

Genesis 23-24



One of the classes that we had to study in Seminary was called Types and Shadows. We saw in the Old Testament, types which would be fulfilled in the New Testament. When you begin to study, in the Old Testament, about the tabernacle, different sacrifices, and the various feast days; you will find that they were all types of things to come in the New Testament. The Passover Feast was the foreshadowing of the death of Jesus Christ and so it was significant that He died on the day of the Passover. The Feast of Pentecost foreshadowed the birth of the "church," and so, the pouring out of the Spirit and the first fruits of the harvest among the gentiles, were fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost.

In the History of Abraham, we have a type of God, the Father, and his son Isaac as a type of Jesus Christ. Sarah, the wife of Abraham would be a type of Israel, who was the wife of God. God called Israel to be His bride and espoused her to Himself. God spoke of Israel as His wife and her turning away from Him as an adulteress wife.

So, in the story of Abraham, being called upon by God to take his son, his only son Isaac, and offer him for a sacrifice on a mountain that God would show him; you have a foreshadowing of the event that would take place some two thousand years later on the same mount Moriah in Jerusalem. God gave His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for our sins.

It is significant in the story that once Isaac was offered, God provided the substitute. Abraham prophesied, "...God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering" and "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen."

We do not read of Isaac again until we get to the 24th chapter of Genesis and we do not see Isaac, in the picture again, until the "bride" for Isaac has been brought from a far land and he rises up to meet the bride. Once Jesus died and was our sacrifice, He was received up into heaven and does not appear on the scene again until the Holy Spirit, of which the servant of Abraham is a type, brings his "bride" to Him and He rises up to meet His "bride."

As we look at chapters 22, 23, and 24 in sequence, we find that chapter 22 tells of the sacrifice of Isaac; chapter 23 tells of the death of Sarah; and in chapter 24, we find the gathering of a bride for the son by the servant, Eliezer.

Upon the death of Jesus Christ and the rejection of Him as the Messiah by the Jews, Israel, the wife of God, is set aside. And so we read that Sarah died. The Holy Spirit is dispatched to get a bride for the son, not from the land where they were dwelling; but, to go back to the nation of Abraham and to his family to get the bride for his son. As we begin chapter 23, we read of the death of Sarah or the setting aside of the nation of Israel in order that God may get from among the gentiles, a "bride" for His Son.

"And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old; these were the years of the life of Sarah." (Gen.23:1). If Sarah was 127 years old when she died, that means that Isaac was 37 years old at this time. This was immediately after the story of the sacrifice of Isaac. You can put out of your mind the pictures in your Sunday school papers, where you see Abraham leading a small boy up a mountain and the boy is unaware that his father is going to offer him as a sacrifice. The very next event, in the scripture, is the death of Sarah and Isaac is 37 years old. We don't know how much time elapsed between chapters 22 and 23, but, Isaac could have been 33 years old at the time he was offered for sacrifice. To fill the type of Christ, who was 32 or 33, when He was sacrificed; it would be fitting for Isaac to be about that age.

"And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan; and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her." (Gen.23:2)

It would seem that Abraham was probably not there when Sarah died, because it said, "...Abraham came to mourn for Sarah." He could have been tending flocks further south in the Negev, where he spent a

lot of time, but he came back up to Hebron when he heard of Sarah's death and mourned and wept for her. It could indicate that Sarah's death was quite sudden and Abraham might have wept because he wasn't there when she died. If Sarah had a prolonged illness, Abraham would have certainly been at her side.

"And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, I am a stranger and a sojourner with you; give me a possession of a burying place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight. And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him, Hear us, my lord; thou art a mighty prince among us..." literally means, "you are as a prince of God among us." (Gen.23:3-6a). Abraham was highly respected by the people of the land. Of course, at the time when the confederacy of kings had invaded the land and sacked the cities and taken many hostages, Abraham led the group that freed the hostages and defeated these kings.

In the next few verses, we get a small view of the oriental customs that help form their culture. As Abraham goes through the purchase of the property, they do a lot of bowing and talking about the price of the property. There were certain niceties that took place and the words that were said were not necessarily genuine.

"...In the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead." (Gen.23:6b). And so they offered Abraham his choice of burial places. Abraham wanted to buy a burial place of his own to say we are rooted in this land. He never considered taking Sarah back to Babylon for burial.

