

Old Testament types of the Lord Genesis 24 – the Lord coming for His bride

*[Please note: sections in blue type are not broadcast on every radio station.
The Authorised Version of the Scriptures used unless otherwise stated.]*

Introduction

If you are a regular listener to Truth for Today, you will know that from time to time we return to look at types or pictures of our Lord Jesus Christ as seen in the Old Testament. It is a rich way to study the Old Testament, ever looking for that which speaks of Christ in the Scriptures. You will remember that when the risen Lord, Himself, drew alongside the two disciples, who were journeying to Emmaus, He opened their eyes to the “things concerning himself” which were found in the Old Testament Scriptures. We read,

“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”

Later in the same chapter, again we have the words of the risen Lord, this time speaking to the ten disciples,

“These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures” (see Luke ch. 24 vv. 27, 44-45).

Today, just as I usually do in my talks, I will be reading and quoting from the Authorised Version of the Bible, sometimes called the King James Version, and these references will be listed in the transcript which can be found on our website, www.truthfortoday.org.uk. With so many competing voices today, I increasingly feel the importance of anchoring whatever I say to the Word of God. Please feel free to download any of our talks to listen to, or print them off to read. If you have been blessed by our ministry, then please tell your Christian friends about us.

In the previous two talks in this series we have looked at chapters 22 and 23 of Genesis, and today we turn our attention to chapter 24. Looking at these chapters in the light of the New Testament we can see types or pictures of; the Lord’s death and resurrection (ch. 22), the setting aside of the nation of Israel (ch. 23), and the Lord coming for His bride (ch. 24). Whilst I am sure that viewing these chapters in this way will be familiar to many of our listeners, I do trust that looking again at them carefully, will be a real blessing to us all. If you have missed any of these talks, then please go on the website and find them.

The story so far –

Beginning our series at chapter 22, we break into the story of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac. (You really need to go back to chapter 12 to see the beginnings of God’s dealings with Abram). But it is

in chapter 22 that we have the first mention of love in the Scripture, the love of a father for a son! In the Gospel of John we read concerning the Son of God,

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (see John ch. 1 v. 14).

The story begins with the Father’s love for His Son, and the glory of that relationship!

Types always fall short, but in the story of Abraham, the father, and his son, Isaac, going together to the place of sacrifice, we see a foreshadowing of what would happen at Calvary. Isaac was bound and put on the altar, and would have been slain, but a substitute was found. In stark contrast, there was no substitute found for the blessed Lord –

There was no other good enough
to pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gate
of heav’n, and let us in.

(Mrs. C.F. Alexander).

Isaac is then taken off the altar and we see him as a picture of the One who was raised from amongst the dead! How glad we are that the Easter message doesn’t end on a cross, or in a tomb, but tells of One who was raised on the third day! The Lord Jesus Christ has conquered death and the grave, and is alive forevermore, hallelujah!

There is no mention of the son, Isaac, in chapter 23, the story is of Sarah’s death and burial. In the second talk of the series, the suggestion was that in the death and burial of the one who bore Isaac, we have a type or picture of the setting aside of the nation of Israel. Looking again in the Gospel of John we read,

“He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (see John ch. 1 v. 11).

As a nation, Israel were the apple of God’s eye, His people. He loved them and had blessed them in so many ways throughout their history. The apostle Paul, himself a Jew, writes of their advantage,

“Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God” (see Romans ch. 3 v. 2).

But this was to no effect. When Pilate presented Jesus to them saying, “Behold your King!” we read that the Jews cried out,

“Away with him, away with him, crucify him” (see John ch. 19 vv. 14-15).

Writing his Gospel to the Jewish nation Matthew recalls the words spoken by “all the people,”

“His blood be on us, and on our children” (see Matthew ch. 27 v. 25).

Although we will not consider chapter 25 in this series, perhaps I should just point out that in this chapter we read that Abraham takes another wife. So as we are thinking about the typical teaching before us, it is good for us to remember that God will not set aside the nation of Israel forever. The

day will come, after the church has been raptured to heaven, when God will again bless Israel, and fulfil all the promises He made to them.

Chapter 24 –

The title given to me for today's talk was, 'the Lord coming for His bride', so we will consider this wonderful event later in the talk. But first, I want to look at what we read in chapter 24. We don't have time to read the chapter now, but I trust you will when you have a moment. (It is a much longer chapter than the previous two we have considered, and I suggest there is good reason for that. God, the Holy Spirit, moved these holy men of old to write the Scriptures, and here, Moses goes into great detail for our learning).

The main focus of the chapter is that of Abraham's desire to obtain a suitable bride for his son, Isaac. You will notice that Isaac only comes into the story in the closing verses of the chapter, while the main characters are; Abraham, the servant, whom we assume to be Eliezer (see ch. 15 v. 2), and Rebekah. Whilst our study today is on the typical lessons in the chapter, we do well to note the very real concern Abraham had that his son would marry the right woman. She was not to be a Canaanite, but of Abraham's family. I was going to say that I am sure it is the prayer of every Christian parent that their children 'marry in the Lord', but let me offer it as a challenge. If you have children or grandchildren, is your prayer that they might 'marry in the Lord'? It is a disaster when believers choose to abandon God's instructions and marry non-believers. In His goodness, sometimes the spouse will be converted, but often this is not the case.

