

# Session 11 (Pt. 2): The Bride in Genesis—Wife for Isaac

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## I. A Wife for Isaac

1. In this session we will continue our look at the bride in the book of Genesis as we explore Abraham sending his servant to take a wife for Isaac.

- a. Moving on from Adam and Eve as a type of Christ and His bride, we will now delve into another important type and shadow of Christ and His bride recorded in Genesis. In this session we will look at Abraham who is a type and shadow of the heavenly Father and Isaac as a type of Christ. More specifically, we will look at Genesis 24 in which Abraham sent his servant to his homeland to take a wife for Isaac.
- b. This story illustrates another important biblical truth, that being the need for the betrothed bride to leave Babylon and journey toward the promise land where she will be married to Christ. Before we discuss Genesis 24, let's explain why Abraham is a type of the Father and Isaac a type of Christ.

2. The book of Hebrews states directly that Abraham is a type of the Father and Isaac a type of Christ.

- a. Hebrews 11:17-19 confirms that Abraham and Isaac are a type and shadow of the Father and the Son,

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; it was he to whom it was said, "IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED." He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back *as a type* (Heb. 11:17-19).

3. In addition, the story of Abraham offering Isaac as a sacrifice in Genesis 22 further illustrates Isaac as a type and shadow of Christ.

- a. Genesis 22 presents the story of Abraham being willing to offer Isaac as a sacrifice and the Lord at the last moment intervening with a sacrificial ram to be offered in Isaac's place. This amazing story is a type and shadow of Christ going to the cross. Some of the parallels which support this premise are:
  - Even though Abraham was also the father of Ishmael, Isaac is referred to as Abraham's only begotten son. Likewise, Jesus is referred to as the heavenly Father's only begotten Son (Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 4:9), just as was Christ (Gen. 22:2, Heb. 11:17).
  - Abraham's servants stayed behind at a distance while Isaac accompanied by Abraham proceeded to the place of sacrifice (Gen. 22:5). When Jesus went to the cross, the majority of His followers stood at a distance from Him (Lk. 22:54; Lk. 23:49).
  - Isaac was not a small child when this event took place. He was old enough to understand what was transpiring and strong enough to resist Abraham. Even so, he willfully submitted to his father. In a like manner, Jesus could have decided not to go to the cross, but He voluntarily submitted to His Father and in obedience went to the cross (Mt. 26:53; Lk. 22:42).

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- Isaac carried the wood to be used in the sacrificial act to the place of sacrifice (Gen. 22:6). When Jesus was sentenced to death on the cross, He had to carry His own cross (Jn. 19:17). When He became too weak to continue, Simon of Cyrene took His cross the rest of the way.
  - Isaac was bound and put on the altar just as Christ was bound to the cross (Gen. 22:9).
  - God provided the ram on the third day as was the time of the resurrection of Christ (Gen. 22:4).
- b. From these examples, we see that Abraham is a type and shadow of the heavenly Father and Isaac is a type of Christ.

