

**GENESIS 23-24**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Genesis chapter 23 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

This evening in our study we are going to see the death of Sarah and then the marriage of Isaac to Rebekah.

I guess you can say that we will be looking at death and life in these two chapters. But death is something we all have to face, and it is never easy.

Ray Stedman put it like this. He wrote,

What a bitter day it is when a man buries his wife! It is perhaps the lowest point ever reached by the human spirit, and the sunset for him of all earth's hopes and expectations.

In Genesis 23 we stand beside Abraham now, as he weeps at the grave of Sarah. He is walking through the valley where death has cast its shadow, but we shall see as we read this chapter that there is a light which always shines in the dark shadows in the life of a man of faith.

As we sometimes sing in the old hymn, "There is a light in the valley of death now for me, since Jesus came into my heart."

The first two verses of Chapter 23 bring us into the shadow of heartache and death.

- <https://bit.ly/3AerU2l>

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in Genesis chapter 23, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

**GENESIS 23****VERSES 1-2**

As you read this it would seem that Abraham was not with Sarah when she died. It is possible that she died suddenly while Abraham was out tending his livestock.

But Sarah died in the land of promise, in the land of Canaan, in the center of God's will, and in fellowship with God, as Hebron means "*fellowship.*"

What a great picture for us, living our lives and at the end, we are still in the center of God's will and in fellowship with Him! That is what we desire, may we finish strong!

And let me say this. Death is tragic, it is painful, and it is the result of Adam's sin.

Paul tells us this in Romans 5:12, "**Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.**"

And this is very important for many try to deny this concept, but again, listen to how The Living Bible puts this verse, "**When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. His sin spread death throughout all the world, so everything began to grow old and die, for all sinned.**"

That is what sin has done, brought death and destruction into the world and it is only through Jesus that we can have hope, that one day He will restore this world to the way it was when He created it!

Now keep in mind that Isaac is now 37 years old at this point, so Sarah's death could have taken place only some four years after the events in Genesis chapter 22! (Sarah was 127 years old, and she had Isaac when she was 90 years old!)

Make no mistake about it, Sarah was a godly woman, not perfect but one the Scriptures tell us that women should look to as an example.

In Isaiah 51:1-2 we are told, **“Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, You who seek the Lord: Look to the rock from which you were hewn, And to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father, And to Sarah who bore you; For I called him alone, And blessed him and increased him.”**

And in I Peter 3:3-6 we are told, **“Do not let your adornment be merely outward - arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel - rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.”**

She truly is an example of what a godly woman is to be like!

And here we see the effects of this loss for Abraham as he cries over the death of his wife, Sarah!

Let's face it. God made us with feelings. We are emotional people. And death truly brings out those emotions!

It is as Boice tells us, ***“To weep for a loved one is to show that we have been close, that the loss is keenly felt, that death is an enemy, and that sin has brought this sad punishment upon the human race.”***

And if we are not to weep as Christians, if we are not to shed tears as Christians, then why did David say these words in Psalm 56:8, **“You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book?”**

You see, God knows each tear we shed, that is how much He loves us and cares for us. And those tears are a result of how devastating sin is in this world.

Abraham wept over the death of Sarah his wife!

#### VERSES 3-4

Remember that God had promised Abraham that the land of Canaan would be his and his descendants.

At this point, Abraham didn't own any land in Canaan and thus, he had no place to bury his wife, Sarah.

Now why did he feel like a **“foreigner”** a **“visitor”** in this land, the land that God had promised him, the Promise Land?

I think Abraham recognized that this was not his home, that he was just passing through this land and now with the death of his wife Sarah that point was driven home even more.

Moses even recognized this fact as he told the children of Israel what the Lord told him in Leviticus 25:23, **“The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me.”**

And Paul, in Philippians 3:20-21 tells us, **“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”**

The Amplified Bible puts these verses like this, **“But we are citizens of the state (commonwealth, homeland) which is in heaven, and from it also we earnestly and patiently await [the coming of] the Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah) [as] Savior, Who will transform and fashion anew the body of our humiliation to conform to and be like the body of His glory and majesty, by exerting that power which enables Him even to subject everything to Himself.”**

And lastly, in I Peter 2:11-12 Peter tells us, **“Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.”**

In other words, this is not our home, we are pilgrims and strangers just passing through for our citizenship is in heaven with our Lord!

