

Kings Norton Baptist Church

Sunday 5th November 2023 10 am

The bride

Welcome to all.

Opening Scripture and prayer

Hymn MP 41 At the Name of Jesus

Scripture Psalm (page 569)

Prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

Children's talk - John 4:34, 19:10, 7:18, Heb 12:1

Chorus 40 Ascribe greatness

Notices Fellowship lunch, Anthony Acc. BCM Annual Review,
CRE tickets,

Culture shock Missionary to the Human Race

Prayer and share time.

Reading Genesis 24:1-33 (page 23) Genesis 24:1-9, 10-21, 22-33

Hymn MP 522 O the deep deep love of Jesus

Sermon: Being Rebekah

Hymn 'O great God' (on the Service sheet)

Closing Prayer

[Sermon Index Database](#)

9am Breaking of Bread for members

Ps 133, MP 40 As we are gathered, Mt 18 where two or three

Prayer and Exordium

✚ We have here a love story, do you like to hear love stories?

So let's see: What happened? What all the detail represents, and what it means to you and I? Christians are in this love story!

What happened?

In Chapter 21 the promised son Isaac is born, then in the great chapter 22 we see the wonderful example of Abraham's faith and obedience when told to kill his only Son. Here also we see how clearly Isaac foreshadows Jesus. In Ch 23 we read of Sarah's death and here in Ch 24 Abraham finds a wife for his son.

✚ This is about life's big events; we are in what the registrar's office label as: births, deaths and marriages.

Abraham has in mind the future, he is **old** and just to make the point, we read he was **well advanced in years**, turn the page - and he is dead (Gen 25).

the LORD had blessed him in every way and promised that Isaac would be the heir, he would inherit all of Abraham's estate and manage the wealth, possessions and servants.

But more importantly Abraham had been told his seed, to him he presumed it to be Isaac, who will be the source of much blessing – to many people. Therefore extra care must be given to the choosing of a wife.

He is asking the question many aging parents have asked especially with a son in his 40's and as yet unmarried?

⇒ "It is time to find you a wife!"

Abraham turns to his servant in this, and the first question is "where to look?"

It is really important. The world over people are concerned, from which level of society? Is it to be the same ethnicity, same background, same village or clan?

Where would Abraham find the right wife for Isaac?

✚ The world has its ways: wait until you meet someone you 'click' with?

✚ Hundreds of thousands go online to the dating apps which promise to "Find the perfect match for you" or "Start your love story here"

"Find the perfect match for you" but who is that 'perfect match'? Is it someone like you - or unlike you? Is it looks? Is it money, position, intelligence? Is it similar background?, or someone who makes you laugh?

For a Christian: if my son is of the faith - then he needs someone 'of the faith'
That's most important!

Quite, so Abraham is quick to say to his chief servant v3. 'promise you won't go to the unbelievers, the **Canaanites**'. A nation stepped in sexually based idolatry, grossly immoral and perverted.

⇒ **Noah pronounced a curse on Canaan son of Ham**

These pagan rites and perversions were detestable to God. Their judgment was hanging over them because of their wickedness (see Deut 9.)

What a snare they would be - and how they would nullify the chosen Holy line!

In 26:34 we see how Esau marrying Canaanite (in particular Hittite) women was a great source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah. In fact in 28:8 we see how he married one more just to spite his father Isaac.

⇒ **"No this girl had to be of a different stock" x2**

4 No **go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac."**

But the servant has a question: What if the girl won't come back should Isaac go there?" NO, don't do that! 6 and 8b It's an abhorrent thought to Abraham **you can feel the heat off the paper**. I came from 'there' I will not go back 'there' nor will he - but you go 'there' and bring his bride out and back 'here'.

So the servant sets off with the Angel of the Lord going ahead. God's angels are spirits sent not only to protect the Lord's people, the heirs of promise, but also to guide us. Heb 1:14.

¹⁰ **Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and left, taking with him all kinds of good things from his master. He set out for Aram Naharaim and made his way to the town of Nahor.** Well that was a long way off perhaps 500 miles from Hebron - a journey of a month or two.

He had had plenty of time to think of what he was to do, - what he was to say. - When he arrived how would he know which one? *What would be the test?* - 14 **May it be that when I say to a girl, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too'—let her be the one**

Yes after this long journey the camels were dry, tired and looked pretty weary, - a good test. When he arrived it says v.11 **He made the camels kneel down near the well outside the town;**

Has your mind has already gone to John 4 where Jesus sits down tired from his journey in that foreign land of Samaria - and meets that woman. He asks her for a drink - she didn't want the trouble of drawing water, she made excuses.