"And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar." (Gen.23:7-8). Abraham is asking the sons of Heth to be a mediator between him and Ephron the son of Zohar.

"That he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me for a possession of a burying place amongst you. And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying, Nay, my lord, hear me; the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee; bury thy dead." (Gen.23:9-11). This was the correct thing to do, culturally speaking.

"And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land, And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee, hear me; I will give thee money for the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there. And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, My lord, hearken unto me; the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead." (Gen.23:12-15). It was probably a highly inflated price and he was expecting Abraham to dicker for the land. Usually they would ask double what something was worth. If you go to Israel today they still go through this process of dickering and so, you should never pay the first price asked; for, they will take about fifty percent of the asking price. It's like a game to them to dicker for the price. Ephron was probably waiting for Abraham to make a counter offer.

"And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant. And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field that were in all the borders round about, were made sure." (Gen.23:16-17). So, the cave, the field, the trees and all within the borders were deeded to Abraham.

"Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city. And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan." (Gen.23:18-19). At the present day you can go to Hebron to the place of the cave of Machpelah. You are not allowed to go down into the cave, but you can go to the shrine that is built above it. At this point there is a supposed contradiction in scripture.

In the New Testament when Stephen, in the Book of Acts prior to his stoning, is rehearsing the history of the people, he makes mention of Abraham purchasing a cave. The patriarchs were brought back for burial in the cave that Abraham bought in Shechem.

Notice in Acts, chapter 7, where it says, "So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, And were carried over into Shechem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Shechem." (Acts 7:15-16).

We don't know the whole story, but we do know that later on Jacob purchased a cave in Shechem. When Jacob was dying in Egypt, he had Joseph, his son, take an oath that he would be carried back to be buried in the cave at Shechem.

One possible solution: Abraham lived many years after the death of Sarah and married a woman named Keturah and had children by her. It is possible that after he married again that he went to the area of Shechem and bought a field for his wife and her family, leaving the Machpelah cave for himself and Isaac and those who were later buried at Machpelah.

It is also possible that the children of Keturah, later on, sold the field in Shechem and that even still later, Jacob, in Shechem, knowing that Abraham had once purchased that field repurchased the field for the family that they might have a burial place.

There are many plausible explanations to this seeming contradiction in scripture. You can't just jump on Acts and say Stephen didn't know his history and that here is a contradiction of scripture.

There are those who are always looking to point out mistakes in scripture and say, "You can't trust the Bible, it contradicts itself." We don't have all the information and as the scripture says, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." (John 21:25).

So Abraham buried Sarah, his wife. "And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a burying place by the sons of Heth." (Gen.23:20).

And now Sarah is set aside; as Israel was set aside after the crucifixion of Jesus. "And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things." (Gen.24:1). There is approximately three years between chapter 23 and chapter 24. Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah.

"And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh." (Gen.24:2). This oldest servant was probably Eliezer. He was named for us in chapter 15, when God promised that He would be to Abraham his exceeding great reward and bring to him great riches. Abraham told God that all of his wealth was of no value because he had no heir but his servant Eliezer, who was born in his house. The LORD gave him the promise that Eliezer would not be his heir, but he would have a son.

The name Eliezer, in Hebrew, means "God my help" and is a type of the Holy Spirit who goes to get a bride for his master's son. His job was to woo and to win the bride and bring her back that the master's son might marry her.

As a type of the Holy Spirit, his name is significant. Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the Comforter, which in Greek is "Paracletes" and it means literally, one who comes along side to help. Eliezer is not named in chapter 24, and I believe that it is a deliberate omission by the Holy Spirit, who inspired the text.

Jesus said, speaking of the Holy Spirit, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." (John 15:26). The witness and work of the Holy Spirit, in the world today, is not to magnify himself, but to magnify Jesus Christ. I wonder how the Holy Spirit feels when people seek to magnify him, when his duty is to magnify Jesus. So important is his magnifying the name of Jesus that even though he inspired the text, he

leaves out the name in chapter 24 of the oldest servant.

Abraham asks his servant to put his hand under his thigh and take an oath. "And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac." (Gen.24:3-4).

"And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land; must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?" (Gen.24:5).

