

The Bride's Journey

OR

Rebekah Conducted To Isaac



AN ADDRESS BY
G. W. WARE

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GENESIS XXIV

This well-known scripture sets forth, in the most simple and precious way, the work which the Spirit of God is carrying on at the present time.

The present moment of Christ's absence on high is characterized by the presence and activities of the Spirit on earth. The Lord Himself has been here, and who can rightly speak of His blessed activities? How wondrously He wrought to make known the deep well-spring of love which was in the Father's heart? He came here too, that, through death, He might make a channel by which the love of God might righteously flow out to us. But if merely that had taken place, we should have been great losers at the present moment; we should be looking forward to a time of deliverance, but should have no present enjoyment of it. We should be like the beloved saints of old, who lived ever merely in expectancy, embracing the promises afar off. But the blessed God had something better in mind for us, and so the Spirit has been given that we might have, not only the expectation, but the realization of these things, the present enjoyment of all that faith gives.

In the first actions of Abraham's servant towards Rebekah, we see in type the preliminary work of the Spirit in our souls. She had often gone out to draw water: it was probably a regular daily task. She had no thought of Abraham or of Isaac, but a man arrives through whose activities a great change is made in her heart. He puts a jewel on her face and bracelets on her arms, and, as he does so, new thoughts and aspirations begin to arise in her soul. This corresponds to the work of the Spirit when He first touches us in new birth. All was changed for her from that moment: she was no longer satisfied to go on as she had been doing. Similarly, after the Spirit first touches us, we are no longer at rest in the old condition of things. We begin to be exercised about something beyond this scene. How we should ever thank God for the sovereign grace which led Him to commence a work in our souls. If we are asked why He did it, we cannot give an answer; all we know is, that it pleased Him in the sovereignty of His grace to do it, and thus turn our faces towards Himself. Surely it is but right that we should pour out our hearts to God in thankfulness and praise for His wondrous goodness; but have we ever done so? It is but common politeness that we should thank a friend for a gift, but how many Christians have ever thanked the blessed God for His sovereign action towards them in new birth? Often that which

Cost the sore travail of the heart of the blessed Son of God is received without a word of thanks.

Now the further activities of the servant show how God works in our hearts, to detach us from this scene and attach us to the Lord Jesus Christ where He is. He has three things which He brings forth, and with which he decks Rebekah; jewels of silver, jewels of gold and raiment. We may say that these represent redemption, righteousness and reconciliation. That is all very good and true, but have our souls been established in the good of these three things?

Do we stand in our souls in the present good of redemption? We say it is forgiveness of sins. This is included doubtless, but the full truth of redemption goes very much further. It involves the fact that the blessed God has visited us in our lost and undone state, and has met all the liabilities which lay upon us, and has put us on an entirely new platform in His presence.

All of Adam's race occupied one large platform, upon which the cloud of condemnation rested. But, after about four thousand years, the Lord Jesus Christ came down into holy Manhood, and occupied a platform on which He was absolutely alone. Now could God take Adam's race and transfer them to this platform? This was absolutely impossible, for

the blessed Lord Jesus was the only Man in flesh and blood in whom the blessed God could find His delight. An impassable gulf was fixed between the Adam platform and His. Now what was to be done? For three days and three nights the platform which the Lord occupied was found vacant, its Occupant had gone down into the dust of death. But then He rose again from the dead, and, in resurrection, went on to another platform altogether: and now through His precious work of atonement, the way has been made by which we can be associated with Him: and those who were of Adam's race can now be delivered wholly from that order, and transferred, on the principle of faith, to that new platform which He has established in resurrection.

