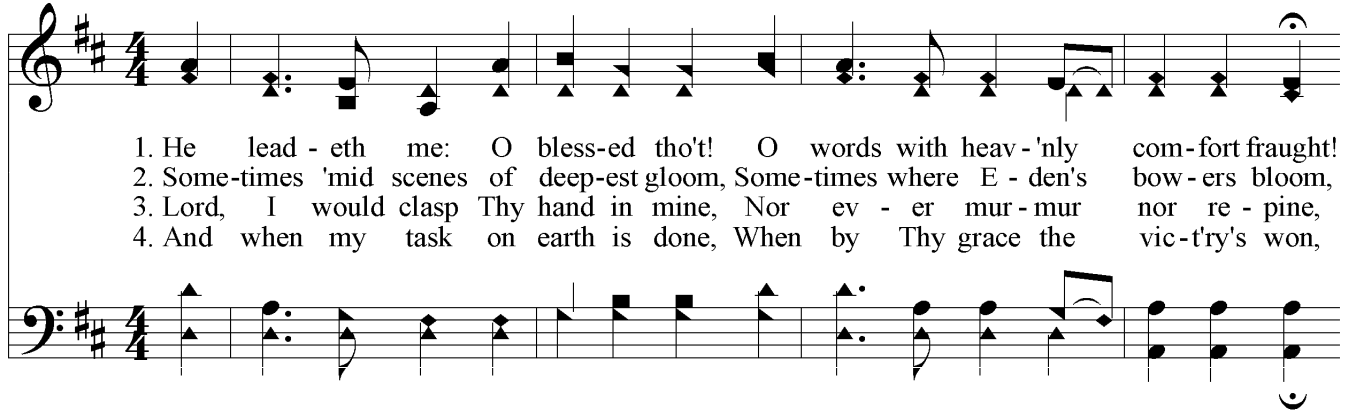
Offering:

Benediction:

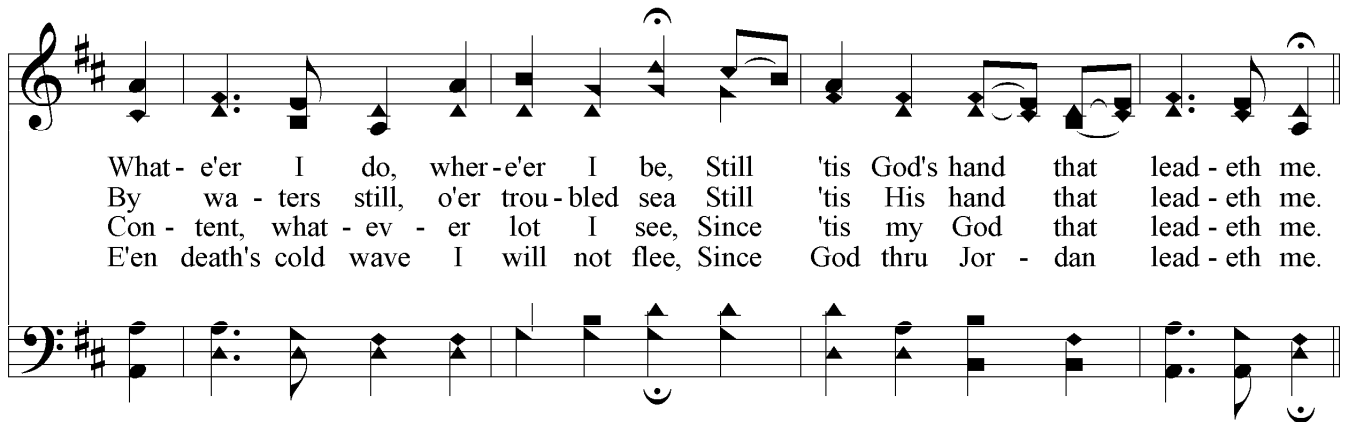
Closing Music: The Goodness of the Lord
Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir

