

A PECULIAR MARRIAGE

– MARCH 23. – GENESIS 24:58-67. –

**"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."
– Proverbs 3:6.**

WHEN ABRAHAM was 140 years old and his wife Sarah had been dead three years, his son Isaac was forty years old. This heir of the most wonderful of the Divine promises did not go to seek a wife for himself, probably because too bashful. Then Abraham called Eliezer, the steward of his household, and directed that he take ten camels and go a distance of about 500 miles to the vicinity in which Abraham was born, and where his brother Nahor and family still lived. Eliezer went under the general direction that he should find a wife suitable for Isaac and bring her to him.

The entire story is told with a beautiful simplicity quite convincing to the unprejudiced. The characters described by the historian were not savages, much less cousins of monkeys, as evolutionists would have us think. And the story itself is peculiar enough in its setting to assure us of its truth. A fabricator of such a narrative will scarcely picture his hero as obtaining a wife under the circumstances here set forth, nor was this the custom of that time nor of any time, nor of any people, so far as we have knowledge. The procedure was in every way unique.

Only recently have Bible Students learned why the matter was so arranged. It was evidently to illustrate to us a great spiritual design, which has been more than eighteen centuries in process of accomplishment. The type fits to its antitype in a manner not to be misunderstood.

Abraham typified the Heavenly Father, Isaac typified the Lord Jesus (his forty years typified in due time), and Eliezer typified the

Holy Spirit. In due time, the Father sent the Holy Spirit to gather the Elect Company which will constitute the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. As in the type Abraham did not take a wife for his son from amongst the heathen, so in the antitype God did not select the Bride of Christ from the heathen. As Eliezer went to those who were related to Abraham, and believers in God, so the Holy Spirit was sent only to believers, to select from them the Bride class.

THE BRIDE CLASS ORIGINALLY JEWISH

The Jews were in fellowship with God under their Law Covenant, and to them only the Holy Spirit originally went. Later, in God's providence, the door was opened to the Gentiles. This was not in the sense of accepting all Gentiles to the Bride class, but merely of permitting them to hear the Gospel, in order that such as heard and responded might as believers draw nigh to God, and be permitted to join the Bride class when they fully consecrated themselves to God – the antitypical Rebecca enduring the trials and perils of the journey to the antitypical Isaac. From this standpoint, today's Study is not only beautiful and interesting, but highly instructive.

REBECCA AT THE WELL

Abraham's servant, loyal to his commission, faithful both to the father and to the son, sought earnestly the proper person of Abraham's desire, assured that Isaac, the heir of such precious promises, should have a suitable companion and helpmate. When he came to the place appointed, the city of Abraham's brother, Nahor, he was alert. He found Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel, the granddaughter of Nahor, at the well, caring for the sheep. This is interpreted to signify that those approached by the Holy Spirit with the suggestion of becoming joint-heirs with Christ are usually found in some way connected with the service of God's sheep – God's people – giving them water from the well, which symbolically would mean giving refreshment from the Bible and its words of life – "water of life."

The first test put to the maiden was in respect to her willingness to give of the water. Eliezer asked for a drink. Rebecca replied, "Drink, and I will give thy **[R5187 : page 60]** camels to drink also." Here was manifested the spirit of generosity – of service – just as the Holy Spirit indicates that those who constitute the Bride of Christ must have meekness and humility as primary qualifications for acceptance with the Lord to the high calling.

Immediately Eliezer hastened to put upon Rebecca some jewels, symbolic of spiritual blessings, which come to those who first hearken to the Spirit of the Lord and show a willingness and humility. Eliezer was received into the home. The friends of Rebecca received the blessings of the spirit which she had received; and they all, representing the Household of Faith, rejoiced with her.