The servant realized that what Abraham was asking of him was not an easy task. He has to go back to Mesopotamia, which is about five hundred miles away. There he has to coax a young girl to get on a camel and ride five hundred miles across a desert area to meet and to marry a man she has never seen before. All she knows of him is what the servant has told her. She'll never see her parents or her home again. The servant could see the difficulty of talking a pretty young girl into such an adventure. He really didn't have much hope for the success of the trip and so he asks if he fails in the venture, should he take Isaac back to the land of Mesopotamia.

"And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again." (Gen.24:6). Abraham realizes if Isaac goes to Mesopotamia, he might be talked into staying there after the marriage and then the purposes of God would be thwarted. Isaac never did leave the land of promise.

Abraham is very confident that the LORD will be with the servant in selecting a bride for Isaac and so he says, "The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; He shall send His angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence." (Gen.24:7).

"And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath; only bring not my son thither again. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter. And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand; and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor." (Gen.24:8-10). Nahor was the brother of Abraham.

"And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water. And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water." (Gen.24:11-13). The evening was the time when they went out to draw water from the well. The camels are kneeling and the servant sees the girls coming out from the city for water and so he prays that the LORD would give him success.

"And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also; let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master." (Gen.24:14). The servant sets up a condition, a sort of fleece, that the girl he asks for a drink will also give his camels water.

The scripture speaks, in the New Testament, concerning the church of Jesus Christ; that, we have been chosen in Christ before the foundations of the world. The servant realized that the bride for Isaac was already appointed by God. God had already appointed Rebekah to be the bride. Even as God has already chosen the "bride" for Christ. Those who have received Jesus as Lord and Savior are a chosen generation. Chosen before the foundations of the world that we should bring forth glory and praise unto God as the bride of His Son, Jesus Christ.

So, the servant prays, let me know the one you have appointed LORD; let this be the condition. "And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to

Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder." (Gen.24:15). While he was still praying, Rebekah came out to draw water.

"And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her; and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up." (Gen.24:16). The scripture does not talk about many damsels as being fair to look at; but, in Psalms 45, a prophetic psalm, concerning the "bride" of Christ, it says, "So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty..." The LORD looks upon you and He sees you as very beautiful. His "bride." Sometimes we don't feel very beautiful and our attitudes are ugly, but it's neat to know that the LORD sees us as being beautiful.

A lot of the wells in Israel have steps leading down to a large hole and then at the bottom you would let the pitcher down into the well. This was evidently the case here in the city where Nahor lived. If you have been to the Holy Land and have visited Megiddo, you would see this type of well. Now, the significance of this, in our story, is when Rebekah volunteered to draw water for his camels she would have to go down these stairs each time her pitcher was empty. Camels can drink between twenty to fifty gallons of water each and to go up and down these stairs filling the trough for ten thirsty camels until they were finished drinking would be a very tiring thing for a young woman. So, when the servant had made this stipulation, he had put a pretty good sign, an indication, for which one God had chosen to be the bride.

"And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher, and she said, Drink, my lord; and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels." (Gen.24:17-20).

"And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not." (Gen.24:21). By this time, watching her, the servant must have marveled at this beautiful young girl and her energy. She was pleasant and gracious. Who could she be? Was this the One that God has chosen for Isaac? He didn't speak until she had finished watering all the camels.

"And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight..." (it was actually a nose ring) "... and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold." (Gen.24:22). These were heavy pieces of jewelry, but it was a sign of prosperity and wealth in those days.

"And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee; is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?" (Gen.24:23). Remember! There were two conditions. Abraham said, "...go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac." Now here is this beautiful girl, graciously giving water to him and all the camels and can you imagine his pleasure at her reply?

"And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor." (Gen.24:24). The name Nahor is music to the servant's ear. Abraham's brother, Nahor, and this beautiful young girl is his granddaughter. Wow!

Isaac wasn't born until Abraham was a hundred years old, which means that Isaac and Rebekah were close in age because he was born late in the life of his parents. Rebekah was a second cousin to Isaac.

"She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in." (Gen.24:25). Rebekah tells the servant that they have room for him and his camels.

"And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD." (Gen.24:26). The man had prayed that the LORD would make his journey prosperous. The task, that he had thought so difficult, was beginning to look as though it might work out. It was all too much for him to take in and being excited, he bowed and worshipped God.