## II. Genesis 24 and Christ's Bride

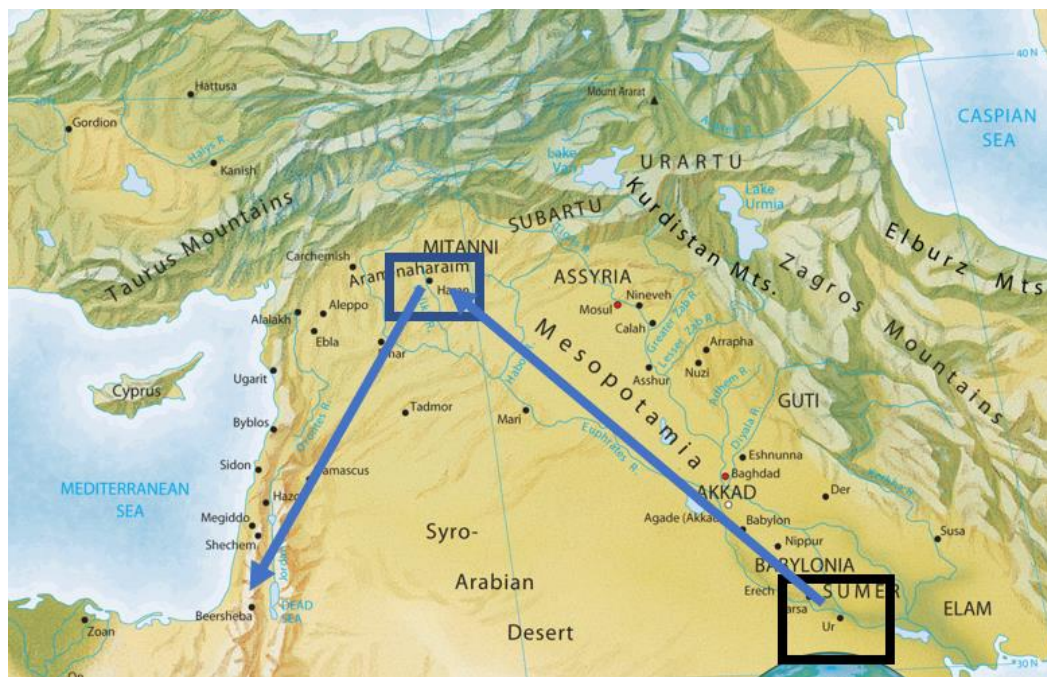
### 1. We want to go now to Genesis 24 which records Abraham sending his servant to take a wife for Isaac.

- a. Let's begin by summarizing the story. Abraham who was old by this point desired for his son Isaac to have a wife. Even though every father desires their son to find that perfect helpmate, this was much more than just a way to provide joy and happiness for Isaac. The reason being that God's promise to Abraham was dependent upon Isaac finding the correct bride and their union producing a child of promise. Years earlier, God had promised Abraham that "He would make him a great nation" (Gen. 12:2); that He would "multiply Abraham exceedingly" (Gen. 17:2); and that he would be the father of even a multitude of nations (Gen. 17:4). Therefore, God's promise could only be fulfilled if Isaac was married.
- b. With this in his mind, Abraham sent his chief servant, probably Eliezer, to his homeland and, more specifically, to his relatives to find a wife for Isaac. With these instructions, the servant departed with ten camels loaded with gifts and provisions, arriving at the city of Nahor. The city of Nahor was very near Haran and was where Abraham's brother, Nahor, lived. Abraham's brother, Nahor, remained in Haran when Abraham departed for the land of Canaan. Rebekah, who would become Isaac's wife, was Nahor's granddaughter. Thus, she was a relative of Abraham from his homeland.<sup>i</sup>
- c. Before continuing, it is important to clarify the location of the town of Nahor and Haran where Abraham's family lived. The theme of this teaching is that to become the bride of Christ, the individual believer must come out of Babylon. To be clear about where Rebekah and her family lived, it is helpful to discuss the location of Nahor, the city where Abraham's family lived. The New Unger's Bible Dictionary states that the town of Nahor was located just below Haran in the Balikh Valley of Upper Mesopotamia.<sup>ii</sup> In a literal sense, Nahor is not located in ancient Babylonia. It is located in the region of Mesopotamia. Babylon and Babylonia are also located in Mesopotamia. Abraham was born in Ur of the Chaldeans and as a child was taken to Haran with his family.
- d. Genesis 11:31 records this important verse,

Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there (Gen. 11:31).

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- According to the Holman Online Bible Atlas, Ur of the Chaldeans was located during the days of Abraham in southern Babylonia near the city of Babylon. Thus, Abraham, Nahor, and their family were originally from the region near the city of Babylon in the region of Babylonia.
- Note the following map of the homeland of Abraham from the Holman Online Bible Atlas along with my added highlights.