We are told **it was towards evening, the time the women go out to draw water.** Women were at the well in John 4:6 towards evening. Not the middle of the day, the 2011 NIV does the interpretation for you, - and wrongly I believe for John uses Roman timing, - as we do - the synoptic gospels use Hebrew timing.

The servant has been praying and now we hear his prayer - 12..."**O LORD, God of my master Abraham, give me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham.** ¹³ **See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water.**

Pray is the first thing to do - and the last - and in the middle, we must ask God. Let him in his wisdom find the person of his choice. In everything pray.

in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Pr 3:6

Now the test - 14 **May it be that when I say to a girl, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too'—let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master."**

The prayer is immediately answered - 15 **Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder.**

Isa 65:24 **Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.**

⇒ **Saul didn't pray, David always did – do you pray? Pray in faith, pray expectantly!**

Who was it who came out leading the way but none other than the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor.!!

Wow – be amazed!

¹⁶ **The girl was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever lain with her.**

Her outward beauty reflected an inner beauty. That is not always the case!!

For some the more dubious the life and corrupted the character the more resort there is to paint things up and try and present something as beautiful when inside it's quite the opposite.

It's both character and purity that make someone beautiful. Her beauty is most seen when she's tested.

I wonder: did you "test" the character of your husband or wife before you married him/her?

- **Everyone is nice when they love you and everyone is friendly – and all is going well - that is no revealer of character.**

- Arrange for that person to be in a situation they find hard. Hardship reveals character, or to meet someone they do not like, will they still be loving? That is the test of true character.

Let's see what Rebekah was like: it says **she went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.** ¹⁷**The servant hurried to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water from your jar."** As Jesus said to the Samaritan woman - Here Rebekah's response is: ¹⁸ **"Drink, my lord," she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink.**

Well many of the girls might have helped out a thirsty stranger in a dry land by giving some water – that would have been basic hospitality.

Maybe they thought he should be offering them help - as *Moses did in Midian*.

But Rebekah **quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink.** She's not dragging her feet. Although she had her own flock to water, when a stranger appears and asks for a drink she gladly obliges. Yet she does not just do that. She sees beyond the servant and sees all those deadbeat camels.

¹⁹ **After she had given him a drink, she said, "I'll draw water for your camels too, until they have finished drinking." So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, ran back to the well to draw more water, and drew enough for all his camels.**

Many of the women would not have rushed to this chore of watering the flock. Going down repeatedly to the level of the water was labourious, the buckets were heavy and it was hard work. ¹⁶ **she went down to the spring** down and up, down and up again, and again, and again.

A thirsty camel can drink 20 gallons in one go. How many camels were there?? (10) It must have taken half the evening to fetch enough water for all of them.

✚ **No chance to enter in to all the chit chat that was going on, No time to catch up with all the latest news and gossip.**

She would be still there when all the others had headed off home. It would have been a sacrifice of time – but NO it never is – it is an investment for heaven, as every act we do for Him is.

²¹ **Without saying a word, the man watched her closely to learn whether or not the LORD had made his journey successful.**

He was – as we should be - looking for God's hand in this. The servant had plenty of time to observe, he watched the way she worked, a great revealer of her attitude and character – **your attitude is everything - and says everything.**

How opposite of Rebekah most are – How rare for the needs of others to be even noticed, never-lone help given, never-lone time and effort expended in the service of another. Now it's self-absorption, luxury, and laziness that prevail.

²² **When the camels had finished drinking,** the servant could see clearly the Lord's hand in it. He gives Rebekah a gold nose ring and two bracelets. Then he bowed down in worship for God's gracious and sovereign leading.

What does Rebekah do? the **girl ran and told her mother's household about these things.** The Lord had touched her – as he touched the woman at the well in John 4 who also rushed off to tell of all that Jesus had said.

What does it represent?

Why all this detail? Here's the longest chapter / passage in Genesis – what does the Lord want us to see here!

That the Lord is sovereign, He is in control of all everything. "Of all the watering holes in the world you walk into this one, of all the women in the world you meet this one. (one can almost hear Frank Sinatra here!)

Journey

There is also the sense of distance with this long journey to that far off country. Is it not a picture of the distance between Heaven and earth?