HE LEADETH ME

SING Verses 1, 2 & 4

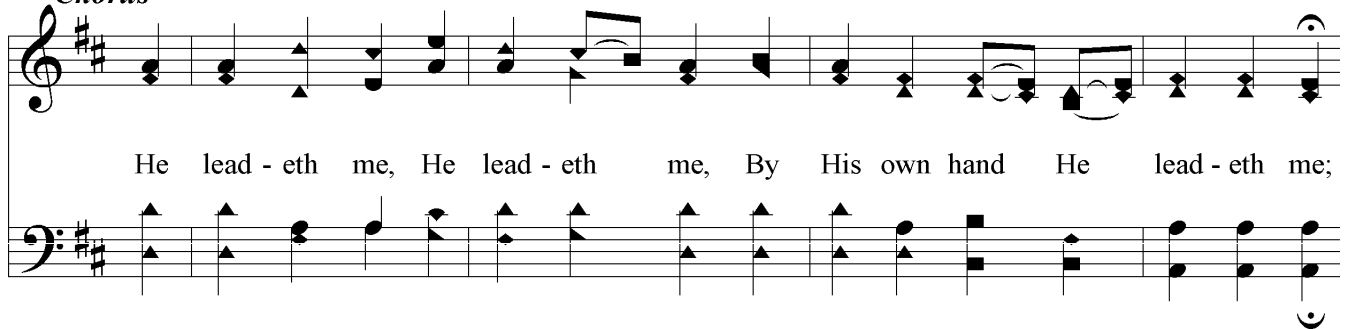


1. He lead - eth me: O bless-ed tho't! O words with heav - 'nly com-fort fraught!
2. Some-times 'mid scenes of deep-est gloom, Some-times where E - den's bow-ers bloom,
3. Lord, I would clasp Thy hand in mine, Nor ev - er mur - mur nor re - pine,
4. And when my task on earth is done, When by Thy grace the vic-t'ry's won,

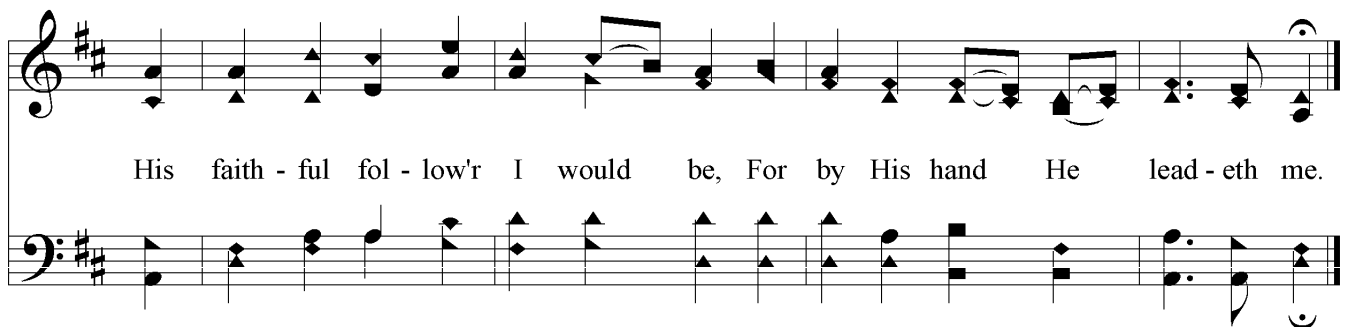


What - e'er I do, wher - e'er I be, Still 'tis God's hand that lead - eth me.
By wa - ters still, o'er trou - bled sea Still 'tis His hand that lead - eth me.
Con - tent, what - ev - er lot I see, Since 'tis my God that lead - eth me.
E'en death's cold wave I will not flee, Since God thru Jor - dan lead - eth me.

Chorus



He lead - eth me, He lead - eth me, By His own hand He lead - eth me;



His faith - ful fol - low'r I would be, For by His hand He lead - eth me.

Dentwater Bible Church

Genesis Message Fifty-Three

A Bride For Isaac Part III

February 5, 2011

Daniel E. Woodhead

Review:

ELIEZER PRAYS FOR ABRAHAM'S WELFARE

Genesis 24: 10-14

The text ignores the distance of the travel as well as the time it took Eliezer to reach Nahor's city Haran in Northwestern Mesopotamia. The actual distance traveled is approximately four hundred fifty miles.