- When we begin to make our points in this session, we speak of coming out of Babylon. Even though the town of Nahor was not technically in Babylon, it was in Mesopotamia and it was most definitely Babylonian in terms of the mentality and lifestyle of the people and the culture of the area. For us today, an accurate term would be that they remained in a Babylonian system of worship and life.
- e. Now, back to the story. Before sending his servant on the journey, Abraham made it clear to his servant that the woman who was to become Isaac's wife must be willing to leave her Babylonian homeland and come to where Isaac was. Isaac was forbidden to go to her homeland. Even though she had never seen Isaac in person, she had to be willing to come to him.
- f. When Abraham's servant arrived at Nahor, he went to the well where the young ladies collected water. There he encountered Rebekah. He asked for water and she willingly offered him water and even offered to water his camels. In addition, she invited him to stay at her family's home while he was there. As Abraham's servant spent time with Rebekah and her family, he soon realized that she was the one he was looking for. Once he realized she was the one to whom he had been sent, he asked her and her brothers if she would go with him and she agreed. They left together and when they arrived in Canaan, Isaac met her and they consummated the marriage.

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2. The story is a type and shadow of the heavenly Father inviting believers to become the eternal bride of Christ and the need for the betrothed bride to leave family and to journey out of Babylon to be married to Christ.
- a. Although probably obvious, this encounter is a type and shadow of the heavenly Father taking a bride for Christ. In this story, Abraham represents the heavenly Father and Isaac represents Christ.
  - b. The servant pictures the Holy Spirit. As the text states, the servant was the oldest in Abraham's household and was in charge of all that Abraham owned. He was sent to take a wife for Abraham's son. Of course, this offers an excellent description of the Holy Spirit. Eternally a part of the Godhead and fully God, He abides in the household of God. He is in charge of the fulfillment of God's eternal purpose. One of the primary roles of the Holy Spirit is to seek out a bride for Christ; to give the bride all of the gifts and provision she needs to be made ready; and to bring her out of Babylon so that she might be made ready for her wedding with Christ. This is a major assignment of the Holy Spirit in our day. A member of the Godhead from eternity past, the Holy Spirit is the eternal Helper currently being sent throughout the earth to invite and prepare a wife for Christ.
  - c. Since Rebekah was a relative of Abraham and Isaac, she is a type of a believer just as Christ is "the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). In this instance, she represents a believer who is being invited by the Holy Spirit to become a bride for Christ.
  - d. The entire encounter pictures the Jewish wedding system which was followed in ancient times in Israel and in place during the days of Christ's earthly ministry. Just like in the Jewish wedding system (see Session 2 to refresh your memory), the bride was first betrothed to her Bridegroom. The betrothal took place in or near the home of the bride. Like in the Jewish system, the bride had to first agree to and accept the bridal invitation. At the time of her agreeing to the proposal and the terms of it, she was then betrothed to her bridegroom and given gifts to seal the agreement. She was provided with everything she needed to be a beautiful bride for her husband. The story of Rebekah beautifully depicts the betrothal of a young Jewish man and woman. The servant went to the bride's home where he invited her to become the wife of Isaac. The invitation was based on her agreement to leave her home and go to where Isaac lived. She was given gifts at the time of the invitation, both to woo her to say "yes" and to give her everything she needed to make herself ready for her bridegroom.
  - e. The story also depicts the consummation service that is also part of an ancient Jewish wedding. In a typical Jewish wedding of that day, the consummation service took place at a later time and at the home of the father of the groom. Prior to the consummation service, the bride and groom lived apart; however, at the time of the consummation service, the bride and groom would enter the bridal chamber and consummate the marriage. After agreeing to the proposal, Rebekah and Abraham's servant departed for the home of Abraham where the marriage was consummated.
  - f. In this brief story, we learn several important truths about the bridal invitation believers are being given and about bridal preparation. In the remainder of the session, we will share important truths about our bridal relationship with Christ first from the perspective of the Godhead and then from the perspective of the believer.

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## III. Truths from God’s Perspective

In this section, we present 11 important truths from the perspective of the Godhead.