#### VERSES 5-11

Keep in mind that Abraham came from the Ur of the Chaldeans, he had family still there, he could have found a burial place for Sarah there, but he didn't go back.

Why didn't he go back?

Because the Lord told Abraham to separate from his family, to separate from that land and he did. Don't go back to the world!

Thus, he wants to bury Sarah in the land of Canaan, the land of promise!

Now it seems, as you read these verses that Ephron wanted to give the land to Abraham for nothing, for free!

It seems that way, but that is not the way that they did business back then, or even today.

You see, this was a common practice of negotiating or bargaining with each other. Ephron is doing that with Abraham here.

I can't imagine what Ephron would have said, what he would have felt if Abraham said to him, ***“Great, I accept your generous offer and thank you for giving this land to me for free!!”***

Abraham knew that this was just the beginning of the negotiations for the land!

And you have to love Ephron here. Abraham wanted the cave of Machpelah and what Ephron is telling Abraham is this.

***“That is great Abraham, but the cave of Machpelah is not for sale all alone. It goes with the surrounding field; it is a package deal. I can't break it up, you understand that!”***

Notice what happens next.

#### VERSES 12-16

Abraham tells Ephron that he wants to pay so now the bartering begins.

He tells Abraham that the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver, which it really wasn't.

You see, that was a very high price, and it was the starting point for Ephron, he was bartering with Abraham, expecting Abraham to come with a lower price and they would go back and forth till they settled on a price.

Let me give you this example I heard from my pastor. He said that one of the Calvary Pastor's had gone into an Arab store in Israel to look around and he saw this beautiful olive wood chess set that was on sale.

The price was listed at \$1600!

That is a lot of money for a chess set!

So, after negotiating, after all the bartering, he walked out of the store with the chess set for \$65!

What is interesting to me is that Abraham doesn't barter, he was told 400 shekels of silver and that is what he was willing to pay for this piece of land!

As Christians, when we do business with people, we should be fair, we should be courteous, we should be respectful.

Abraham is a good example of how we should act.

Clarke makes this point in regard to how some Christians behave.

This is what he wrote, ***“They who, under the sanction of religion, trample underfoot the decent [honest] forms of civil respect, supposing that because they are religious, they have a right to be rude, totally mistake the spirit of Christianity.”***

Obviously, that was not Abraham and I think the Lord is showing us how we are to do business, follow Abraham's example!

#### VERSES 17-20

So here in the cave of Machpelah Sarah was buried, and the surrounding field was the only parcel of land Abraham owned in the land of Canaan. And yet, by faith he believed that God would give the land to his descendants one day.

Also, we will see as we go through Genesis that not only is Sarah buried in the cave of Machpelah, but so is Abraham, his son Isaac and wife Rebekah. Jacob will bury his wife Leah there and Joseph will bury his father, Jacob there.

What is interesting to me is that the word “**Machpelah**” means double-doors, or a way in and a way out. You can think of it like that.

In other words, Sarah entered the cave of Machpelah physically dead, but she left the cave of Machpelah spiritually alive!

You see, we walk through the valley of the shadow of death to get to the other side.

Paul tells us in II Corinthians 5:8, “**We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.**”

And in John 11:25-26 we are told, “**Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?’**”

That is a great question that we need to ponder and understand!

And here is the point, the sting of death was removed by Jesus and thus, death has no power over those who believe!

It is just a doorway we are passing through to enter into eternal life with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! That is our Hope! Our Machpelah is Jesus Christ, He is the door to eternal life that we enter through, don’t lose sight of that hope!

Now, before we get to Genesis chapter 24, let me share a few things that are leading up to what we see here in this chapter of Genesis.

Remember back in Genesis chapter 22 where we saw Abraham go to Mount Moriah to sacrifice his only son as the Lord instructed him. And Abraham obeyed by faith.

Now Abraham did not offer Isaac as a sacrifice, the Lord stopped him before the knife came down.

You see, the Lord was showing Abraham how his faith has grown.

Also, out of that story we saw how Abraham was a picture of God the Father who gave His only begotten Son to save man from his sin as He was sacrificed.

We saw Isaac as a picture of God the Son and just as Isaac was willing to freely give his life as a sacrifice as he laid down his body on the wood, Jesus laid His body on that wooden cross freely giving His life for us.