Abraham calls his eldest servant, his most trusted and dependable servant, for this task, to search for a bride for his son. The servant's name is not given, as in true servant character, what he does is the important thing. I have no quarrel with the suggestion that the servant was Eliezer of Damascus, but the fact remains that no name is given. In chapter 22 the suggestion was that Abraham was a type (or picture) of God the Father, and that Isaac was a type (or picture) of God the Son. In chapter 23 the suggestion was that Sarah was a type (or picture) of the nation of Israel. Here, we suggest that in the unnamed servant, we have a type (or picture) of God the Holy Spirit, and as we consider Rebekah, we suggest that she is a type (or picture) of the Christian church.

It is a wonderful story. A story of an obedient servant who was willing to do his master's bidding, even travelling to another country to find a woman with the right heritage. We read how he asked help of God that his mission be successful. He acted wisely, taking the camels to the well at the appropriate time of day, and prayed specifically that the woman who would be Isaac's bride would answer him in a specific way. I wonder how often you pray so specifically. How often do I pray as specifically as Abraham's servant prayed? It's a challenge! The response of Rebekah was amazing. Not only was she from the right family, she also had a lovely character and showed both kindness and endeavour in what she did, fetching water for the servant, his men, and his camels, to drink.

As we have already said, the servant is not named and we suggest this is typical of the Holy Spirit, who does not seek to glorify Himself, but the One who sent Him. John records the words spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ, to His disciples in relation to the promise of the Holy Spirit, who would be a comforter to them after Jesus had been taken from their presence,

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth...” (see John ch. 14 vv. 16-17).

The church did not come into being until the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost. We read of this tremendous event in Acts chapter 2, and at the end of that chapter we read,

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptised: and the same day there was added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (see Acts ch. 2 vv. 41-42).

The Lord was beginning to “build his church” as He said He would.

Rebekah, then is representative of the church, the bride, the one who will be wed to Christ and have a special place in His heart for all eternity. Every believer since that day of Pentecost has been baptised by the Holy Spirit into this special company, the church. [In the New Testament the church is spoken of as the Body, the Bride, and the Building \(or House\), and it is wonderful to see how the Holy Spirit brings these things to our attention. Although not in an exclusive way, the apostle Paul speaks of the body and the main thought is life; the apostle Peter speaks of the building and the main thought is light \(or truth\); and the apostle John speaks of the bride and the main thought is love.](#)

We can see from the story of Rebekah that while she was in the mind of God, and chosen as the bride for Isaac, she was also willing to leave family and home and go with the servant to be married to Isaac. What does this teach us? It teaches us the truth of the Word of God, that as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have been chosen, but that we also are those who have responded to the call of the Gospel (see Ephesians ch. 1 vv. 3-6, Acts ch. 16 vv. 30-31). We do well to appreciate that these are complimentary, and not opposing, truths of Scripture. The saving of souls is the work of the Holy Spirit, and although God may allow us to be involved in the preaching of the Gospel, we do well to remember that it is He who gives the increase. As a young man, I was given this advice in my desire to see souls brought to Christ, ‘Preach as though it all depended on you, and pray knowing that it all depends on God.’

Have you ever noticed the difference between the parables the Lord told of the marriage feast (in Matthew ch. 22) and the great supper (in Luke ch. 14)? Read these again, you’ll see that they reinforce what we have been saying in our series, how that God’s provision was made in the death and resurrection of Christ, and His invitation is come! Those that were invited first refused, just as the nation of Israel refused the Gospel. The invitation then went out to a wider circle, the Gentiles, that God’s house will be filled. In Matthew we read that the king used his servants but in Luke it is the servant who is sent. Unsurprisingly it is the servants that brought in the guest who did not have the wedding garment on, no such mention in Luke, as the servant (again I suggest a reference to the Holy Spirit Himself, makes no such mistakes). How wonderfully accurate Scripture is!

Back to our chapter and we see that the servant, knowing that Rebekah was the one for Isaac, gives her the jewels which he had brought with him from Abraham’s house. He goes with her to her father’s house and rehearses the whole story and tells how God had led him to Rebekah. The servant speaks of Abraham’s greatness and of his son Isaac, and gives presents, “jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment.” His words and his gifts attract Rebekah’s heart to Isaac, and although she had not met him, she was prepared to leave all behind for him. When the time came, her family tried to detain her, asking that she may remain with them “a few days, at least ten.”

The present work of the Holy Spirit is to engage our hearts with Christ. He is the “living water” that the Saviour speaks of to the Samaritan woman at Sychar’s well (see John ch. 4). Just as the Lord Jesus spoke of the Father, the Holy Spirit speaks of Christ. Again in John’s Gospel we read the words Jesus said,

“When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for

he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you” (see John ch. 16 vv. 13-14).