### 1. The New Covenant is a bridal covenant.

- a. Like we mentioned in the previous section, this story illustrates the Jewish wedding system, the betrothal at the home of the bride, and the consummation service at the home of the groom.
- b. In addition to this overall theme, Genesis 24:2-3 reads in part, “Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he owned, ‘Please place your hand under my thigh, and I will make you swear by the Lord’...”. In doing this, Abraham was reaffirming that sending his servant to get a bride for Isaac was an essential aspect of the covenant God had made with Abraham many years before. The same is true in terms of a bride for Christ.
- c. As we stated in Session 2, the New Covenant is a bridal covenant. There are other aspects to the New Covenant, but an important and essential element of it is for Christ to have an eternal partner—a bride. The application for us is that God’s eternal plan and purpose is for Christ to have a bride made ready for Him, and that the truths of this type and shadow are an integral part of the bridal covenant between Christ and His bride.

### 2. God’s eternal purpose demands a prepared bride for Christ.

- a. Genesis 24:1-4 reads,

Now Abraham was old, advanced in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in every way. Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he owned, "Please place your hand under my thigh, and I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live, but *you will go to my country* and to my relatives, *and take a wife for my son Isaac.*"

- b. Following Abraham telling his servant to place his hand under his thigh and swear to take a wife from his homeland, Abraham told his servant that “you will go to my country and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac”. The point here is that Abraham issued a demand to his servant to take a wife for his son.
- c. As you will recall from Genesis 12, God promised Abraham to make him a great nation as noted here, “And I will make you a great nation”. God said also to Abraham, “...for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever” (Gen. 13;15) and also, “And I will establish My covenant between Me and you. And I will multiply you exceedingly” (Gen. 17:2).
- d. As you can see from the promises made to Abraham, he had to have a son for them to be fulfilled and his son had to have a wife so as to have children. In other words, the covenant made with Abraham demanded a wife for Isaac.
- e. In a similar manner, God’s eternal purpose which includes a bride for Christ demands that Christ have a prepared bride. The eternal plan and purpose of God includes that Christ would have a bride as an

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eternal partner. In God's purpose, Christ and His prepared bride will be eternal partners who will live together in great intimacy and partner together to take dominion over God's creation.

- f. Therefore, God's eternal purpose demands a prepared bride for Christ.

## 3. The Holy Spirit is completely focused on the task of getting a bride for Christ.

- a. As soon as Abraham's servant swore to Abraham concerning getting a wife for Isaac, he immediately departed for the city of Nahor, "Then the servant took ten camels from the camels of his master, and set out with a variety of good things of his master's in his hand; and he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor (Gen. 24:10). Still looking at the servant's focus on getting a bride for Isaac, Genesis 24:33 reads, "But when food was set before him to eat, he said, "I will not eat until I have told my business." Abraham's servant was focused on one thing and that was to bring a wife back for Isaac to marry. He also told Rebekah's family when they wanted him to stay longer, "Do not delay me, since the Lord has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master" (Gen. 24:56).
- b. The Holy Spirit is on a similar assignment. Of course, the Holy Spirit is able to do multiple things at once, but we believe that His primary assignment at this time is to get and prepare a bride for Christ. The Holy Spirit is completely focused on this one task of bringing Christ a bride to be His eternal partner.

## 4. The Holy Spirit is searching the earth for a willing vessel.

- a. Abraham's servant went to the city of Nahor to the place where the young maidens gathered. His objective was to find Isaac's bride there. He had put out a fleece for the correct bride and, of course, Rebekah met the qualifications,