He took ten camels with him and a caravan of wealth. These were not all the camels that Abraham owned. This wealth being transported was to serve as the price for the bride. It was also designed make a powerful impression on Nahor's family. It would also serve as the device for testing her character. It would also provide homeward transportation for the bride and her entourage. The figure ten, relevant to gift giving in the Old Testament, is common. Examples are Jacob's ten bulls (Genesis 32: 15); Joseph's ten donkeys (Genesis 45: 23); Jesse's ten loaves (I Samuel 17: 17); Jeroboam's ten loaves (I Kings 14: 3); and Naaman's ten talents (II Kings 5: 5). The entourage traveled to *Aram Naharaim*, which is the city of Haran. אֶל-אָרָם נְהָרַיִם

Eliezer then took the camels to a well just outside the city in the evening. He knew that women traditionally went out for water at this place and time. It was natural for a stranger to go to the public wells. He could replenish his water supplies and at the same time learn about the town and make useful contacts, because the well was a meeting place for the townsfolk and shepherds. Jacob, too, immediately went toward the well on arriving at Haran (Genesis 29: 1-14). Moses did the same thing when he fled to Midian (Exodus 2:15-21). Water is an incredibly important commodity in arid regions. (We read of the water theft by the servants of Abimelech in chapter 21.) Therefore it is a primary place of congregating. In each case the encounter at the well resulted in a betrothal. The three scenes share a number of features in common. Eliezer trusted the LORD to grant him specific leading. He prayed that Isaac's future bride would give him and his camel's water to drink. Interestingly he asked the Lord to grant his prayer for Abraham's sake not his own. He was truly a loyal servant. This is a fine example for us to follow in our work and careers. When you go to work for someone, work hard and do it as to their direction. Do your work with their best interest in mind. If you work for somebody that is difficult and you do not respect do your work as to the Lord (Ephesians 6: 5-6). To water ten thirsty camels involved much work, for camels guzzle great amounts of water. If they needed to replenish their total capacity they would each drink twenty-five gallons each. This would amount to two hundred fifty gallons in all. He had them kneel down in preparation for receiving their water which is a tradition still followed in the Mid-East.

The result here is not one of chance (*mikreh*). It is in reality, a deliberate act of God. A fine characteristic of biblical man is his conviction about the role of Divine

Providence in everyday human affairs. He prays that the proper criteria of a bride to be suitable which he determines might be in accordance with God's will and be effective. The criteria that the servant establishes are aspects of character not physical appearance. The ideal wife must be hospitable to strangers, kind to animals, and willing to give of herself to others. The difficulty of the prescribed test can be appreciated with the volume of water these camels needed. Each probably needed the entire capacity of twenty-five gallons of water to regain the weight it lost in the course of the long journey. It takes a camel about ten minutes to drink this amount of water. The proper choice of a wife for Isaac is that she must be industrious.

ELIEZER MEETS REBECCA

Genesis 24: 15-27

The servant Eliezer's prayer is answered almost immediately, completely and in a greater measure than what he asked! Although he knew that this was the region of Nahor's family he had not specified that in his prayer. The girl who comes to the well is an answer to prayer. She is Rebecca the granddaughter of Nahor. The family of Nahor, which we were given in the 22nd chapter of Genesis, is for us to see the providential nature of this meeting. It is not a chance encounter. God has a plan for all His children if we only look for it, not turn away from Him and resist the clear path He has for us. Further his prayer he did not mention beauty, and she is well endowed with it. But, her chastity, a precious virtue, is unblemished.

Eliezer upon seeing her ran to meet her. Displaying a sense of urgency and seeing the water bottle she was carrying he asked for some water to drink. She responded to the urgency he displayed by going about her business briskly and conscientiously not wasting time gossiping or engaging in other distractions. She got to the task immediately. In order to test her he only asked for water for himself. He did not ask her to provide water for his animals. However, she did offer to water the camels, which is highly generous to say the least. She knew full well the level of effort associated with watering ten camels. It could have been as much as two hundred fifty gallons of water. She got right to the job. Interestingly in the Hebrew here there is only *one* verb used for speaking. There are *eleven* different verbs associated with Rebecca's actions. This is a clear indication that she was industrious. At first Eliezer's response was to watch until all the camels had been satisfied. He just wanted to be sure that the Lord had led him to the correct girl. She impressed Eliezer so much that he bestowed gifts upon her. He did this even before he asked her name or from which family she came. He was exercising faith in God in response to his prayer. She received *a golden ring of half a shekel weight and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold.* (The Hebrew text here means it is a nose ring.) These gifts would impress her and her family. *One*, most women like jewelry and *two* the specific weights given are an indication of their trading value. Her family would appreciate the gifts and because of their value immediately realize the earnestness with which they were given. This was a serious move on the servant Eliezer's part. It was designed to move things along in order to further discussions and family meetings.