"And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my

master of his mercy and his truth; I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren." (Gen.24:27). Notice that being on the way, the LORD led him. One of the most important steps in being led of the LORD is to get moving. It's hard to guide a stationary object. If you're just sitting around, it's hard to get the leading of the LORD. God leads us as we're moving. We have to step out in faith and as we step out in faith, then the LORD is able to lead us.

If you're sitting waiting for the LORD to show you his leading, you will probably just sit the rest of your life. You'll probably never get any direction. Stand up! Start walking! The LORD will start leading you as you're going. To be led of the LORD, we must step out in faith.

"And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother's house these things." (Gen.24:28). There is an indication, in the text, that Bethuel was probably an invalid. Her brother Laban takes an active role in the greeting of the guests and the arrangements to be made for their stay. Bethuel seems to have a very passive role and it could be that he was pretty much in an invalid state at this point.

She ran home and told those of her mother's house, not her father's house. It could be that Bethuel had concubines, which was very common in those days. The children were actually closer to their mother than to their father; because, the father could have children from several wives. There would be a tendency for the family unit to be centered around the mother of the children rather than around the father.

"And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban; and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well." (Gen.24:29). Later on, we encounter Laban again when Jacob flees from the wrath of Esau and goes to his uncle Laban in Mesopotamia.

"And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well." (Gen.24:30). We learn from Laban's dealings with Jacob that he was a greedy person. Having this characteristic, it could be when he saw all the gold jewelry that Rebekah was wearing, he thought this man must have great wealth; and so, he came running out to meet him at the well.

"And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels, And the man came into the house; and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him." (Gen.24:31-32). It was the custom to provide water for the guests to wash their feet. They wore sandal type footwear and the roads were dusty and dirty; besides, washing your feet, after a long journey, would be very relaxing. So, Laban provided food for the camels and bedded them down for the night and then provided water and food for his guest and the men that were with him.

"And there was set meat before him to eat; but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on." (Gen.24:33). Everyone was excited at this moment. This man was here on an errand. They were all waiting for him to speak.

Abraham's name had already been mentioned, so, they were willing to forgo their meal until they heard the reason for the errand. "And he said, I am Abraham's servant, And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great; and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses. And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old; and unto him hath he given all that he hath." (Gen.24:34-36).

Seeing the picture of Eliezer as the Holy Spirit, he is now wooing the bride for the son as he testifies of the glory of his master's kingdom. His master has a son and all that he possesses, he has given to his son. We begin to hear the witness of the Holy Spirit with the glories of God's Kingdom: the beauty, the glory, and the riches of the Kingdom of God and God has a Son, whom He has appointed "heir" of all things. The Spirit is here to woo us to Jesus Christ to be the bride of Christ that we may be joint heirs with him of the wealth of the Kingdom of God. So you see the picture begin to come together here as the servant describes the wealth

and glory of his master's kingdom. I would imagine that he describes the son in glowing terms and Rebekah is listening, I'm sure. She probably figures, at this point, there is something very interesting going on.

"And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell; But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son. And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me, And he said unto me, The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house; Then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee one, thou shalt be clear from my oath." (Gen.24:37-41). The servant rehearses the experience with Abraham and his commission to get the bride.

"And I came this day unto the well, and said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go; Behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink; And she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels; let the same be the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my master's son. And before I had done speaking in mine heart..." (Gen.24:42-45a). This is interesting, he was speaking in his heart. We think we always have to articulate our prayers, but that's not so. God can hear the prayer of your heart. He was just saying a prayer in his heart that God would point out the woman who was to be Isaac's bride.

"And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water; and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee. And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also; so I drank, and she made the camels drink also. And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him; and I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands. And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had let me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son." (Gen.24:45-48).

"And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left." (Gen.24:49) This is it, will you let her go? Tell me now or I must go somewhere else.

"Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the LORD; we cannot speak unto thee bad or good." (Gen.24:50). They said, obviously the thing is from the LORD. We can not object to it.

"Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken. And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth." (Gen.24:51-52).

Abraham's faith in God has certainly influenced his household. The servant is following the example of Abraham by worshipping God on these different occasions. "And 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." (Gen.24:53). Even as we, who are committed to Jesus Christ to be His "bride," responded to that wooing of the Holy Spirit and upon consenting, we began to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We received those gifts of God and the gift of the Spirit, himself, which becomes the "earnest" of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. The servant brings in this magnificent jewelry and clothing and says, here's a sample of the wealth of my master as the gifts of the Spirit are just a foretaste of the glory that awaits us when we arrive in the heavenly kingdom. We have a down payment of the glory to come and with Peter we can say, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (I Peter 1:8).