He said, "O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today, and show lovingkindness to my master Abraham. Behold, I am standing by the spring, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water; now may it be that the girl to whom I say, 'Please let down your jar so that I may drink,' and who answers, 'Drink, and I will water your camels also' — may she be the one whom You have appointed for Your servant Isaac; and by this I will know that You have shown lovingkindness to my master" (Gen. 24:12-14).
- b. We don't know from the story exactly how many young ladies were gathered there that evening; however, for sure, there were several. From the larger group, he issued an invitation and Rebekah accepted. However, before he issued the invitation to Rebekah, he looked over the entire group of young ladies to see who if any would meet the test of the fleece. You can picture Abraham's servant gazing over all of the young ladies of the city to see who would become Isaac's wife.
- c. In a similar way, the Holy Spirit is searching throughout the earth to find those willing vessels to become the bride for Christ. In the case of the bride of Christ, it is not just one or even a few selected by the Holy Spirit; instead, the invitation is to anyone and everyone who will accept the Holy Spirit's invitation.

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## 5. The Holy Spirit is going to the church to find a bride for Christ.

### a. Genesis 24:3-4 reads,

and I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live, but you will go to my country and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac.

### b. As Genesis 24 states, the bride was required to come from Abraham's relatives and also from Abraham's homeland. Abraham was very clear that whoever would become the bride for Isaac could not come from the daughters of the Canaanites where Abraham lived but from his home country and more specifically from his relatives (Gen. 24:3-4).

### c. This is an important point for our understanding of bridal theology. Many evangelicals believe that the act of being born again makes one the eternal wife for Christ. Of course, we have made the point repeatedly that this is not true. The eternal wife of Christ comes forth from within the body of Christ. As this passage exemplifies, the Father is sending the Holy Spirit to the church to invite believers to say "yes" to become the eternal wife of Christ.

## 6. The bride will be selected from within the body of Christ.

### a. Although this point is similar to the previous one, I do want to highlight another issue of importance. When Abraham's servant met Rebekah at the well, he asked if he could stay at her father's house,

Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room for us to lodge in your father's house, "She said to him, 'I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor.' Again she said to him, 'We have plenty of both straw and feed, and room to lodge in'" (Gen. 24:23-25).

### b. Her house being a picture of her as a believer in the house of God and the servant being a picture of the Holy Spirit, this represents her accepting the Spirit of Christ into her heart at salvation. Just as the servant went to stay in her house, the Holy Spirit comes to live in our spirit at salvation.

### c. Moreover, in addition to Rebekah inviting the servant into the house, she also accepted a separate invitation to become the bride of Isaac. Note these verses, "So now if you are going to deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, let me know, that I may turn to the right hand or the left." (Gen. 24:49) ..." Then they called Rebekah and said to her, 'Will you go with this man?' And she said, 'I will go.'"(Gen. 24:58).

### d. As we note in the above verses, Abraham's servant issued a separate invitation, this time, to journey to become the wife of Isaac. Again, she said "yes" to his invitation and ultimately became Isaac's wife.

### e. The same pattern is the normal way a believer accepts the invitation to become a wife for Christ. When a believer accepts Christ as personal Savior and Lord, they are betrothed to Christ as His betrothed bride. Even so, most individuals at this point in their walk have no revelation of being a bride for Christ. For the vast majority of believers, this comes later. Therefore, the normal pattern is for an individual to accept Christ as Savior and then at a later time say to Him as Rebekah did, "I will

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go” to become your bride. Therefore, as the heading suggests, the bride will be selected from within the body of Christ.

### 7. Christ will not go to Babylon to take a wife.

- a. We shared a little earlier in the session that Abraham originally lived in the territory referred to as Babylon and his relatives including Rebekah still lived in that culture. Abraham sent his servant to Babylon to find a wife for Isaac. Even though Abraham’s servant traveled there to find a wife, it was clear she could not stay there. She had to come to where Isaac lived.
- b. Genesis 24:8 records these words, “But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this my oath; *only do not take my son back there.*” Abraham made it emphatically clear that Isaac could not go to Babylon under any circumstance to get his wife. She had to come out of Babylon to marry Isaac. He gave clear instructions that Isaac could not go to Babylon to get her and that she had to be willing to leave Babylon in order to be married to Isaac.
- c. Unfortunately, in our day throughout much of the world, many pastors are taking Christ into Babylon rather than calling the bride out of Babylon. In an attempt to be seeker sensitive or to meet people where they are or not wanting to lose people by teaching those portions of the scriptures that don’t fit neatly into our Babylonian culture, many pastors are teaching a compromised gospel. In essence, rather than calling people out of Babylon, they are taking Christ into Babylon. This approach will never prepare a bride for Christ and it must stop.