And I believe the exact spot that Abraham was going to offer Isaac up is the exact place that Jesus was crucified, in the mountains of Moriah, Calvary!

So we have seen God the Father, God the Son in our picture so far, but what about God the Holy Spirit?

That is what we will see in Genesis chapter 24, a picture of the Holy Spirit and the work He came to do. It is an amazing story as you will see.

## **GENESIS 24**

### **VERSES 1-4**

We don't know the age of Abraham here, but he is at least 137 years old for he was ten years older than his wife Sarah, who died when she was 127 years old.

And, according to Genesis 25:20 he was 140 years old when a wife was found for Isaac.

Here's the problem. Isaac is not married yet, so Abraham sends his oldest servant out to find a bride for Isaac and Abraham is very specific about where he is to go.

He is not to go to the Canaanites for a wife, but to his country.

Eliezer, the oldest servant as we are told in Genesis chapter 15, is to go to Mesopotamia for a wife for Isaac, which is some 500 miles away and it would take him months to get there.

So Isaac's bride was not to be taken from the cursed line of Canaan but from the blessed line of Shem, Abraham's family.

We are not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers as well!

What is interesting to me is that his name means, "*God of help*" or "*comforter*." So the father is sending the comforter out to find a bride for his son, Isaac, and that should sound very familiar, it should ring a bell you might say.

You see, in John 14:16-17 Jesus said, "**And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever - the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.**"

Jesus is saying that the Father is going to send out a helper, a *PARAKLETOS* in the Greek, or a comforter, one who is coming alongside to help, the Holy Spirit or the "*God of help*."

You see, the Holy Spirit comes alongside us to draw us to Christ, to draw out a bride for Christ!

What is also interesting to me is that this servant's name is not mentioned here in Genesis chapter 24.

In other words, he is not to draw attention to himself but to point the bride to the son!

The only reason we know his name is because we are told back in Genesis chapter 15.

This is also true of the Holy Spirit.

I do realize this may offend some because they have their focus on the Holy Spirit, but that is not Scriptural.

You see, the Holy Spirit is to point us to Jesus, to reveal Jesus to us and not to draw attention to Himself.

In John 15:26 we are told, **“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.”**

Also, in John 16:13-14 we are told, **“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”**

Thus, we see that the comforter’s mission is not to draw attention to Himself or to highlight what He is doing, but to point people to Jesus!

There is more, let’s read on.

#### VERSES 5-9

This servant is concerned that she might not come back with him but if he brought Isaac with him, it may make it easier.

But Abraham said that Isaac must remain in the land of promise and that Eliezer must go and get a bride for Isaac.

And here we see the oath take place between Abraham and his servant.

How does that relate to the Holy Spirit today?

Think about it. The Holy Spirit is drawing us to Jesus, whom we have never seen. All we have is the testimony of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to go on.

And the next time *Jesus comes back to this earth* is in judgment at the end of the Tribulation Period.

Thus, the Son must not go. The comforter must go alone!

And please understand that I did not say the next time we see Him, but the next time we see Him on the earth.

Now here's the thing. If Eliezer is representing the Holy Spirit, drawing out a bride for Isaac, can he fail?

Absolutely not! He will get a bride for Isaac.

Now, can the Holy Spirit fail? Absolutely not, He will gather together a bride, but in saying that, there are those that will reject the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. They will commit that unpardonable sin that is called blasphemy of the Holy Spirit or the rejection of Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

But the Holy Spirit will draw out a bride for Christ and He will complete the work!

#### VERSES 10-14

So the servant heads out on this long journey, arriving at the city of Nahor.

And he remains outside the city by a watering hole, and he begins to pray.

In his prayer he asks God to show him the right woman and by providential circumstances he could discern God's will.

In other words, if this woman would not only give him a drink of water but also water his camels, she will be the one!

Notice that he was not looking for outward beauty but inward character.

You see, one camel can drink up to 20 to 30 gallons of water. So let's take these ten camels using 20 gallons of water for each of them and you are talking about some 200 gallons of water.

The pitcher that these women would use would be made of stone holding about three gallons of water. And keep in mind that just the pitcher alone would have to weigh at least ten pounds.

That would mean that each pitcher full of water would weigh about 35 lbs.

