

REBEKAH who loved one she had never seen
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(Genesis 24 : 58-67)

This is one of the most suggestive of the Old Testament stories, and all evangelistic preachers will discover a goldmine of truth in its details. It is the account of a father who planned a marriage for his son his well-beloved son. It tells of the trustworthy servant who was authorized to seek a bride for Isaac. It describes the invitation given to a charming young woman, and how she learned to love someone whom she had never seen. This remarkable episode clearly demonstrates that the divine Author was able to embody in ancient stories glimpses of eternal things yet to be revealed to man.

A Great Request

"Abraham was old, and well stricken in age and he said unto his eldest servant . . . go unto my country. and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac And the servant took ten camels . . . and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor" (Gen. 24:1-10). And even before he reached his destination, the Lord had prepared the way. Prayers were answered, and ultimately the man realized that the desired maiden stood before him. When he had been introduced to her family, he revealed to them the nature of his mission, and then calmly awaited their reactions. Rebekah listened to every word, and quietly noted every detail concerning the man to whom she would be betrothed. She had never seen him; she knew little about him; yet she was singularly attracted by the remarkable testimony of this stranger. His quiet assurance, his deep convictions, his smiling eyes, all impressed her soul; and when she saw the presents which he offered, her heart thrilled. Many years later, the Lord Jesus said. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth . . . He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:13-15).

A Gracious Response

"And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go" (Gen. 24 :57-58). Three outstanding features are revealed in Rebekah's answer. (i) Love responding. It seemed ridiculous that she should consent to marry one whom she had never seen; the future might be filled with unhappiness. She had no guide but the witness of this stranger; yet his testimony awakened a response in her heart. (ii) Love renouncing. "And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go. And the servant said unto them, Hinder me not . . . send me away that I may go to my master." And when appeal was made to the listening daughter, Rebekah supported his request. She became one of the select company who, for the master's sake, forsook houses, brethren, sisters, father, and mother. and in the end received a hundredfold and life everlasting (see Matt. 19 :29). (iii) Love rejoicing. "And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way." And as her dreamy eyes looked into the unknown, her heart was singing.

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A Glorious Reward

"And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coining And when Rebekah saw Isaac, she lighted off her camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah and she became his wife; and he loved her" And when Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife, God graciously heard his requests, and the joy of motherhood became a reality in the life of this brave woman (see Gen. 25 :21). Undoubtedly she often remembered the eventful moments when the strange challenge reached her, but never once had she cause to regret the response made when she left all and followed him.

Centuries later, the apostle Peter wrote, "Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1: 7, 8). Rehekah would have loved to listen as Simon Peter preached the Gospel. He would have been telling her story!

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