Eliezer then offered an inquiry to move the relationship along. He said, "*Whose daughter are you? Tell me, I pray you.*" Then he said, "*Is there room in your father's house for us to lodge in?*" She told him that she was the "*daughter of Bethuel who is the*

son of Milcah whom she bore unto Nahor.” This showed that she was related to Abraham thereby meeting one of the conditions Abraham had given unto Eliezer. She also responded to the question of lodging. She said, *“We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.”* To provide provender and shelter for the camels and all the other men is a generous hearted undertaking.

Eliezer responded to these events, ever the man of God in worship and prayer. He immediately worshipped God by bowing his head and then giving thanks. He said, *“Blessed be Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his lovingkindness toward my master.”* This is again clear recognition of the Abrahamic Covenant being fulfilled. He now realizes that it is God that is in control of this situation. For he says, *“As for me, Jehovah hath led me in the way to the house of my master’s brethren.”* He recognized God’s providence and the fact that the angel was doing things that were not mentioned and were sight unseen. God’s angel brought the proper woman to the well at just the right time of the right family with the best qualities for a wife for Isaac. The sign requested had been fulfilled and the servant Eliezer recognized God’s total providential control.

Rebecca’s Characteristics are:

1. Hard working
2. Efficient
3. Conscientious
4. Friendly
5. Helpful
6. Hospitable to strangers
7. Kind to animals
8. Willing to give of herself to others
9. Chaste
10. Unblemished character

Today’s Message:

ELIEZER MEETS THE FAMILY

Genesis 24: 28-33

²⁸*And the damsel ran, and told her mother’s house according to these words.*
²⁹*And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the fountain.* ³⁰*And it came to pass, when he saw the ring, and the 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 was standing by the camels at the fountain.* ³¹*And he said, Come in, thou blessed of Jehovah. Wherefore standest thou without? For I have prepared the house, and room for the camels.* ³²*And the man came into the house, and he ungirded the camels. And he gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men that were with him.* ³³*And there was set food before him to eat. But he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on.*

Rebecca again showing her sense of urgency runs to her mother's house. She hastened home to relate all that had occurred to "her mother's house," i.e., to the female portion of her family. When the news had been broadcast within the house the result was that Rebecca's brother Laban came out also with a sense of urgency. He was not included in the family genealogy, which was presented in chapter twenty-two. Laban's motivation was chiefly that of the wealth Rebecca saw and received gifts from. For text says Laban spoke to Eliezer and said, "Come in, thou blessed of Jehovah." He saw the material blessings, which were apparent in the gifts. Laban then provided the room for Eliezer, food and shelter for the camels and water to wash their feet. Eliezer was given food but would not partake of it until he made it known why he had come. The mission was more important to him than eating.

Genesis 24: 34-49

³⁴And he said, I am Abraham's servant. ³⁵And Jehovah hath blessed my master greatly. And he is become great. And he hath given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and men-servants and maid-servants, and camels and asses. ³⁶And 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. ³⁷And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell. ³⁸But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son. ³⁹And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me. ⁴⁰And he said unto me, Jehovah, 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. ⁴¹Then shalt thou be clear from my oath, when thou comest to my kindred. And if they give her not to thee, thou shalt be clear from my oath. ⁴²And I came this day unto the fountain, and said, O Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go. ⁴³Behold, I am standing by the fountain of water. And let it come to pass, that the maiden that cometh forth to draw, to whom I shall say, Give me, I pray thee, a little water from thy pitcher to drink. ⁴⁴And she shall say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels. Let the same be the woman whom Jehovah hath appointed for my master's son. ⁴⁵And before I had done speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder. And she went down unto the fountain, and drew. And I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee. ⁴⁶And 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. ⁴⁷And 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 ring upon her nose, and the bracelets upon her hands. ⁴⁸And I bowed my head, and worshipped Jehovah, and blessed Jehovah, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter for his son. ⁴⁹And 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.