The Holy Spirit engages our hearts with Christ as we read the Scriptures. We read of His greatness, His glory, and His majesty. But it is His love which touches our hearts and makes our spirits long to see Him, face to face.

Face to face! O! blissful moment!
Face to face – to see and know;
Face to face with my Redeemer,
Jesus Christ, who loves me so.

Face to face shall I behold Him
Far beyond the starry sky;
Face to face in all His glory,
I shall see Him by and by.

(Mrs. Frank A. Breck).

Having heard something of Abraham and Isaac, the question to Rebekah was “Wilt thou go with this man?” And she said, “I will go.” Reading on in the story, it is as if the journey had just begun when we read of Isaac at the well called “Lahai-roi” (which I understand means, ‘the well of Him that liveth and seeth me.’) Isaac lifted up his eyes, and Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and what a moment that must have been! I’m sure these thoughts were in the heart of the hymn writer, (Emma) Frances Bevan, as she wrote these verses -

Who is this, who comes to meet me,
On the desert way,
As the Morning Star foretelling
God’s unclouded day?
He it is who came to win me,
On the cross of shame;
In His glory well I know Him,
Evermore the same.

O the blessed joy of meeting,
All the desert passed;
O the wondrous words of greeting,
He shall speak at last!
He and I together ent’ring
The fair realm above;
He and I together sharing
All the Father’s love.

It must be worth noting that just as we saw the first mention of love in chapter 22, that of a father’s love for a son, so here at the end of chapter 24 we have the second mention, the love between husband and wife. Read again the Son’s prayer to the Father (John chapter 17) and revel and wonder at the Father’s love for the Son, and of the Son’s love for us!

I do trust that these talks on the typical teaching of these three chapters have been a real blessing to you.

For the time we have left today, I want to say something of the truth, which is revealed in the New Testament, concerning the Lord coming for His bride. This is so important; it is the hope of the

Christian! I want to bring three passages of Scripture before you which clearly speak of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first of these is in Matthew's Gospel, where the Lord tells a parable concerning the coming of the Son of man. The second is a prophecy which the Christians in Thessalonica received through the apostle Paul, concerning the coming of the Lord. And the third, and most wonderful of all, is the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, "I will come again," which we read of in John's Gospel.

A parable is a natural story with a spiritual meaning. And just as we have learnt spiritual lessons from the Old Testament story of Abraham, Isaac, Sarah and Rebekah, the Lord intends that we learn spiritual lessons from the parables He told of everyday events. In Matthew chapter 25, He speaks of Himself as "the bridegroom" and the call is to 'be ready.' Nothing is said of the church, remember it was not in existence at this time, but the wise and foolish virgins give us a very clear picture of what it meant to be ready. The wise had oil in their lamps, whereas the foolish had lamps but no oil. Every Bible student will know that oil is consistently used in the Scripture as a picture of the Holy Spirit. So the clear lesson is, 'be ready', have the Holy Spirit in your heart, through salvation, so that when the bridegroom comes you will go in with him.

We said earlier that ever since the day of Pentecost (spoken of in Acts ch. 2) believers have been added to the church. That was in the first century A.D. and of course, many Christians have died since that time. (I say died, but the Bible uses the thought of 'sleep' in a particular way to speak of the death of believers). Just as we go to bed to sleep, so that we may wake up in the morning, believers who "sleep in Jesus" do so in view of their awakening. Perhaps I should state clearly that death (or sleep) for the believer is only in reference to the body. It is so important to realise that when Christians die, they are,

"With Christ; which is far better," "absent from the body...present with the Lord" (see Philipians ch. 1 v. 23, 2 Corinthians ch. 5 v. 8).

The Christians at Thessalonica were concerned for those of their number who had died, thinking that they would miss out on the Lord's appearing, when He comes with His saints to reign on the earth. In response, God gave a revelation to Paul, who said authoritatively,

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord" (see 1 Thessalonians ch. 4 vv. 13-18).

How glad we are of this Scripture that we might 'be informed.' We read how that the Lord Himself (and how wonderful that is!) will come from heaven and "the dead in Christ will rise first." Afterwards the living believers will be changed, and we will be snatched up (raptured) together to meet our Lord and Saviour. And all this in the twinkling of an eye! (see 1 Corinthians ch. 15 v. 52).

But best of all, we have the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, as He prepares His disciples for His departure out of the world. How tenderly He speaks to their hearts as He says,

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (see John ch. 14 vv. 1-3).

Now what could be better than that! A promise from the lips of the Saviour Himself. The promise given is that we might 'be encouraged.' He loves us, and He gave His life for us, and He will not

be satisfied until He has us (the church complete) in glory with Him. In the context of what we have considered with Isaac and Rebekah let me end by quoting from Ephesians:

“Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (see Ephesians ch. 5 vv. 25-26).

May God bless you all.

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