Thus, if she worked hard enough it may take her an hour or more.

Thus, this woman would be a remarkable woman, one of great character and strength!

And these wells are not like we think of today where you lower a bucket down and pull out the water, but many times they were cisterns that collect water, and you would have to travel down 50 maybe 100 steps to get to the water. Thus, this was not easy for her to do.

Now, let me also say this about providential circumstances; we can manipulate them to get what we want, and we can ignore what we don't want.

Case-in-point. There was this gentleman who was trying to lose weight and loved doughnuts and he made this deal with God. He said, ***“Lord, I am going to be driving by this doughnut shop in a few minutes and you know my weakness. Lord, if you want me to stop there and have a doughnut then you provide a parking place right in front of the doughnut shop.”***

You know what, the Lord did provide a parking spot for him, and he explained this to his friend. He told him, ***“You know, God wanted me to stop there, he provided a parking space right in front of that doughnut shop, it only took 10 times driving around the building for the spot to open up!”***

Be careful!

VERSE 15

Here we see Rebekah, who was Abraham's brother's granddaughter come to this well.

And yes, sometimes God does answer our prayers very quickly, here the servant was still praying, and God answered!

It is as Isaiah 65:24 tells us, **"It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear."**

The Living Bible puts this verse like this, **"I will answer them before they even call to me. While they are still talking to me about their needs, I will go ahead and answer their prayers!"**

But that is not always the case; Abraham waited 25 years for God to answer his prayer!

Now the servant was not sure at this point if this was the one, but he is going to watch and wait and see what the Lord is going to do, if she really is the one!

But I am sure he was excited, seeing the hand of God working here and yet, wanting to be sure.

VERSE 16-21

Notice that the servant didn't rush into this or jump to the wrong conclusion but waited to see if this was the one that God wanted for Isaac.

And Rebekah gave him a drink and said she would water the camels.

It seems like she is the one, right?

Then why do we read in verse 21, **"And the man, wondering at her, remained silent so as to know whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not."**

You see, he was still waiting because she said that she would water the camels, but she had not completed the work yet.

He wanted to see if she truly had a servant's heart.

Yes, she was beautiful outwardly, but the servant was waiting to see her inward character, which was more important.

God still looks for people who have servant's hearts that He might work through. He is not looking for beautiful people, but people of character, people who are willing to serve Him faithfully and not half-heartedly or just when they have the time, or it is easy to do.

In regard to this point, Jesus tells us in Mark 10:45, "**For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.**"

If our Lord was willing to serve, shouldn't we?

Of course we should and it is as we are told back in II Chronicles 16:9, "**For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. . . .**"

He is looking!

One more point here and it is interesting how we are told that Rebekah was a virgin.

Why is that so important?

Think about it. Rebekah is a type of the Church, and we see in the New Testament that the Church is called "***the virgin bride of Christ.***" (II Corinthians 11:2)

It fits perfectly!

VERSES 22-28

Now the servant is convinced that she is the one, a descendant of Abraham's brother and a woman of character and thus, he asks her if he could lodge at their family's house. And she said they have plenty of room.

You see, she completed the task she said she would do, and the servant blessed her with gifts!

Now, as this all comes to pass, as the servant sees all these things taking place, what does he do?

He does not take any credit, but he praises the Lord!

Notice, “**. . . ‘Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His mercy and His truth toward my master. As for me, being on the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master’s brethren.’**” Genesis 24:27.

How important that we understand that. It is not what we have done, it is what God has done through us and He gets the praise, not us!

Now, keep in mind that Isaac and Rebekah have not met yet, but this servant gives gifts to Rebekah.

Again, if Rebekah is a type of the Church, the bride of Christ, the Scriptures teach us that the Holy Spirit gives gifts to us, **“for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”** Ephesians 4:12-13.

In other words, the Holy Spirit is giving gifts to the bride of Christ to make her more beautiful, and you can read of the many gifts the Holy Spirit gives out in Romans chapter 12, also in I Corinthians chapter 12, and Ephesians chapter 4.

It is as Paul said in Ephesians 5:27 in regard to the bride of Christ and how she is to be presented, **“that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.”**

Thus, the Holy Spirit gives us gifts to be used in the body of Christ to make the bride more beautiful!