Are we conscious of being there? If so, the Spirit has given us the full joy of redemption. It is of no use merely saying that we believe in the thing: the question is, Are we consciously there? So many, young and old, are found just pinned down to a verse of scripture: they have nothing livingly in their souls. One thanks God deeply for the Scriptures, but the Spirit has been given, that the things which are presented in the Scriptures may become a fountain of joy in our souls. People complain sometimes that they are not conscious of being on this new platform. Whose fault is this? God the Father has assigned us there; the bless-

ed Lord has gone into death that we might be righteously placed there, and God the Holy Ghost is working at the present time, in order that we may consciously reach that point in our souls. So we find that the energy of the Godhead is put forth that we may consciously know our transference, and thus the full good of redemption be wrought out in our souls,

Now in connection with the gold there is the introduction of the thought of divine righteousness. Can we say much experimentally about this? There are two aspects of divine righteousness. The one is based on the righteous way in which God has dealt with the whole question of sin, and has been rendered the fullest possible satisfaction. But that is not the aspect of righteousness set forth in gold, as presented in our chapter. If we are eating the fatted calf in the Father's house, we do not want to be occupied with our past sinful history and the way the blessed God has wrought in view of it, blessed as that may be. What we need is to be in the consciousness, in our souls, that we have been made compatible with all that God desires in His holy being and sphere. In 2 Cor. V, 21 we read that He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin—that is the brass; but with the view that we might be made righteousness of God in Him—that is the gold. It is that we are made conscious of having been made perfectly suitable for the presence of God. It is not only that

there is nothing about us which can offend Him, but that He positively finds delight in us. This is no exaggeration, for the blessed God finds infinite and unspeakable delight in having His own in His presence, as made His own righteousness in Christ. May God have mercy on those who are in the state of being sheltered only; they are like a chip of wood floating on the ocean; they will surely be thrown up on the shores of eternity, but as to present salvation and joy they know nothing.

Now another question faces us, Are we reconciled? Many thousands believe the doctrine of reconciliation, but it is not merely something to be preached; it involves a tremendous subjective work in our souls. Have we tasted the joy of reconciliation? Do we know what it is to find all our joy and delight in God. In Psalms 43 we see this most beautifully illustrated. We find the Psalmist exclaiming. "O send out Thy light and Thy truth; let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy; yea upon the harp will I praise Thee, O God my God." It is perfectly plain to see whether a soul is reconciled or not. Wherein do we find our joy? Do we find it all in God? How we should thank God that the Spirit is here to effect this in our souls. It is a marvelous thing that God has so wrought that we can stand before Him, conscious that we are set in

all the divine favour that rests upon the beloved Son. A fully reconciled soul can say that the love wherewith the Father loved the Son now rests upon him, and know it in the consciousness of his soul. Has this work of the blessed Spirit been accomplished in us?

Now Rebekah is asked the question, "Wilt thou go with this man?" Wilt thou go and be united to Isaac? The Spirit is here to win souls for union with Christ. I will not ask you whether you are able to talk about union, but whether you are in the consciousness of your soul united to Christ? You may say that this must be a very advanced character of spiritual experience, but let us notice that this question was proposed to Rebekah after about twelve hours only of the servant's work. This is open to the very simplest believer, and the Spirit is waiting to effect it in all our souls. Nothing will give color to our coming out in testimony like our being touched in this way by the Spirit of God, and, furthermore, the heart of Christ never gets all that it is seeking from us, unless we get to know in our souls what it is to be united to Him. People may say that it is only consummated at His coming, but the Spirit proposes that we should now come into the sense of it, so that the heart of Christ may be satisfied, and our hearts too. One can with surety affirm that we have not reached the height of Christianity until we have come to this point.

The devil will do all that he can to oppose our journey from Mesopotamia to Canaan. He will say that the journey is a long one and seek to discourage us in that way. But let us notice that the journey is taken on camels of Isaac's providing. Isaac is reached by riding upon his camels and following his servant. It is all of Isaac's providing.

Now the question for us is, Are we willing to let the Spirit have His way with us? Nothing else will avail to put us outside this present evil world. By grace we shall know what it is to breathe the atmosphere of the tent, and thereby be spoiled for everything here.

Finally, let us notice that when Rebekah comes into Isaac's presence she puts a veil over herself. She says, as it were, Let Isaac only be seen by all. This will be the true desire of every soul that is in the good of union. We shall be willing to go out of sight so that Christ may come into view. Paul desired that Christ might be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death. May we be in this condition, for the present comfort and joy of the heart of Christ.

—G. W. W.

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