Eliezer largely retells the story of Abraham sending him back to Mesopotamia to find a wife for Isaac. He tells the story that God has blessed Abraham in wealth and gave him a child when he was one hundred years old. He makes the statement that Sarah was old. In fact she was ninety when she gave birth. Abraham has truly been blessed. It will be Isaac not Ishmael or Eliezer who will receive the inheritance of Abraham's wealth and covenant with God. Islam claims that Abraham visited Arabia with the inheritor Ishmael. This text refutes that notion. God told Abraham that He would also bless Ishmael but His covenant would be established with Isaac. The Koran states this in reverse.

God planned to bring the Messiah through Abraham to Isaac, Jacob then through the tribe of Judah. The Qur'an does not explicitly state which son of Abraham was supposed to be sacrificed in the Akedah of Abraham sacrificing his son. Today most Muslims, whether Sunnis or Shi'ites, believe that it was Ishmael, in contrast to the Biblical record that it was Isaac. However, many early Muslim commentators believed and stated clearly that the child of sacrifice is Isaac. They base their conclusions on many hadith (additions to the Qur'an) from the companions of Muhammad themselves. This hadith is obviously incorrect, since none of the Jewish sources - Bible, Talmud or Targums - mention any other sacrifice except Isaac, which is evidenced by the Dead Sea Scrolls as well. The Koran was written Cir. 600 A.D. The Dead Sea scrolls were from about 100 B.C.

Isaac was the covenantal heir not either Eliezer or Ishmael. He states the oath he made to Abraham. Mention of the oath demonstrates the great seriousness of the matter at hand, which is a delicate form of honor to the bride and her family. So is the reference to the rejection of a Canaanite wife, which also happens to explain why Isaac has not yet married. Eliezer does not mention Abraham's original separation from the family. Interestingly, the family is hearing the divine guidance, which Jehovah provided for the first time. It had to have made a strong impression upon them. He finishes his discourse with a question asking for her hand (*now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me*), if not I will leave (*That I may turn to the right hand, or to the left*). He did have that possibility of rejection in his mind from the inception of Abraham's charge to him and the required oath.

ELIEZER AND REBECCA GO BACK TO CANAAN

Genesis 24: 50-60

⁵⁰Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from Jehovah. We cannot speak unto thee bad or good. ⁵¹Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as Jehovah hath spoken. ⁵²And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself down to the earth unto Jehovah. ⁵³And 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. ⁵⁴And 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. ⁵⁵And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten. After that she shall go.

⁵⁶And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing Jehovah hath prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master. ⁵⁶And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing Jehovah hath prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master. ⁵⁷And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. ⁵⁸And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go. ⁵⁹And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. ⁶⁰And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and let thy seed possess the gate of those that hate them.

Laban and his father Bethuel both recognized that these events were divine as they said, *"The thing proceedeth from Jehovah."* Both of them consent to the marriage, which is typical of this type of negotiation in the ancient biblical times (Genesis 34: 5-7; Judges 21: 22). Eliezer being now relieved that his earlier concern had been relieved and he prayed (*bowed himself down to the earth unto Jehovah*). Now Eliezer begins to shower Rebecca with gifts. She gets jewels of silver gild and clothing. Further he gives precious gifts to her mother and brother Laban. Once they settled down to the meal they celebrated long into the night. Rising early in the morning Eliezer requested leave to return to Abraham and Isaac with his bride. They wanted to keep her with them יָמִים אֹ עָשׂוֹר, (*Yameem O Asor*) *"some days, or rather ten;"* but when she was consulted, she decided to go right away. Rebecca was ready to meet her husband. *"Then they sent away Rebekah their sister* (Laban being chiefly considered, as the leading person in the affair) *and her nurse"* Hebrew *meneket* is really a wet nurse, such as Hatshepsut (Pharaoh's daughter) needed for the baby Moses in Exodus 2:7. That turned out to be Moses' birth mother! Rebekah being a virgin certainly didn't need a wet nurse. In Mesopotamia the wet nurse, Akkadian *mušēniqtum*, "the one who suckles," frequently had the additional duties of *tarbītum*, bringing up the child and acting as guardian. In Genesis 35: 8 Rebekah's nurse is identified as Deborah, and her death and burial are recorded. She was obviously a valued member of the family. Having attended and reared Rebekah from birth, she must have remained as a member of the household and now accompanies her. The mother and Laban give her the parting wish that she might be exceedingly fruitful and become the mother of many offspring. *"Become thousands of myriads"* is a hyperbolic expression for an innumerable host of children. Both of the children she will have Esau and Isaac will bring forth generations of thousands of offspring, Arabs and Israelis. While their parting words where hyperbole they indeed proved to be factual.