#### VERSES 29-33

Now Laban, the brother of this young girl named Rebekah focuses on the riches he sees – the nose ring, the bracelets that were on Rebekah, given to her by this servant, Eliezer.

He is looking at this as a good deal for him, a moneymaker and isn't that how the world looks at things?

Even today Christianity has many unbelievers profiting off the merchandise that is being sold and the only reason these unbelievers are in the business is to make money! How sad that truly is.

Back in Mark 8:36-37 Jesus said, **“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”**

You see, you can have everything this world has to offer and still lose because you are dead in your trespasses and sins apart from Christ!

Yes, Laban was hospitable, but I wonder if it was in response to gain some resources.

What we also see here is that before this servant eats, he wants to complete his mission, the one he was sent to do.

What a great lesson for us, that we complete the work that God has sent us to do!

It is as Spurgeon wrote, *“Like every true servant of Christ, he put his master’s business before his own ease or comfort; even before the question of necessary food. When a man begins to think more of his eating than of doing the will of God, he ceases to be a true-hearted minister.”*

#### VERSES 34-49

Here the servant is telling Laban and the rest of the family his mission, to find a wife for his master’s son and how God brought him to the spot where Rebekah would be, and as he was praying, she showed up!

It truly was a witness of God’s power and God’s direction for this family to see and believe, but I don’t believe that they did, except for Rebekah!

I have shared how God's hand brought me up from Chicago to Wisconsin to be the pastor of this church and my family and some friends were not moved at all by it.

I don't understand that because there was the calling of God and then waiting some ten to twelve years and then God intervened and brought me up here.

And there is much more to the story, and you have heard it, but if you can't see the hand of God in that, you are not listening!

I don't think the family was really listening here. Maybe they were overwhelmed by it all! Let's face it, all that was told to them is a lot to take in!

And then, we see Laban and Bethuel speak up as we read on.

#### VERSES 50-53

As Laban, Rebekah's brother and her dad, Bethuel finally take this all in, as they process all these things that Eliezer the servant has told them, they do believe it was from God.

What is interesting is that in Genesis 24:50 they also say, "**... we cannot speak to you either bad or good.**"

First, it is from the Lord and then, we don't know if this is going to work out, if this is going to be a blessing for Rebekah or not.

How can you say that something is from God, and it is not good?

James tells us in James 1:17, "**Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.**"

This phrase, "**Father of lights**" was an ancient Jewish title for God, and it spoke of Him being the Creator, the giver of light!

And thus, from God all that is good is given. And please note that God's goodness is consistent, there is no variation to it.

One scholar put it this way, *“Unlike those sources of light, which, magnificent as they are, can nevertheless vary and will eventually fade, God’s character, power, wisdom, and love have no variation or shifting shadow. Through Malachi the Lord declares, “I, the Lord, do not change” (Mal. 3:6); through John, we are told that “God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5); and through the writer of Hebrews we are assured that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever.”*

After they give the blessing, then Eliezer brings out the jewelry of silver, of gold, all kinds of clothing and gave them to Rebekah. Not only that, but he also gave many precious things to Laban and Bethuel.

This was the dowry and it showed that Isaac was able to provide for his bride.

I think for Laban, he is like, *“Show me the money! Show me the money!”*

The reason I say that is because when Jacob runs to hide from his brother Esau, he goes to his uncle Laban's house. And Laban takes advantage of him. He was all about making money, obtaining things.

How is Rebekah going to respond to all of this?

Let's read on and see.

#### VERSES 54 –60

After the servant tells how God brought this all together, he asks if he could leave with Rebekah so that he might bring her to his master's son, which seems like a reasonable request.

But Laban, the brother of Rebekah and her mother want her to stay awhile; they want her to delay her departure.

But Rebekah doesn't even hesitate, she tells the servant, "**I will go.**" (Genesis 24:58)

Isn't this interesting. They said she could go and yet they want her to stay, to delay her departure for ten days. Some say it was a longer period of time, but whatever the case, it was a delay!

That is the world folk's, isn't it?

Of course it is!

To the sinner, "***Don't hurry, you have plenty of time to decide!***"

To the believer, "***Don't hurry, you don't have to go to church, you don't have to get involved, go out with us tonight instead of your Christian friends!***"

It is as Barnhouse wrote, "***If the world does not succeed in persuading the believer to abide in the world, it will seek to delay his exit. . . . When you decide to go with the Lord, the world will applaud your devotion but will say, 'Don't rush. Abide a few days, at least ten, and then go.'***"

The reality is the world keeps us from obeying the Lord.