### 8. The Holy Spirit will provide to the one who says “yes” everything they need to be made ready.

- a. Abraham’s servant took with him ten camels loaded with “a variety of good things of his master’s” (Gen. 24:10) to give to the one who would journey back with him to become Isaac’s wife. Abraham’s servant led Rebekah back to meet Isaac and was with her every step of the way on the journey. He never left her, and he provided everything she needed along the way to successfully get her there and to beautify and prepare her to be Isaac’s wife.
- b. Once a believer says “yes” to the journey of preparation, the Father gives them everything they need for life and godliness, that is, everything they need to be made ready. What a wonderful picture. If one says “yes” to the bridal journey and follows through in humility and obedience, the Holy Spirit will lead them step by step on the journey of preparation and will provide everything they need to be made ready.

### 9. There will also be angelic help for the bride to be made ready.

- a. Abraham’s servant *put his gaze* upon Rebekah to see if she was the one who would follow him back to Isaac. The passage reads, “Meanwhile, the man was gazing at her in silence, to know whether the Lord had made his journey successful or not” (Gen. 24:21). Other translations state that he “watched silently”.
- b. Just like Abraham’s servant watched the young lady closely to see if she would take the bridal journey to Isaac, the Holy Spirit and angels watch over believers to see if they will accept the



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invitation to make themselves ready as a bride for Christ. Both initially and all along the journey, the Holy Spirit and God's angels set their gaze upon the bride to watch her, lead her, and prepare her. God's gaze never abandons her and never ceases to lead her to readiness. His eyes are ever upon Christ's bride to make her ready.

## 10. There is an urgency for the bride to be made ready.

- a. Rebekah's family asked the servant to delay the journey a few days, but the servant refused, saying, "He said to them, 'Do not delay me, since the Lord has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master'" (Gen. 24:56).
- b. The Holy Spirit is saying the same thing today to the church. Don't delay the journey of readiness. The days are evil and the time is short. There is a tremendous urgency in the Spirit to come out of Babylon. Session 13 and 14 address coming out of Babylon in much more detail—both in coming out of allegiance with the Babylonian system impacting the world today and also coming out of her sins. It is time for the bride to make herself ready. Therefore, the bride is to make haste in beginning and continuing the journey of readiness.

## 11. The heavenly Father will have a worthy bride for Christ.

- a. The scriptures record these words, "I said to my master, 'Suppose the woman does not follow me.' He said to me, 'The Lord, before whom I have walked, *will send His angel with you to make your journey successful, and you will take a wife for my son from my relatives and from my father's house*'" (Gen. 24:39-40). Regardless of an individual's choice, the Lord will have a bride who will follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. Christ will have a bride who will come out of Babylon and make herself ready. This eternal plan of the Lord will be successful. The issue is not if it will be successful, but if an individual will be a part of the coming forth of Christ's bride in the fullness that the Lord desires.

## IV. Truths from the Believers Perspective

In this final section, we present 7 truths from the believer's perspective.

### 1. The bride must come out of Babylon to become the wife of Christ.

- a. As we stated earlier, Rebekah's family was originally from Ur of the Chaldeans in the region of Babylonia, near Babylon. Her family followed the Lord's invitation to leave Ur and travel to the land of promise. However, her family settled in Haran (Gen. 11:31). What a revealing statement. They left Ur but they were called to go all the way to the promised land. Instead, many of the family members settled in Haran. Even though not technically in Babylon, Haran was similar to Babylon in religious practice and compromised lifestyle. In other words, the family maintained a Babylonian lifestyle.
- b. As we have noted already, Abraham forbid his servant to take Isaac into the Babylonian culture to take a wife. The woman he was to marry had to leave Babylon and come to meet him in the promised land. As we know, Rebekah agreed to leave her homeland and travel with Abraham's servant to meet Isaac in his homeland.