Did not the guiding angel say as we read of John in Revelation, "**Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.**" ^{Re 21:9}

Is not Isaac the forerunner of Christ whose bride is to be drawn out of this world - As we are.

And who does the father send to find a bride for his son? The servant – the unnamed servant. The self-effacing Holy Spirit who takes no glory for himself but searches out those chosen by the father for His Son.

The Spirit works unseen - as the wind blows so we cannot tell - to where – and in whom He is at work – They are those Sovereignly chosen.

The prayer is answered even before he finishes praying. For the Spirit of Jesus, whose prayer, whose intercession, is always heard on high. (Romans 8)

With Isaac the anti-type of Christ, the bride Rebekah represents the church, the people of God sought out and set apart for Him, for his Glory and splendour.

The Holy Spirit is searching out those who will leave their father and mother and follow. Those who hear the Lord's voice recognise His call and follow. ... The Spirit of Jesus is still doing so. This long chapter = the long Gospel Age?? The servant brings out the golden nose ring and two golden bracelets assuring her that she now belongs to another – but there's more v53 **Then the servant brought out gold and silver jewellery and articles of clothing and gave them to Rebekah.**” So the Spirit applies the merits of Christ's finished work to the elect.

She has been confirmed as the one chosen through this abundant and particular gift. God's abundance spills over to her relatives, not saving Grace they are not to be the bride, but the blessing generously associated to those close to the redeemed, as believer's families are. (see 1 Cor 7 for more on that).

This grace to Rebekah is evident, all around can see it.

⁵⁰ **Laban and Bethuel answered, "This is from the LORD; we can say nothing to you one way or the other. Here is Rebekah; take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has directed."**

Rebekah when she sees the Lord's hand submits to His leading and sovereign will. She responds to grace with the words **"I will"** - It's the only way possible.

⇒ **She has heard the call - The irrevocable call that cannot be taken back.**

⁵⁸ **they called Rebekah, "Will you go with this man?" "I will go," she said.**

When the Lord calls things happen. A Christian friend said at the meeting he was converted the Lord's Spirit just seemed to make him stand up.

She is willing to get up and leaves straight away! – This is the only way – like the fishermen who left their nets and everything when Jesus called **"come follow me"** - *As every true disciple must !*

⇒ **Have you? have you said the "I will" and then done it? The Gospel Call**

How do you fit into this? You are Rebekah!

If you are a true believer you are Rebekah. When we hear God's voice we must, like Rebecca, get up and come straight away leaving all, country, family, and follow Christ who calls us by his Spirit. - no looking back, no return.

Are you like Rebekah?

She was pure, a virgin V16 Paul concerned for God's honour amongst His people said: **I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband , to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.** 2Co 11:2

- **We as the Christians need Rebekah's purity. A pure heart is both pure and uncorrupted – it is single minded. Eyes for one only, love for one only.**

The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 1Ti 1:5

Are you like Rebekah?

- **We as the Christians need Rebekah's beauty, V16**

Peter reminds us where true beauty lies: the beauty of **your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.** 1 Pet 3:4. We are made beautiful, adorned by the fruit of the Spirit.

Rebekah was well qualified to be the master's wife: pure, humble, industrious, courteous with a servant heart quick to do good. She will be joined to Isaac, as we are to Christ, to love and serve him only.

Return journey

⇒ **Has your love for Him grown? Or grown cold?– It must grow.**

Imagine that long slow journey back? The Servant accompanies the bride betrothed to the masters Son. This journey home is called the Christian life.

We are being taken from that far country where we once were, we are being prepared ready for the close country of heaven our eternal home.

On the way the servant talks to Rebekah of Isaac the Son. She is bonded in her heart to him and the more she hears of Him the more her love grows.

- **So the Spirit teaches us of the Son that our love for him too may grow**

This is Spirit's work, to take the things of the Son and make them know to us - Instilling a desire for His holiness, that set apartness for the one we have been promised to.

Note the Servant will never abandon her on the way but make sure she arrives safely. He assures her safe arrival before Isaac. She will be there.

- **As the servant brings her home - so the Spirit will - after our long and difficult journey in this life bring us safely home and unite us with Christ.**

V67 - Then that great day arrives. She meets the son, her husband, face to face.. the veil shows her perfection now complete. Rebekah goes in to be Isaac's wife

⇒ **The happy glorious ending – or should I say beginning!**

What a picture of heaven that is. That great day is the marriage feast in heaven **Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.** Re 19:7

END