Warren Wiersbe puts it like this. He wrote,

The application is obvious for unsaved people today: They must not delay in making their decisions for Christ. It is a decision of faith, based on the evidence provided by the Holy Spirit through the Word and the witness of the church.

The sinner who delays is in danger of losing the opportunity to belong to God's family and live in heaven (John 14:1-6). "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Heb 3:7,15, NKJV). "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor 6:2).

At the closing service of a great evangelistic crusade he conducted in Fort Worth, Texas, Dr. George W. Truett, then pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, said to a vast congregation: "Satan does not care if men and women come to the house of God, and to public services such as these, and are attentive and serious and deeply moved, if only they will let the religious opportunity pass, and be unimproved. Oh, dreadful possibility, that religious opportunity may come and pass by, and the highest things of the soul be lost and forfeited forever" (A Quest for Souls, 362).

Dreadful possibility indeed!

A century and a half before, Charles Spurgeon said to his London congregation: "Ten days did not seem too long; but they might have been ten days too late. One day does not seem much; but one day more may be one day too late, and one day too late is to be too late forever; yea, one minute too late is an eternity too late!" (Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, vol. 13, 533)

- Warren W. Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – OT, p. 90

Not only that, but this delay may have been a way for Laban to stall and see if he could get more money, more jewelry, whatever, from this servant. Spurgeon put it like this, "***He thought, perhaps, that there were more golden bracelets to be had, that he was parting with his sister rather too cheaply, that he must not let the priceless gem go out of his hands too soon.***"

But, in spite of all that, look at the faith of Rebekah, never seeing Isaac before but she was willing to go immediately to be with Him.

Remember what Jesus said in John 20:29 to Thomas after His death and resurrection, **“Jesus said to him, ‘Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’”**

And in I Peter 1:6-9 Peter tells us, **“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith - the salvation of your souls.”**

That is faith and that is what we see here with Rebekah, nothing was going to get in her way, not even family of her coming to her bridegroom!

Make no mistake about it, that is exactly the commitment all Christians make to their Bridegroom, Jesus Christ!

One more point here before we move on. And this has to do with Rebekah’s family.

You see, Rebekah’s family tried to make the decision for her. We see that in Genesis 24:50-51, as I have said.

But it was only Rebekah who could make this decision and go.

That is just like us. Our family, our friends can’t make a decision for Christ for us. We must decide on our own and take those steps of faith as Rebekah was doing here!

Let’s read on and see how this story ends.

VERSES 61-67

So Eliezer takes Rebekah on this journey to meet her bridegroom!

And keep in mind that from Nahor back to Beersheba it was about 500 miles, and that would take several months to accomplish that journey.

It was long, it was slow, it was difficult at times but let me also say this. There was never a doubt about them completing the journey. They would make it.

Also, Rebekah never gave directions to the servant, telling him which way to go or where to stop. She followed as he was leading!

Let's apply that to our Christian life.

Think about it. The Christian life it is a long journey, and it can be slow at times, it can be difficult at times, but there is never a doubt about us not making it.

Yes, I do realize that some feel you can lose your salvation, but I don't see that in the Scriptures. You see, our salvation is based upon the finished work of Christ on the cross of Calvary and not upon our good works!

Paul made this very powerful point in Philippians 1:6, as he wrote, "**being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.**"

Did you see that?

Who began a good work in you?

The Lord did!

Who is continuing to do a good work in you?

The Lord is!

And who is going to complete the work He started in you?

The Lord is!

But tragically many feel it is up to them. That is not true, and Paul makes that very clear for us to see.

Also, as we are on this journey, we are not to be telling God the Holy Spirit where we want to go, we are to be directed by Him, He knows best!

I know, it can be scary but think about it. Do you think the Lord will send you to a place and not equip you for the work, that He is just going to abandon you?

Absolutely not!

Thus, trust in Him. You see, the Christian life is a long journey, walk by faith as the Holy Spirit leads you!

Not only that, but Rebekah left all she had to be with someone she never met before, traveling some 500 miles!

We as Christians, like I have said, have only the witness of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to go by.