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- c. Not only did Rebekah have to be *willing* to leave Babylon, she also had to *actually* leave and travel to the land of promise where she met and married Isaac. Here is the application for us. Most, if not, all believers when they initially are born again live in spiritual Babylon and are enmeshed in Babylon's culture and religion.
- d. To become Christ's wife, believers must come out of Babylon. Speaking of spiritual Babylon, the book of Revelation records this command, "I heard another voice from heaven, saying, 'Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities'" (Rev. 18:4-5). Idolatry, false religion, compromise, immorality, witchcraft, and spiritual delusion permeate the Babylonian culture throughout the earth.
- e. To be made ready, the bride must be willing to come out of all agreement with the false religion and immoral culture of Babylon and then to actually act so as to come out of her. Believers cannot settle in Babylon or come out to a degree but then settle in partial compromise. Believers must make coming out of Babylon an urgent matter and act without delay.

### 2. Believers must with intention agree to pursue becoming a bride for Christ.

- a. As we mentioned earlier, Rebekah made two different decisions while in her homeland. First, she invited Abraham's servant into her home. As we stated, this pictures Rebekah's salvation encounter. In addition, she was asked by the servant, if she would go with the servant to be married to Isaac. This encounter reads, "And they said, 'We will call the girl and consult her wishes.' Then they called Rebekah and said to her, 'Will you go with this man?' And she said, 'I will go'" (Gen. 24:57-58).
- b. As you can clearly see from the text, Rebekah was faced with a direct question concerning becoming a bride for Isaac. She was asked if she would journey with Abraham's servant from her homeland to Isaac's home and marry him. She answered the question with the intention to become the wife of Isaac.
- c. In a similar fashion, an individual believer is faced with the same question: "Will you go with this man?" In other words, will you journey with the Holy Spirit *with a focus on becoming the bride of Christ*? Just as there was an intentionality to pursue the bridal relationship with Rebekah, the same is true for the believer. Believers must say "yes" to a bridal pursuit with a focus on becoming the prepared bride for Christ—a focus that impacts and affects our walk for the rest of our life. It is not sufficient to agree or desire to be the wife of Christ and then to ignore the bridal paradigm. It must become a decision that impacts us for the rest of our life.

### 3. If a believer rejects or ignores the bridal invitation, the Holy Spirit will move on to others.

- a. Genesis 24:39 and 41 read,

I said to my master, "Suppose the woman does not follow me"... "then you will be free from my oath, when you come to my relatives; and if they do not give her to you, you will be free from my oath."

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- b. Individual believers are given a free choice as to whether to come out of Babylon to become the eternal wife of Christ. Rebekah was not under compulsion to go with Abraham's servant. Genesis 24:49 reads, "So now if you are going to deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, let me know, that I may turn to the right hand or the left." She said "yes" to the invitation, "Then they called Rebekah and said to her, 'Will you go with this man?' And she said, 'I will go.'" (Gen. 24:58). However, as verse 49 told us, if she had not agreed to go, he would have moved on to another.
- c. In a similar manner, if a true believer decides it is too difficult to respond positively to the Holy Spirit's invitation to come out of Babylon so as to be made ready as a bride for Christ, they will lose the greatest of all eternal rewards, that being to become Christ's eternal partner as His bride. Rebekah had a free choice to come out to Isaac or not. If she had refused, Abraham's servant would have found someone else suitable for Isaac. The same is true with a bride for Christ.

