

SECURING A WIFE FOR ISAAC

Genesis 24:21-67

It is impossible to dwell in exhaustive detail on all the interesting and beautiful touches of this complete narrative. However, we cannot fail to notice the courtesy of Abraham's servant. By his example we are taught that courtesy counts for much in the Lord's work. A good cause may be and often is spoiled by lack of consideration and courtesy.

Rebekah emptied the pitcher of the water which she had drawn for herself in order to give it to the camels. Thus it is that the redeemed give up to the people of the world what they might have used for themselves. Rebekah was quick and eager to supply the need of all the camels.

Having asked that she would give the camels water to drink as an indication that she was the woman the servant was seeking, he immediately began to deal with her. It already seemed evident that his journey was successful, but humanly speaking much still depended upon the young woman's decision. The servant realized that the prosperity of the journey was in the hands of God.

The wisdom of the servant was evident when he brought out what would be known to the young girl as bridal gifts, and offered them to her before approaching the subject of his errand, or mentioning the person of his master or his master's son. She accepted the gifts which Abraham had sent for her. By placing the bracelets on Rebekah's hands the servant claimed her services for his master.

The servant asked Rebekah, "Whose daughter art thou?" He must have felt that he knew the answer, but he had to make sure for he was bound by his master's order to a daughter of Nahor. The disclosure of her parentage by Rebekah proved that she was the very one whom the servant had been sent to seek. Rebekah assured him that they had plenty of feed for his camels. Seemingly, she had an exceptional love for animals. The young girl took the servant to the home where she lived. The servant's reaction was right and commendable. Before anything else he gave the glory to God. He rightly expressed his praise in words. He attributed the success of his mission to the kindness, goodness and guidance of God. Man depends for his life upon God's mercy and truth. Mercy is the expression of God's grace to the undeserving sinner. Truth is God's faithfulness to His pledged word. What God promises He is always able to perform.

Rebekah was an eager witness as well as an eager helper. She did the right thing by going to her mother's house and telling the news in her own home. Her brother, Laban, responded graciously to the news. He could see that his sister's appearance had changed for the better. He saw the ring and the bracelets and knew that she had accepted them as gifts. He understood that these gifts signified the devotion of her life. From her lips he heard the explanation of what had taken place. Rebekah passed on to her brother what had been said to her. In the same way, it is the duty and privilege of one who has been transformed by Christ to convey the gospel message to others.

Laban went out to meet the man who was standing by his camels at the well. He invited him to enter the house. They began to talk about the bridal gifts and wanted to know all about them. Then he began to tell. The first thing he mentioned in his message was the name of his master, which

was Abraham. The fact that he was his master's servant was the whole basic reason for his journey and his message. He did not say anything about himself, but spoke of the blessing, greatness and possessions of his master. Having been sent to get a bride for his master's son, he naturally told how great his master was. He indicated that the Lord had blessed Abraham greatly. He had given him personal justification, victory in the trials of faith, a son and an heir after years of waiting, great material riches, and many great and precious promises for himself and his family for the future. Eight things which God had given Abraham are named, arranged in four pairs.

The servant was loud in his praise of his master. He mentioned Sarah as one whose name should be known to the family of Nahor. He wanted them to understand that Isaac was not the son of a concubine, but rather of Abraham's wife, Sarah. The servant told quite simply the sign for which he had asked, and the resultant experience which he had had. He firmly believed that the realization of God's appointing hand would make an impression and have a great effect upon Laban and Rebekah. Rebekah was convinced that God's hand was upon her and she was ready to go. The members of her family were so deeply convinced that it was the will of God for her to go that they were ready to give up one who was dear and precious to them. Again the servant worshipped the Lord. He had done so when his prayer was answered, and he did so again when the decision was made in favor of his master.

When the decision had been made openly, additional gifts were given to Rebekah for purposes of adornment. They consisted of jewels of silver, jewels of gold and raiment.

After he had discharged his mission, the servant spent the night at rest before his departure for home. His love and loyalty continued to place his master's interest above everything else. He had nothing to do but to look after his master's business, so he wanted to take care of that with the least possible delay. He was never completely happy when absent from him. He wanted to see his master and give an account of his mission. Rebekah's decision was to go at once, also. By accepting the servant's gifts she had shown that she consented to go. By her simple decision she showed that her interest in the bridegroom was paramount. She was ready to put his call first and to answer it immediately, leaving her mother's house with scarcely an opportunity to say goodbye. She was ready to leave the protection of her home and go with a stranger on a long journey to be the bride of a man whom she had never seen. Her decision was influenced by the clear evidence of the call of God and the gifts which had been sent to her. From what the servant told Rebekah of the glory of Abraham, she was convinced that he was a wonderful person, and that his son was wonderful also.

In blessing Rebekah her family expressed the hope that her new life would be exceedingly fruitful and that she would have millions of descendants. They were convinced that God had a purpose of exceptional blessing for Rebekah. The wishes of Rebekah's family for her blessing were in line with the will of God. She became an ancestress of Christ and a channel of the blessings of Abraham to us.

As he surveyed the horizon Isaac saw the camels coming. When Rebekah saw Isaac, "she lighted off the camel" and covered herself with a veil.

In the last four verses of this chapter Rebekah ceases to be the central figure. Instead, Isaac comes to the front. The climax is seen in the comforting of Isaac.

This unnamed servant of Abraham exemplifies what should characterize every true servant of God.

1. He did not run before he was sent; he was commissioned (verses 1-9).
2. He recognized his absolute dependence upon God; he was prayerful (verses 10-14).
3. He sought definite guidance and obtained it (verses 15-21).
4. His service was blended with worship (verses 22-28).
5. His master's interests were his one concern (verses 29-53).
6. His message was an urgent one and admitted of no delay (verses 54-60).
7. His task was not completed until he led to the son of his master the one whose heart he had won (verses 61-67).