It is as Peter said in I Peter 1:8-9 regarding Jesus, **“whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith - the salvation of your souls.”**

That is faith, believing what you do not see but trusting the witness of the Holy Spirit by the Word of God!

Now when was the last time we saw Isaac?

The last time we saw Isaac was when he was on Mount Moriah, willing to be sacrificed as a sin offering, but the Lord stopped that, He does not want human sacrifice.

And we were never told that Isaac came down with his father Abraham, although we were told that Abraham came down.

Obviously Isaac came down with his father but the Holy Spirit edited that out for us to fit the type.

Thus, the next time we see Isaac mentioned is when he meets his bride, Rebekah!

Folks, that truly does fit the picture beautifully for us, for the next time we will see Jesus is when He comes for His bride, the Church.

And when He comes, we will meet Him in the air, we call it the Rapture.

Paul, in I Thessalonians 4:13-18 expounds on this for us as he says, **“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.”**

You see, from the time that Jesus breathed on His disciples on the night of His resurrection, the night they were saved, spoken of in John chapter 20, until that last Gentile is saved, that is the Church Age and that is the bride of Christ that the Holy Spirit is drawing out.

Thus, Paul tells us what should be on our hearts, **“looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”** Titus 2:13-14.

That is what we are waiting for, the call of the Bridegroom for His bride!

Look at the picture we have seen here in Genesis chapter 24 and back in Genesis chapter 22.

Abraham was a type of God the Father who was willing to give his only begotten son as a sacrifice just as God the Father did give His only begotten Son for a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

Isaac was a type of God the Son, of Jesus who was willing to lay down his life on the wood as a sacrifice, freely giving his life just as Jesus did willingly lay down His life on that wooden cross and was crucified on Calvary.

Eliezer was a type of God the Holy Spirit, who does not draw attention to himself but is sent out by the father to find a bride for the son just as the Holy Spirit is sent out by the Father not to draw attention to Himself, but to bring people to Jesus, the Bridegroom. He is gathering a bride for Christ!

Rebekah is a type of the Church, the bride of Christ, who has not seen the bridegroom but was willing to go on that journey based on the witness of the servant. And the same is true for us. We have never seen the Lord face-to-face and yet we too are willing to go and follow Him based on the witness of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. And like Rebekah, we too will meet up with our Bridegroom as He comes for us one day!

Now there is one person we have not talked about, one person we have missed in this study and that is Sarah.

Who does Sarah represent?

I believe Sarah represents or is a type of the nation of Israel who rejected their Messiah, rejected Jesus. Sarah died just as Israel is spiritually dead at this time.

You see, after the death and resurrection of Jesus, God placed the nation of Israel on hold for a time and is working through the Gentiles just as we see here with Rebekah. Sarah is not mentioned!

I am not stretching this by any means. Listen to what Paul said regarding Israel and the Gentiles in Romans 11:11-14, **“I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them.”**

Paul is telling us that God is using the Gentiles, He is using you and me, blessing us in hopes that it will stir the hearts of the Jewish people, it will make them jealous, and they will turn to the true and living God, they will receive Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Now that is not to say that Jews can't be saved today, they can, but the nation as a whole is on hold until the start of the Tribulation Period and then once again God will deal with Israel as the Church has been taken home in the Rapture!

I do realize that many think that God is done with Israel, He is not.

Listen to what Paul said in Romans 11:25-27 and there is no way you can think that God is done with them. Paul wrote, **“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.’”**

You see, Israel will be saved, their sins will be taken away and the only way that can happen is by them receiving Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and that will happen!

Let me close our study this evening with these words, *“This last verse speaks volumes. Notice Isaac brought Rebekah into his mother Sarah’s tent. Sarah represents Israel. Rebekah represents the Bride of Christ. Rebekah is not Sarah. But Rebekah is brought into the place that Sarah occupied previously. The Bride of Christ moves into that place where Israel once was. When Israel turned her back on the Lord and wouldn’t submit to the rule of the Lord, Israel was put away and the church moved into the tent where Sarah once was. The church is not Israel anymore than Rebekah was Sarah, but we move into the place that Israel once enjoyed because Israel is now temporarily put away. However, before you think this means God is through with the Jews, you must read on to see it’s not the end of the story for Israel, not by a long shot. . . . ”*