ISAAC AND REBECCA MEET AND MARRY

Genesis 24: 61-67

⁶¹And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man. And the servant took Rebekah, and went his way. ⁶²And Isaac came from the way of Beer-lahai-roi. For he dwelt in the land of the South. ⁶³And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, there were camels coming. ⁶⁴And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she alighted from the

camel. ⁶⁵And she said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant said, It is my master. And she took her veil, and covered herself. ⁶⁶And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. ⁶⁷And 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.

They began their long journey of a month or more back to Beer-Lahai-roi. Rebecca's entourage was more than one maidservant Deborah. The text says that "damsels" rode with her. The story now switches to the scene in the south country, which is the Negev desert.

The specific location is *Beer-lahai-roi*. According to Genesis 16:14, this is the name of a well situated in the Negev. It could have been part of an oasis to which sheep-breeders came for water and pasturing. Isaac later settled there (Genesis 25:11). Isaac was engaging in evening prayer time when he saw the caravan approaching in the distance. He was anticipating his wife's arrival. Rebecca noticed him and got off her camel asking Eliezer who was that man in the distance. The Hebrew word translated "alighted is נָפַל *Naphal*, which means to *fall*. The imagery we get here is that when she saw Isaac she fell off her camel. This might very well be love at first sight! She then veiled her face. This is a display of modesty. We see that Sarah in Genesis 12: 14, was not veiled. This shows that Israelite women were not normally veiled. Tamar put on a veil only to disguise herself before Judah (Genesis 38:14). There is some evidence that the veiling of the bride was part of the marriage ceremony. In Akkadian the bride on her wedding day is called *kallatu kutumtu*, "the veiled bride." *Pussumtu*, "the veiled one," is another term for *kallatu*, "bride." The Middle Assyrian laws make the raising of a concubine to the status of a wife contingent upon her becoming veiled in the presence of the court. In light of this, Rebekah's veiling herself has significance. It is an unspoken signal to Isaac that she is his bride.

Eliezer then recounted all the events of acquiring Rebecca to Isaac. This is followed by a simple wedding ceremony. Isaac took her into his mother's tent. Sarah had been dead for three years and the tent was still erect and waiting occupancy. They completed their physical union and Isaac loved her. By this act, Rebekah formally becomes the successor to Sarah the matriarch. The continuity of the generations and the providential ability to pass the covenant is assured. Rebecca was a comfort to him since his mother's death. We see here in the story of Isaac taking Rebecca as his wife the components of a biblical marriage.

1. Commitment to each other for a lifelong union.
2. Love, which is a decision not just a deep romantic or sexual attachment. There must be a commitment *to love* the one you marry.
3. Adherence to the marriage ceremony of the culture within the society we live, i.e. rings, vows, license, blood tests etc.
4. Finally a sexual union where the two become one flesh as God has intended.

NEXT WEEK: KETURAH AND THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM

Please Call or e-mail with any questions or comments.

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O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus 352

How wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ. Ephesians 3:18

1. O the deep, deep love of Je - sus, Vast, un - mea - sured, bound - less, free,
 2. O the deep, deep love of Je - sus - Spread His praise from shore to shore!
 3. O the deep, deep love of Je - sus, Love of ev - ery love the best;

Roll - ing as a might - y o - cean In its full - ness o - ver me.
 How He lov - eth, ev - er lov - eth, Chang - eth nev - er, nev - er - more;
 'Tis an o - cean vast of bless - ing, 'Tis a ha - ven sweet of rest.

Un - der - neath me, all a - round me, Is the cur - rent of Thy love;
 How He watch - es o'er His loved ones, Died to call them all His own;
 O the deep, deep love of Je - sus, 'Tis a heav'n of heav'ns to me;

Lead - ing on - ward, lead - ing home - ward To my glo - rious rest a - bove.
 How for them He in - ter - ced - eth, Watch - eth o'er them from the throne.
 And it lifts me up to glo - ry, For it lifts me up to Thee.