

REBEKAH AT THE WELL

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Lesson: Genesis 24

The Lord had promised Abraham that his descendants would be as many as the stars in the sky and that they would inherit the land of Canaan. And Abraham and his wife, Sarah, did have a son even though they were old. Now after this son, Isaac, was grown up, his mother Sarah died. Abraham had also grown very old, and he knew that the time would soon come when he would be taken up into heaven. Abraham wanted his son Isaac to marry and raise a family so that the Lord's promise might be fulfilled. But Abraham did not want Isaac to marry one of the daughters of the Canaanites. He wanted him to marry a woman whom the Lord Himself would pick out, who would love the Lord as Abraham and Isaac loved the Lord, and who would help Isaac to raise their children in the knowledge of the Lord's commandments, so that the Lord might keep His promise for them. So Abraham called his steward, the head of his household, a very trusted servant, named Eliezer. He told Eliezer to go back to Haran, to the original country of his people, to find a wife for Isaac. He asked Eliezer to promise not to bring Isaac a woman of the Canaanites.

Now Eliezer was afraid that he would not be able to find a woman who would be willing to come down into the land of Canaan to marry Isaac. But Abraham told him that the Lord would provide. Eliezer was to go and take presents to give to the woman that the Lord would tell him about. Eliezer made up a caravan of ten camels loaded with precious gifts, as well as food for the other servants of Abraham that would go with him on this journey.

So Eliezer set out to find a wife for Isaac. But he was troubled in his spirit for he did not know how the Lord could reveal the right woman for him to bring back for Isaac. And so, as Eliezer neared Haran, he prayed to the Lord to show him the right person. He came to the edge of the city just at sunset, and there was a well of water, which served all the people of the city. In the evening the maidens of the city would come down to draw water for the night and for the next morning. Here Eliezer dismounted from his camel and prayed to the Lord, saying; "Oh Lord God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day and show kindness to my master Abraham. Behold I stand here by the well of water and the daughters...of the city are coming out to draw water. Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,' and she shall say 'Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink'—let her be the one whom You have appointed for Your servant, Isaac." (Genesis 24:13-14)

And as Eliezer was finishing his prayer, behold a beautiful maiden, named Rebekah, came down to the well, and she had a pitcher on her shoulder. And when she had drawn it full of water, Eliezer spoke to her and said, "Please let me drink a little water from your pitcher." She answered, "Drink, my lord," and she let her pitcher down and tilted it to one side so that he could lean over and drink from it. When Eliezer had had enough, she said, "I will draw water for your camels also." And she hurried and emptied her pitcher into the drinking trough for the camels and went again to the well and drew more water until all of his camels had water to drink. Then Eliezer knew that the Lord had shown him the woman who was to be Isaac's wife. He came to her and told her all the things that had happened and asked whose daughter she was. She answered that she was the daughter of Bethuel, and she invited Eliezer to stay with them at her father's home. So he gave her presents of bracelets and other jewelry; and she led him with all of the other servants to her home.

Laban, her brother, hurried out to meet Eliezer, and brought him into his home. Eliezer ungirded his camels, and gave them straw and food, but before he would eat, he told the master of the house his errand. He told how the Lord had blessed Abraham in the distant land and given him great wealth and power. Now, as Abraham grew old, he wanted his son Isaac to marry. He told also how the Lord had led him to Haran to find Rebekah at the well. And the family marveled at his words. Then Laban and Bethuel answered Eliezer and said, "The thing comes from the Lord.... Here is Rebekah before you; take her and go, and let her be your master's son's wife, as the Lord has spoken." And Eliezer brought out gifts for the household, precious stones, jewels, gold and silver, and clothing, and offered them to Rebekah and to her brother and to her mother.

Now Rebekah's family wanted her to stay with them for a little while longer, for about ten days, but Eliezer was anxious to return with Isaac's wife. So they called Rebekah and asked her what she wanted to do, and she said, "I will go." So the family sent her with their blessings to go into the land of Canaan. Rebekah took her maid, her nurse and her maids-in-waiting, and they all mounted their camels and journeyed from Haran back to Canaan. As they drew near, Isaac, who had been waiting anxiously for Eliezer's return, was walking in the fields. Rebekah spied him and asked who he was. When she was told it was Isaac, she covered herself with her veil, got down from her camel, and went to meet him. And Isaac took Rebekah to his mother's tent, and he loved her, and married her, and he was comforted after his mother's death.

Now this story illustrates many wonderful things. It shows the Lord's love and care for those who trust in Him and obey His teachings. It shows how the Lord cared for Abraham throughout his life and answered his deepest prayer, that his son Isaac might find a wife among his own people. And, through Isaac and Rebekah's marriage, the Lord's promise to Abraham that his descendants should inhabit all the land of Canaan and make up the Lord's church was

fulfilled. This story also shows how the Lord answers the prayers of those who trust in Him. Eliezer was obedient to Abraham and trusted in the Lord. He went on a long journey of about 500 miles to find a wife for his master's son. His prayer that the Lord might show him the right woman was answered. This shows how the Lord's Providence governs our affairs. It shows also that the Lord provides all things for those who turn to Him. So Isaac was given a wife whom he could love and who would love him. And they lived in great happiness and peace together.

From this story we can learn that the Lord wants everyone to find a true and happy marriage. You may wonder how in this world, among so many millions of people, you will find your true partner. The Lord answers that in this story also. He teaches that you should trust in Him and pray that He will guide you day by day, and He will surely bring you to the person who is intended for each one of you. So it is said in the work *Conjugal Love* that if we will pray from our youth for a genuine, beautiful and happy marriage, the Lord will guide us to the one with whom we can build such a genuine, spiritual, and happy union. For the Lord's Providence never fails. It is only necessary for us to have the love and trust in the Lord that Abraham and his servant Eliezer showed. Then the Lord will answer our prayers and give us all the blessings and happiness that we can receive. *Amen.*