Eliezer promptly made known his business. He was there on a special mission, and this he set forth. He explained that Abraham was very rich, and that he had made Isaac heir of all that he had, and had sent him, his servant, to find a suitable bride for Isaac. Under the guidance of Divine providence, he had met Rebecca and believed her to be the Lord's choice for his Master's son. The question now was, Would she accept the offer, or **[R5188 : page 60]** would she reject it, and should he seek another? The question was put to Rebecca herself: Would she go into a far country under the guidance of Eliezer, and become the wife of Isaac? Her prompt answer was, "I will go."

All this well represents the question which comes before those called to be of the Bride of Christ. They hear that He is "the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." They hear that He is Lord of all, the Inheritor of the "exceeding great and precious promises." They learn that union with Him will mean the pleasures of His fellowship forevermore and participation with Him in all His great and wonderful future. Such as are rightly exercised answer, "I will go," as Rebecca did, with great promptness.

It meant something to Rebecca to leave her father's house, her own people, her own country with which she was familiar; and so it means considerable for all those who accept the Father's call through the Holy Spirit and become members of the Bride of Christ. The Prophet addresses these, saying: "Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him."

Only a whole-hearted love for the Lord and a well-grounded faith in the "exceeding great and precious promises" will carry us through to the end of the journey, joyful in anticipation to be finally accepted into glory with our Beloved, the King of Glory. We are to remember that during this Gospel Age millions have heard of the Message of the Holy Spirit, inviting to membership in the Bride class; but not all have promptly said, "Yes, I will go." Rebecca types only the successful ones, who will finally make their calling and election sure, and become members of the Bride, the Lamb's Wife.

MORE JEWELS FOR REBECCA

Another part of the record tells us that, when Rebecca decided to accept the offer of marriage with Isaac, Eliezer opened his treasures and gave her still further jewels of adornment. How beautiful a figure! The Bride class receive an early blessing of the Holy Spirit, and a later one. The latter comes to those who have made a full decision to be the Lord's at any and every cost – "to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." The graces of the Holy Spirit come more and more to them. As the Apostle suggests, we add to our faith fortitude, knowledge, patience, experience, hope, joy, love. And each of these jewels of character, in proportion as we put them on, enhances our beauty of character.

Up hill and down, through sunshine and shadow, the camels finally brought Rebecca to her journey's end. So with the antitypical Rebecca. They start in the pathway of obedience and self-denial, leaving their father Adam's house. After they accept the Holy Spirit's

suggestions and decide to go to Christ, they begin promptly to take up their cross and follow Him. Through sunshine and shade – trials and difficulties of the journey – they travel down through the centuries of this Gospel Age.

As Eliezer brought Rebecca and her maids safe to the end of their journey to the presence of Isaac at Lahai-roi, so the Holy Spirit will guide the Church to the end of the journey to the presence, *parousia*, of Christ. The camels which bore the treasures and jewels to Rebecca's home, and which afterward brought her and her maidens and Eliezer back to Isaac's home, would seemingly represent well the Holy Scriptures, by which the faithful are borne along – the agencies sent by the Father and the Son for the comfort and assistance of the prospective Bride on her journey.

As Eliezer met Rebecca at the well and handled the water, symbolical of Truth, so on the return journey Rebecca met Isaac at the well Lahai-roi.

Following the custom of the time, she put on a veil and alighted from the camel to meet Isaac. So the Scriptures tell us that the Church must pass beyond the Veil before she will be fully received by the antitypical Isaac into all the holy associations foretold.

Rebecca's maidens doubtless typified the blessings of the consecrated class, now following with the Bride class, but not living up to their full privileges and opportunities. The blessing pronounced upon Rebecca, "Be thou the mother of thousands of millions," represents the future of the Church; for as the Redeemer will, during His Messianic Kingdom, become the Father or Life-giver to thousands of millions of Adam's race, bought with His precious blood, so the Church, His Bride, will become the mother of those same thousands of millions of humanity, in the sense that she will be their care-taker and supervisor, to assist them forward to full perfection.

=====