### 4. Others cannot make this decision for us.

- a. Genesis 24:50-51 reads, "Then Laban and Bethuel replied, 'The matter comes from the Lord; so we cannot speak to you bad or good. Here is Rebekah before you, take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has spoken'." As this passage notes, her family was in favor of her going. Their decision was for the servant to take her and go. However, they soon realized that it was not their decision to make. As verse 57 conveys, "And they said, 'We will call the girl and consult her wishes'." Rebekah herself had to be the one to decide for herself. No one else could decide for her.
- b. The same is true with pursuing the bridal relationship with Christ. Pastors, family members, spouses, parents, and children can sincerely want a person to join the journey of bridal preparation. In reality, this is regularly the case. Others want a particular person to pursue with intentionality being made ready as a bride for Christ. Of course, we can and should pray for people to join the bridal journey. Even so, each individual must make the decision to pursue becoming the bride for Christ for themselves. No one else can do it for them. It is an individual decision.

### 5. The believer who agrees to the bridal journey must actually live out their decision until they meet Christ.

- a. Believers must be open to the Holy Spirit's leadership in their life and fully cooperate with Him as He leads them in the journey toward readiness. Notice the initial encounter Abraham's servant had with Rebekah at the well (Gen. 24:11-25). The servant had prayed these words,

He said, "O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today, and show lovingkindness to my master Abraham. Behold, I am standing by the spring, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water; now may it be that the girl to whom I say, 'Please let down your jar so that I may drink,' and who answers, 'Drink, and I will water your camels also' — may she be the one whom You have appointed for Your servant Isaac; and by this I will know that You have shown lovingkindness to my master" (Gen. 24:12-14).

- b. As the above passage tells us, the servant was asking for a specific response from the one who was to become Isaac's wife. The response he was looking for was one of humility and cooperation. Rebekah met his qualifications. She willingly gave him a drink. She watered all ten camels and she invited him

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to stay at her father's home. In other words, she walked in humility and responded positively to the fleece that the servant had put before the Lord.

- c. The same is true for the believer who wants to be the bride made ready. As the Holy Spirit leads, believers must respond in humility and obedience so as to fully cooperate with the Lord's leading. This attitude is not a one-time response; moreover, being made ready is an ongoing attitude that is required throughout one's life.

### 6. Believers must avoid "settling" along the way, but must continue to the end.

- a. We quoted this verse earlier in the session, but we repeat it here,

Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there (Gen. 11:31).

- b. Abraham went on to the promised land; however, much of his family "settled" in Haran and did not go on to the destination God had intended.
- c. In a similar manner, many people on the bridal journey settle without pursuing it until the end. Some think that they have gone far enough and others think that God will allow us to become the eternal bride for Christ even if we are in compromise. Whatever the reason, there is a serious call from the Lord not to settle for less than becoming the eternal wife for Christ.

### 7. Believers must not listen to those who say a radical pursuit of the bridal journey is not necessary.

- a. Genesis 24:54-56 reads as follows,

Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night. When they arose in the morning, he said, "Send me away to my master." But her brother and her mother said, "Let the girl stay with us a few days, say ten; afterward she may go." He said to them, "Do not delay me, since the Lord has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master."

- b. Abraham's servant recognized the urgency and importance of taking Isaac's bride back to him. He would not be delayed. However, it is evident that the men around the servant had a much more lackadaisical attitude than Abraham's servant had. There was no urgency in their hearts.
- c. In a similar manner, there are many who think that a radical, urgent, focused pursuit of being made ready as a bride for Christ is not necessary. In fact, large portions of the church believe that every believer becomes the eternal wife of the Lamb the moment they are born again. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth.
- d. The bride must pursue being made ready as a bride for Christ with radical abandonment and must ignore those who would suggest otherwise.
- e. Let's close this session with the blessing Rebekah's family spoke over her applying it to the preparation of a bride for Christ, "May you, our sister [*the bride*], become thousands of ten

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thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them” (Gen 24:60). May the bride of Christ multiply to become thousands of ten thousands so that Christ might have the reward of His suffering—a bride made ready!

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<sup>i</sup> Rebekah, Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers

<sup>ii</sup> Nahor, The New Unger's Bible Dictionary. Originally published by Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois. Copyright © 1988.