"And 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. And her brother and her mother said, Let the

damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go." (Gen.24:54-55). Delay her going. They're a type of the world that is always seeking to cause you to delay your commitment to Jesus Christ.

Everybody wants to be saved someday. They all want to die the death of the righteous. No one wants to die the death of a heathen or sinner. I want to be righteous, but later. I want to live a little first. Oh, what a wrong statement that is. You're dead in your trespasses and sins and what you are really saying is that you want to stay dead a little longer. You don't know what living is until you live in Christ. Paul said, "For to me to live is Christ..." (Phil.1:21). "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col.3:4). John said, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (I John 5:12). But wait, not yet, delay!

"and he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master. And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go." (Gen.24:56-58). The Spirit asks you the big question. Will you commit your life to Jesus Christ? Will you begin the journey towards Him. That journey that will, one day, lead us into His presence and the glory of His kingdom. Will you consent? Will you go? It always comes to the personal application. They asked Rebekah, personally, if she would go and she said, "I will go."

"And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them." (Gen.24:59-60). So they sent Rebekah away with the blessing that she would be the mother of many children.

"And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man; and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way." (Gen.24:61). Rebekah had a nurse and she had maids. That tells us the family was well-to-do and she could have stayed there and lived in comfort; but, she gets on a camel (an awkward uncomfortable beast) to ride some 500 miles that she might meet the man she is to marry and become with him the heir of the kingdom. Riding a camel is a trial and the only way you can ride is to relax and move with it.

We begin our journey through life the same way. We have many trials. Peter says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." (I Peter 4:12). We are encouraged to endure hardness as a good soldier; but, always in trials, we are pointed ahead to the rewards that lie ahead of us. We are pointed to Jesus, as our example, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross and says to us, "Take up your cross."

Paul said, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Romans 8:18). In Corinthians, Paul says, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (II Cor.4:17). So the LORD points us ahead and I'm sure that as they were riding along and Rebekah began to get weary that Eliezer rode along side and told her of Isaac and his gentle nature and the wealth and glory of his master; so that Rebekah would be encouraged and strengthened. Even so the Spirit watches over us carefully and when he sees us getting discouraged he comes and relates the glories of the heavenly kingdom that await when we arrive.

It is interesting that when Paul was going through the severest trial of his life that the LORD came to him and ministered and encouraged him. The LORD told him that he would bear witness of Him at Rome, just as he had in Jerusalem. Every trial that Rebekah was going through was bringing her closer to her destination. God uses the trials and testings in our lives for the purpose of bringing us closer to that desired destination when one day, we will no longer see through a dark glass but we will see Him face to face.

So in Rebekah's heart was the anticipation of the meeting of this man she was to marry. She hadn't seen him, but the things that the servant told her were glorious. Already she was in love with Isaac from the descriptions that the servant had given her, even as we are already in love with Jesus from the descriptions of

the Holy Spirit, "...Whom having not seen, ye love." And so you don't curse the trials, but you rejoice and count it all joy; because, these are the instruments that are drawing us close to Jesus. God's purpose in every testing and every trial is to force us closer to Jesus. God doesn't want me to become independent of Him and so He will send a trial to force me closer to Him.

"And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the south country. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide; and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming." (Gen.24:62-63). Isaac was a man of deep spirit. He was not a very prominent person, but he was a meditative type.

"And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel." (Gen.24:64). It literally means she fell off her camel.

"For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master; therefore she took a veil, and covered herself." (Gen.24:65).

Walking! Come on Isaac, show a little emotion. He saw the ten camels and knew it was the servant returning. There were many more people then had started out; so, he must of known it was a successful journey, but still he walked.

I get impatient with Jesus. I wish that the LORD would come quickly. He seems to be just walking and I get impatient for Him to come. I want to get on with it! I want to meet my LORD! I want to get on with the kingdom! But, he walks. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until He receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." (James 5:7-8). So it seems as though the Lord is walking to meet us, when I wish He were running.

"And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And 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." (Gen.24:66-67). And Isaac loved Rebekah, even as Jesus loves you. Sarah has been dead for three years. It indicates here that Isaac might have been mourning all that time and now is comforted by Rebekah's love.